

No Nation Can Preserve Its Freedom in the Midst of Continual Warfare

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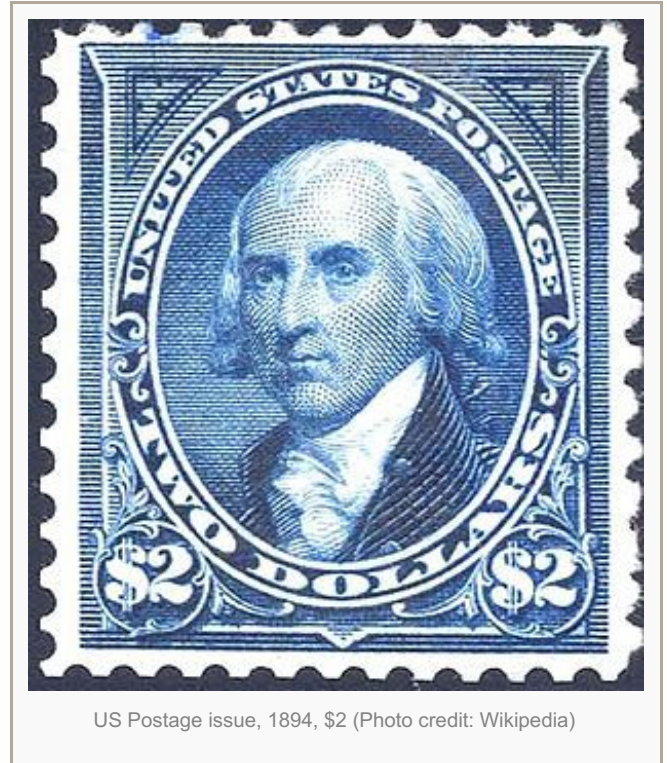
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6/28/2013

Today's title is from James Madison, architect of our Constitution. Madison famously wrote against the perils of forever war. In other words, he wrote about the perils we face today in our ongoing, seemingly unending, war on terror.

Here is what Madison warned us about:

Of all the enemies of true liberty, war is, perhaps, the most to be dreaded, because it comprises and develops the germ of every other. War is the parent of armies; from these proceed debt and taxes; and armies, and debts, and taxes are the known instruments for bringing the many under the domination of the few. In war, too, the discretionary power of the Executive is extended; its influence in dealing out offices, honors and emoluments is multiplied; and all the means of seducing the minds, are added to those of subduing the force, of the people. The same malignant aspect in republicanism may be traced in the inequality of fortunes, and the opportunities of fraud, growing out of a state of war, and in the degeneracy of manner and of morals, engendered in both. No nation can preserve its freedom in the midst of continual warfare ...



Strong words — and words to ponder as we continue to maintain an enormous defense and homeland security complex with bases and commitments around the world.

How, indeed, do you maintain personal liberties and individual freedoms in a garrison state? The short answer: you can't. Just read Madison.

W.J. Astore