

*I am stoked to share an opinion piece from a good friend, 'Silicon Valley Sniper'. Enjoy – JMc*

## Join or Die

I watched a neighbor take down his 'Don't Tread on Me' flag the other day, which was unusual. He decided to fly the stars and stripes at half-mast in honor of 9/11. The 'Don't Tread on Me' flag went back up the next day, per usual, and it got me thinking about the importance of symbols.

The 'Don't Tread on Me' slogan has survived hundreds of years because it's tied to the American spirit, and the rattlesnake image is a uniquely American symbol. The rattlesnake is unique for two reasons: it only exists in America and it warns with a rattle before striking. The timber rattler was well respected by American colonists. At one-point Benjamin Franklin suggested shipping some of them to Britain in response to the convicts that were being exported by the British. He viewed it as generous since at least the rattlesnakes gave a warning before striking. (Sound like a far fetched problem? Here's your modern day reference point: <https://nypost.com/2018/03/08/town-says-nyc-is-illegally-shipping-homeless-families-upstate/>.)

We live and let live, but we also do not bow to a king. So when tyrannical forces try to impose their will on us, it might not go well for them. Was true in the 1700s and it's true today. Back then, Ben Franklin also knew that during spicy times we couldn't just keep to ourselves. As the French and Indian War ramped up, there was a very real threat of bad guys busting into people's homes intent on scalping and killing. So, Franklin put out a more urgent slogan: 'Join or Die'. It had the image a rattlesnake laid out in pieces. The potential power of the whole was there to see.

Shifting back to present day, it's seems we are entering a time where the 'Don't Tread on Me' mindset is not enough. There have been some excellent articles recently on how to defend against mob violence (see *Bracken on Neighborhood Security* and *Jack Lawson's Civil*

*Defense, Volumes I & II On Sale Now).*

Consensus seems to be that an organized and well-trained group has the best odds for success.

We talk a lot about certain gear being a 'force multiplier', and I'm all for it. We've seen recently where one man can mount a successful defense against mob attackers because of better gear and training. But that's a tough road by yourself. I'd rather have more forces on my side, the ultimate 'force multiplier'.

Going back to my neighbor, I've been meaning to strike up a conversation with him about that flag and what it means to him. I'll do that the next time I see him. And it feels about time to start flying 'Join or Die'.

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