Liberty for All

Benjamin Franklin once stated, "those who would give up essential liberty, to purchase a little temporary safety, deserve neither liberty nor safety." In direct contrast to this statement, most citizens of the United States presume that they are guaranteed both based upon the language of “The Constitution.” However, with the advent of technology, cyber space, and wireless communication, coupled with the tragedy of 9/11, many arguments have surfaced regarding the need for greater security, which often compromises freedom. Thus, it is the duty of the United States government to strike a balance between security and liberty.

Historically, there has been tension between the principles of national security and personal liberties. As a nation we are built on the inherent idea of freedom, and the idea of sacrificing freedom for security is a concept that has been imposed on our citizens. In essence, the United States is being guided by a government that could willfully infringe on the privacy of its citizens through instruments such as GPS, Google Earth, Digital Television, Microchips and Spyware. Independently and collectively, these tools create an opportunity for our government to encroach upon our privacy in the name of security. In her essay “Forget *Equality? Security and Liberty in the "War on Terror,”* Claudia Aradau asserts, “Freedoms do not only give way to security imperatives, security becomes a necessary step in the preservation of freedom” (296). Thus, security becomes a vital component for the American pursuit of life and liberty.

Conversely, it is essential to institute a government that promotes a responsible use of power. The founding fathers of the United States anticipated problems that might arise due to the abuse of power, and in “The Declaration of Independence” Thomas Jefferson provides specific instructions for such an occasion. Jefferson asserts, “that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it.” Essentially, Jefferson is creating a platform which would allow American constituents to overthrow any leader who abuses their power. However, Jefferson could not have anticipated cyberspace and the consequences of cyber espionage. These perverse technological strategies have caused our society to rethink its position on freedom and to allow certain aspects of our privacy to be accessible. Therefore, the notion of the abuse of power is also affected and a more lenient perspective has been adopted.

Although our culture and our society have altered dramatically due to increases in technology, the role of the government has not changed. As citizens we appreciate the tight security at our airports, as well as the national security experts who work diligently to subvert any future terrorist events. However, there are certain elements of our freedom which we refuse to relinquish. Our home should remain our sanctuary and all aspects of privacy within our homes should be inaccessible to government officials. Liberty and security are not mutually exclusive ideas; instead they are two elements of our constitution which support our pursuit of happiness.