

### **Some International Issues The U.S. Needs to Address**

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The United States is the world leader and still the world's largest economic power. We are leading the fight against terror by an interesting route – military force that does not address the root causes of terror. To my friends in Europe and Asia, where I have worked, it looks as we are using this “War of Terror” to become the world's dominator and policeman more than the world's moral compass. It is my opinion in the last six years the administration has chosen a path leading it toward world empire through a strategy of domination, fear and force. I believe this to be exactly the wrong way to address the terror wrought on us by representatives of the dispossessed. In pursuit of this direction the United States has chosen to unilaterally terminate treaty obligations, utilize world institutions only when it suits its own self interests and utilize its armed forces, as much to terrorize, as to protect the security of the world. As with dominating powers throughout history we have confused might for security, embraced secrecy to the extreme and acted from the haze of self-imposed paranoia. It is my opinion that the United States leadership has rejected the moral compass of its founders. And because of that, we have lost our global moral leadership. Our allies are wary and our enemies have found an opponent they can passionately oppose, and which we cannot quell by military might. Therefore, I believe there are a series of serious issues we must address in order to begin gaining the moral high ground and the respect of our peers. They follow in no particular order of importance.

1. **We Must Repudiate Pre-emptive War.** – The Bush Doctrine of pre-emptive wars is a denial of our historic values and self image (although there have been times in history that we have initiated such). Pre-emptive strikes are the tactics of nations seeking to build an empire at the expense of weaker parties or the tactics of paranoia. The Germans did this in the lead up to World War II because they needed more “living room”. It appears the United States is using this strategy in part to control natural resources such as oil. The United States must repudiate this doctrine as a step to regaining our status as a responsible world leader. We must address this in part by adjusting our life style and developing alternative natural resources.
2. **United States Aid and Development Strategy Must Address the Root Causes of Poverty Within Developing Nations** – Much of the opposition to the United States is rooted among those without hope. In my experience, much of the so-called U.S. aid is given to poor nations on the condition that U.S. contractors are hired to do the work (particularly infrastructure dollars). Thus, many aid dollars are corporate welfare for our own multi-nationals or not-for-profit organizations. These dollars do less than they should to build significant local and national institutions in the receiving nations. They do even less in the developing nation to improve the economy, because the dollar profits flow to American contractors. Thus, our aid dollars do not work at eradicating root causes of poverty in developing nations. At the same time, our aid dollars have diminished significantly over the last several decades. It is true there is graft and corruption in many developing nations. But it also true that the percentage of misdirected funds probably is quite parallel to that in many multi-national corporations.

3. **We must stop equating economic capitalism with political democracy.** –I have become more and more aware that the media, business and sometimes the government use the terms ‘capitalism’ and ‘democracy’ interchangeably. The major resources of our government are frequently utilized to advance the economic interests of our multi-national corporations in other countries. This has led to many anomalies in our foreign policy. For example, we find ourselves supporting dictators who are very good at controlling their people, making it safer for our business interests. Or we oppose grass roots revolutions because it may not be good for our business. We often deny the rights of peoples in other nations, which citizens in our nation count sacred. Much of our policy toward Central and South America as well as Africa have had this effect, if not purpose. It is a fact that democratic decisions may, on occasion repudiate capitalism as an economic system - and democracy must always set boundaries for its operation. It is also a fact that economic democracy would look very different than the oligarchy of multi-national corporations that exists in our capitalism’s system.
  
4. **We must establish ethical economic policies and multi-national institutions to govern our multi-national corporations –**
  - \$ Capital has been internationalized to the detriment of our own American communities and our internal economy.
  - \$ Capital and jobs have fled to developing nations where low wages and benefits as well as legally mandated regulations do not exist. This is a race to the bottom.
  - \$ NAFTA, CAFTA, WTO and the numerous other trade agreements have few internal restraints and little requirement to protect the environment or worker B only the corporation. It is immoral for these agreements to require the receiving nation to reimburse the corporations for profits supposedly lost if that nation requires environmental and employee laws be obeyed that were not in place when the decision was made to locate the industry there.
  - \$ Further, there are no international institutions (that do not “belong” to the multi-nationals) that a nation or an aggrieved people can take their case to, in order to hold a corporation accountable. Currently, when a corporation feels “put upon” by a community nation, they simply move to another.
  
5. **We must give leadership in developing international law and the international institutions to enforce them –** The United States has unilaterally broken a number of international treaties and boldly asserts its right to do so. This is wrong. True, treaties may need to be changed and be renegotiated from time to time, but to unilaterally do so is irresponsible and does not respect the integrity of other partners in the treaty. In effect, to break them makes the U.S. an international outlaw and the weaker partners have little, if any, recourse. The self interest of the U.S. would be well served to join the World court and to engage with other nations to create a body of global law that we will discipline ourselves to live within. Just as within our nation there must be ways for the weaker to have their grievances addressed, so too among the nations. These world institutions, like the United Nations, must be the creatures of the nations. Further, the U.S., as the most powerful nation in the world must give leadership to create them and then obey them. International institutions, as within nation states, have problems with simple majority

control, but the U.S. must be willing to transcend its self interest and give leadership in finding new solutions for building these institutions before the world devolves into chaos.

