Unilateralism Makes Americans Less Safe Than We Should Be

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HOME SWEET HOME: IS IT SAFE?

Sarah Honkala

Home sweet home—is there still such a place, and is it safe? After September 11, 2001, home doesn’t feel like a safe, sweet place. It could be that in the last few years our world has become a more dangerous, and fearful place to live, or it could simply mean everyone living in the world has received a greater awareness of the dangerous, and fearful events that take place.

The good old television set faithfully broadcasts the latest news to Americans day and night. These news reports are filled with depressing, and terrifying messages. It is amazing that Americans can listen to a news report and still leave their homes. The access we have to information on the war of terror is amazingly broad. Years ago citizens would not have paid as much attention to the information received about terrorist activities. Terror activities were foreign to Americans, because they all took place on foreign soil. Even as the pictures flashed on the TV screen, it was so far away that it wasn’t real. September 11th brought all of this closer to home and made it real.

Now Americans are very aware of terrorist attacks and activities. The leaders of our countries are leading campaigns against terrorist acts. News reporters are reporting stories of terrorists living among us. The focus of our country has shifted to show the balance between safety and fear tipping towards fear. News reports point out vulnerable areas that could be potential terrorist targets. We now have a system in place to show just how threatened we are everyday. September 11th has forced our government to share with us information that would have been reserved for only high-ranking intelligence officials before.

The world has not become a more treacherous place to live. Americans have just become more aware of a terror threat that has always been there. In a world where the latest news can be found on TV, computers, magazines, or newspapers, we perceive the information on terror threats differently when we know that America is not immune to terror attacks. The safety of our homes probably isn’t any different then before September 11, 2003. But each American’s awareness has changed. The awareness that each of us holds on terrorist acts makes it hard to feel safe anywhere in the world, even in our own—home, sweet, homes.

UNILATERALISM MAKES AMERICANS LESS SAFE THAN WE SHOULD BE

Tom Shuell

Are we as safe today, as Americans, as we should be? Emphatically NO! Environmental safeguards that are protecting our air and waters are being dismantled. Health care and prescription costs are becoming less and less affordable for a sizable class of our society. Food regulation is lacking the necessary enforcement to make certain our food is meeting the appropriate standards. Microscopic disease strains are mutating to resist our ubiquitous antibiotics. Poverty is becoming more prevalent in the US. However, the major issue that undermines our safety in the current world climate is terrorism.

We need to be careful of making terrorism a simple good vs. evil issue. Our country has historically cheered and supported many instances of terrorism. The fighters that brought our independence from England incorporated guerilla warfare tactics (e.g., terrorism). The French underground of World War II utilized terrorist tactics. The Algerians gained their independence from France with the help of terrorist acts. The United States contributed materially to the freedom fighters of Afghanistan as they used terrorism to confront the Soviet occupation. These are just a few of the instances that we as a country have endorsed terrorist acts to obtain the appropriate outcomes. It should not be surprising that groups that have different desired outcomes would use the same tactics.

In fact, if a country or a group is involved militarily against the United States, the only option available, short of a weapon of mass destruction, is terrorism. If an opponent postures its tanks in a classic maneuver, the air force simply flies over the top and bombs them. If a massive group of soldiers gets together to launch an attack, the United States simply drops a cluster bomb. The point is that traditional military tactics are no longer relevant against the United States.

What makes terrorism particularly dangerous for American citizens is the extreme resentment toward the United States foreign affair policies by a majority of the world. This resentment stems from an aggressive unilateral approach taken by the United States toward virtually every foreign affair topic. The United States unilaterally pulled out of KYOTO when the entire world was attempting to address the serious issue of global warming. The United States unilaterally pulled out of a discussion concerning a ban on biological weapons when the resolution was nearly decided. The United States unilaterally pulled out of the 2002 conference on racism in Durban South Africa because the...
direction of the talks went in the “wrong” direction. The United States unilaterally removed itself from being bound by the world criminal court. The United States won’t ratify a ban on land mines that most of the world wants. The United States disregards the Geneva Convention by creating an ambiguous enemy combatant. The United States is contemplating the militarization of space, with an enormous price tag, against the desires of most of the world. The United States “accidentally” kills civilians and euphemistically calls it collateral damage. The United States is part of the United Nations, yet disregards its resolutions when they are “inconvenient.”

To diminish the threat of terrorism requires that we diminish the resentment. This must be done through foreign policy. We must move away from an aggressive view that prescribes unilateral United States decisions that impact the entire world. Rather, the United States must take the forefront in developing a multinational approach to addressing the major issues that confront the world today. We must allow all countries of the world to be part of the discussion that determines global priorities. Having determined the priorities, we must be willing to put our resources toward resolving them in a multinational way.

Lauren Roberts

billboards over houses
advertisements in the fields
where the lilies once grew
commercials choking children
as they finish digesting
what the smiling capitalists
shove down their swollen bellies
mountains crumble
before the gods of Wall Street
and we all prostrate ourselves along wet sidewalks
rooted to sign of the dollar
the taste of greed burnt in our mouths
intentions of rape flood our streets
and course our veins
cracking, weak, repenting voices
cry and cry for more
a life we must
but never can achieve
whose dream is this
that you and I parade along
whose ideas are these
that we would kill just to cling to
creations of syntax
of grammar
punctuation we adhere to
a soiled rotten stream
we are so proud to die for
it makes me cringe when I say yes
and conform and become
it makes me ill to say no
and fight and fight
billboards instead of flowers
politics in the playground