

The Social Contract

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A Note from the Editor

America 'Faces the Highest Threat Level Ever'

Appearing on the CBS News program "Face the Nation" on June 21, 2015, the Chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, Rep. Devin Nunes (R-CA), declared the United States today confronts "the highest threat level we have ever faced in this country" due to the flow of foreign fighters and terrorists to and from Iraq and Syria and the "radicalization" of young people over the Internet [www.CBSNews.com/Face-the-Nation]. According to Rep. Nunes, U.S. officials

have been warning for months about the threat posed by people from America or Western Europe who travel to the Middle East to fight with the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and then return to their home countries, where they may carry out attacks.... Officials are increasingly looking for ways to combat radical jihadists' effectiveness in recruiting supporters through social media.... It's just tough to secure [America] if you have someone who wants to blow themselves up or open fire or other threats of that nature and we just don't know or can track all of the bad guys that are out there today.

September 11, 2015, marks the fourteenth anniversary of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon conducted by 19 young Muslims, who hijacked four airliners and turned them into guided missiles. As the final *9/11 Commission Report* stated, "The 9/11 attacks were a shock, but they should not have come as a surprise. Islamist extremists had given plenty of warning that they meant to kill Americans indiscriminately and in large numbers."

In this issue of *The Social Contract*, we revisit the findings of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, commonly known as the 9/11 Commission. The Commission was established on November 27, 2002, over a year after the attacks on September 11, 2001. The Commission staff issued separate staff reports on *9/11 and Terrorist Financing* and *9/11 and Terrorist Travel*. Their final report was issued on July 22, 2004. What is striking to the reader today is that many of the key failures of our national security system, including immigration policy, which the 9/11 Commission identified, have not been rectified. Indeed, thanks to the unwillingness of Congress and the White House to address these issues, the United States has an "open door" to potential terrorists. ■

Troubles hurt the most when they prove self-inflicted.
—Sophocles

Wayne Lutton, Ph.D.