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SECURITY WITH A

VENGEANCE

PAUL L. POIROT

SAFETY AND SECURITY rank high among human values, and rightly so. To risk one's life in reckless fashion shows a foolish disregard for self and dependents. Behavior that diminishes or threatens the lives of other peaceful persons is deemed irresponsible and anti-social. The case for various safety measures and security regulations would seem self-evident. But "playing safe" also may have disadvantages that ought to be considered. Lives can be wasted, if not snuffed out entirely, in the attempt to be safe and secure.

Safety and security alone will not sustain life. They may enhance food and shelter but afford no nourishment or covering as such. Nor are they tools of production that enable a worker to increase the product of his labor. Americans in the latter half of the twentieth century enjoy safety and security in large measure. But the high level of living to which we have grown accustomed

is largely attributable to two other factors: (1) Approximately half of the 200 million people in the United States work to earn a living for themselves and the other half; and (2) An average of roughly \$20,000 has been saved and invested in productive capital for each such job opportunity. Without such savings and capital investment per worker, famine would be as common in America as in any backward area. Our job opportunities—our very lives—depend upon our tools of production.

So, every additional \$20,000 saved and productively invested makes possible an acceptable level of living for two—one worker and one dependent. To take from a man the tools of his trade is to deprive two lives of their economic means of support. And it is a harsh fact that funds diverted to security programs cannot at the same time provide the tools of production and trade. Safety measures, however well-intended, have