

## CIVIL DEFENSE AND CIVIL WAR

We noticed a Wall Street Journal report that one region of the Soviet Union in which the Red Army is killing Soviet citizens in an attempt to "restore order" has activated its civil defense system.

Civil defense is usually thought of as insurance against the risks of natural and man made disasters including earthquakes, floods, or tornadoes, and the chemical, biological, and nuclear risks of accident, terrorism, or war. It is usually not thought of in terms of civilian protection from their own government or from the general risks of civil war.

The Founding Fathers of the United States were strong advocates of individual civil defense from dangers internal to one's country as well as those external to one's country. The defensive technology of their time was the firearm. They did not live in a time of danger from chemical, biological, and nuclear technology. In a statement representative of his time, George Washington said:

*"Firearms stand next in importance to the Constitution itself. They are the American people's liberty teeth and keystone under independence .... From the hour the Pilgrims landed, to the present day, events, occurrences and tendencies prove that to ensure peace, security and happiness, the rifle and the pistol are equally indispensable ..... The very atmosphere of firearms anywhere and everywhere restrains evil interference - they deserve a place of honor with all that's good ...."*

I expect that, had he lived today, George Washington would have made similar statements about civil defense. The logic is the same.

The most extensively armed civilian population in the world is that of Switzerland. Every man of prime age is given an assault rifle and ammunition by the Swiss government. Each is required by law to keep this weapon and ammunition in his home. Also by law, every Swiss citizen must have a civil defense shelter space with full protection from nuclear blast and radiation and chemical and biological agents.

Perhaps it is no coincidence that Switzerland has the lowest crime rate and greatest personal freedom for its citizens of any country on earth. It is also economically rich and has avoided all wars for many generations.

Civil defense shelters are truly "all hazards" devices as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) bureaucrats like to say. They, of course, refuse to build shelters for the American public - they build them only for FEMA bureaucrats. (These are called "emergency operating centers.")

The Soviets have disarmed their people, so that they can be controlled by the Red Army. They want to disarm the United States for the same reason. Arms, however, can be reconfiscated. If the current gamble by the Soviets should accidentally lead to civil war within the Soviet Union itself, it is those civil defense shelters that the Soviet bureaucrats may come to regret the most.