6. **As a world leader the United States must rise above its hubris and self interest to become a responsible world citizen** – The United States has made it a practice to operate out of its own self interest and most recently, its greed. This stance largely negates our moral authority and diminishes trust among our would-be partners. Leadership requires the needs of others be considered and on regular occasions, met. For example, it is good leadership to insist on bans on nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. We, in turn must also not develop these weapons and live within the constraints of the ban.
7. **The United States must focus as much of its resources and attention on Africa, the Americas and Asia as it has heretofore focused on the Middle East** – We cannot abandon Israel but we should not be propping up, and buying the loyalty of Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine and Jordan to the extent we have. These five countries receive a disproportionate share of our foreign aid dollars. And three of them have marginal democracies at best. The Americas, Africa and Asia have significant potential and even more significant problems. We need to be a force in solving these problems, not creating more as we have in last 20 years in Central America. We need to put significant resources into Africa. Their civil wars are often the product of powerlessness and poverty. They are squabbles over crumbs. We, with international partners, need to assist in alleviation of that poverty with aid for education, health and economic self help programs that reach all the people in Africa. We need to assist in nation building where appropriate. This is in the self interest of the West and the world. Likewise in Asia. Asia is becoming an economic dynamo, but the present models are seriously bifurcating the population between rich and have nots. If building a strong middle class is not attended to and the needs of those being left behind are not addressed, it too will become a caldron of discontent.
8. **We need to champion a world peace center** – We invest billions every year in armaments and war. We are the principle exporter of weapons – arming the world, seemingly enemies and friends alike. Modern social science has developed a myriad of new understandings about how to creatively deal with conflicts and resolve them without war. We need to take the lead in establishing a Center to Study and Teach Peace. We need to encourage the nations of the world to participate and we need to encourage departments of peace studies in our public universities. We have universities and institutes dedicated to studying war. Now let's study peace – in a world context.
9. **The United States must stand for, promote, and live under the constraints of global justice.**
  - We must become a leader in international environmental justice not the international environmental outlaw. Every nation in the world shares the environment. It is in each nation's (developed and developing) interest to work together to make the environment sustainable. The developed nations must work with the underdeveloped nations to help them not make the mistakes we have

made, and we must at the same time covenant to radically change our life styles that are hurting the environment. We must give leadership in taking the long view – not what will happen to our economy in the next few years, but what will happen to our world over the next decades and centuries if we do not address the issues. This will require international institutions and international treaties. The U.S. must give unselfish leadership. We must affirm what is right. In the long run, what is right will be good for us too.

– We must be the exemplars of economic justice, first among our own people, then in our international corporate enterprises and finally insist on it in all our treaties.

– We must reign in our agents of paranoia, forcing them to act within the norms of international law. The Central Intelligence Agency, the Defense Department's Intelligence apparatus and their hired soldiers of fortune have been utilized to not only spy, capture and interrogate people on foreign soil, but also to destabilize and overthrow governments. It is essential that these be reigned in and that the United States get out of the business of trying to control the world – under the guise of fighting terrorism. Indeed, I would suggest that it these sorts of practices that have contributed to the rise of terrorism. When our intelligence agencies take the law into their own hands, it creates despair and makes suicide bombers, etc. much more plausible as a way to fight against the despair – because in the end, we cannot really protect ourselves or our friends from the bombers. At the same time, the bombers' costs are minimal and our approach, utilizing the military will, in the end, bankrupt us, just as the cold war bankrupted the Soviet Union. There must be a better way B and it begins with addressing root causes.

10. **We must deal with the clash between the secular liberal culture, largely rooted in Christendom and the theocratic cultures largely rooted in Islam and primitive religions** – Most western culture is in the liberal tradition. It embraces diversity. To be a member you must be prepared to be offended. A traditional theocratic culture is more uniform. You do things by tradition and the will of god – which is rooted in that tradition. One is not a free agent in the theocratic culture. The onus is on the Western culture to be sensitive to the theocratic culture and not intentionally insult its sensibilities, while at the same time it works to build bridges. We need international cultural programs dedicated to that work. It is my sense that eventually modern communication, travel and education will break down these cultural barriers B but in the meantime it can be hoped that perhaps our peace studies will help us find ways to transcend the differences between the secular and theocratic cultures. And certainly our diplomats must be sensitive to these cultural differences.