

National Defense Message: Focus and Prepare
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Although they do not agree as to the best way to do it, politicians agree that our nation must be protected against terror attacks. They might build a wall, reduce legal immigration, control guns, make changes in police procedure, place more regulations regarding air flight, but that will all take time, and may or may not work. I want protection now! So what can I do in the meantime?

Feeling safe when traveling or shopping is going to require each of us to focus on our surroundings. Be on the lookout for suspicious people and things. Notice people and what they are doing; note taking, drawing diagrams, using binoculars or cameras by someone, especially by people who don't seem to belong in the neighborhood, should arouse your suspicions. Be alert for people who move around but don't seem to have a true purpose. People planning an attack of any nature often map out routes or time traffic lights. They may even practice their attack prior to carrying it out. If you are traveling, never leave your luggage unattended or accept packages from strangers. Immediately report to police or security any unusual behavior, suspicious or unattended packages, and strange devices.

Furthermore, we must prepare ourselves should there be an attack. If you are inside, be cognizant of emergency exits of the building. Trust your instinct if something "feels" dangerous or makes you uneasy; move to a safer position where you can easily take cover or escape through a nearby exit. If a person has a knife, notice things you can throw at him if necessary, such as chairs, canned food, and even clothes. Act decisively and don't wait for instruction or try to get a better idea of what is happening. If you feel comfortable, carry a concealed firearm where legal. A concealed firearm in the hands of a responsible and trained individual is statistically one of the best tools available to stop mass killings.

Of course, there are some situations no one is prepared for, such as a drive-by shooting similar to the one on our own Tennessee Highway 81 during September 2016. However, there are some tragedies that have been avoided because of the diligent observance of a citizen, such as the discovery of a pipe bomb along the Tweetsie Trail in Elizabethton, Tennessee. It is an unfortunate reality that attacks exist close to home, and there will be more. Each of us must focus and prepare in order to keep ourselves and our families safe. Don't wait until a wall is built.