

Has American exceptionalism run its course?

Who would have thought that the United States of America, a nation founded on the belief that its people had certain inalienable rights and that the government existed for the sole purpose of facilitating and protecting those rights, would give them all up without a fight? Not this writer. I was taught that we Americans were created in the crucible of common sense, patriotism (to an idea that gave birth to a country) and spilled blood and that because we held certain common beliefs we could put aside our differences and rally around those sacred promises made to us a couple centuries ago.

I was right and I was wrong. We could. We did. But now we are questioning those beliefs, and some among us are actively working to destroy them. Democracies and constitutional republics have traditionally had one important thing in common... free, unfettered and frequent speech - even the uncomfortable kind. Our birth and baptism by the fires of revolution and internal civil war taught us that some ideas are worth fighting (and dying) for and that in order to keep our republic we must be willing to defend it against all attackers, both foreign and domestic.

The Left would have you believe that the Right is wrong and that to resist their liberal theocracy, a system in which they are the high priests extolling the virtues of a catechism of collectivism over individualism, is both heretical and antithetical to making America a truly exceptional country. Their 'secret sauce' is an internal and external attack on - and corruption of - our institutions, from the DOJ to the DOD to DOE to DHS and beyond. This week, they also showed their contempt for banking law by creating an exemption to the wealthy depositors of Silicon Valley Bank that had mismanaged itself and made questionable loans to its political friends in California. At present, the Progressive Left would describe their actions to reverse America's fortunes as a *velvet revolution*, one that uses *soft power* to realize its goals. However, glimpses of its true nature can be seen in their pressure on our government to recuse itself from doing its job, whether it's securing our borders, protecting Americans' lives and livelihoods, safeguarding our basic freedoms in the public square and in our institutions as well as in cyberspace AND by encouraging an 'aWakening' of our military.

We are no longer safe on our own streets due to their (Leftist mayors' and prosecutors') unwillingness to enforce our laws. Our children are subject to pornography in our schools. Once pro-integration minority groups are being encouraged to revolt and vote for the Left by dangling offers of reparations and forced 'equity' in the workplace. We have devolved into a country of two camps - one that wants to preserve our way of life that includes equal opportunities for all - and one that wants to wipe the American slate clean. It's really that simple. The American 'idea,' that bonfire of liberty which made us truly exceptional, is now only a small flame shared in the hearts and hearths of some Americans who can still remember when it burned brightly like a searchlight illuminating our path to a better more prosperous future.

We are in danger of losing our country to older idealists who have grown up on the romanticism of cultural revolutions and the 'flower power' sixties AND a new generation that has been pampered and protected by their parents and that has little or no experience with adversity. Unfortunately, neither group is well-schooled in history nor do they fully understand or comprehend the true nature of the average American. To them, the fact that many Americans value self-preservation, common sense and individual freedom is simply reflective of the 'old' America - something they are duty-bound to replace with a centralized system that dissolves our republic rather than strengthening it.

The sun still shines on America, but the heat of unity that once warmed us has dissipated. Our enemies have watched as we have allowed that unity of purpose and resolve to be poisoned, and they are sharpening their swords and redoubling their efforts to help us commit national cultural suicide. Over the past two years the Left's velvet revolution has emerged from the shadows and morphed into an all-out, multi-front attack on the bedrock of Americanism...our traditional values.

The Progressives do not espouse progress. They have committed identity theft and misappropriated the term *progress*. To them, real progress demands a national cultural 'cold boot' or reset that reflects their ideals and goals.

I asked the artificial intelligence guru 'ChatAI' what it thought *progress* meant and it gave the following answer... "In a broader sense, progress can be seen as the development of civilization or society towards a more advanced, sophisticated or prosperous state. This can involve improvements in technology, science, medicine, education, infrastructure, economic development, social justice, and other aspects of human life. The concept of progress is often associated with the idea of positive change and improvement over time. However, it is important to recognize that progress is not always linear or continuous, and it can be subject to setbacks, challenges, and trade-offs. Different people may have different visions of what constitutes progress and what goals or values should guide it."

For an information-harvesting cyber entity, that was a pretty good response, and its last line, "...Different people may have different visions of what constitutes progress and what goals or values should guide it" says it all. Under our present system, freedom of choice of what to believe and how to act is proof that the very system the Left wants to change has actually given them the right to try to destroy it! It's reminiscent of a Clintonian theme: destroy the village to save it. Though it may sound like warped, self-destructive reasoning, it's actually what the founding fathers wanted...to guarantee successive generations the freedom to proffer ideas (even unpopular ones) and then debate them while protecting the framework that gives them permission to do so.

That is considered too mainstream and antiquated by the Left and is not the direction the Progressives have chosen to go. They want to take traditional America down, back to square one for a radical reset AND they're tired of waiting for their ideas to be embraced and implemented by the average (read: conservative) American. They're impatient and feel time slipping through their fingers. They believe that the eleventh hour is here and that our society is beset by White supremacy, rampant systemic racism, widespread inequity, gender intolerance, imperialism and a resolve to protect our liberties. They feel they must act now...and the targets? Our right to arm ourselves for own protection; the right to decide what kind of education is appropriate for our own children; the rights of the unborn; the right to safeguard our physical borders and more. In order to attack those rights they must wrest control of the levers of power 'for our own good' and crown themselves 'the paternalistic government of the *new* United States of America 2.0.'

As I see it, Americans have four basic choices on what to do about radical Progressivism. The first is to ignore the Progressives and go about our daily lives in the hopes that their cultural bulldozer runs out of fuel. The second is to fight back at every given opportunity whenever they attack a bedrock American value. The third is to accept the 'inevitable' and adapt to the Progressives' new reality. The fourth is to pack up and leave. I'm willing to concede that there may be a few more choices that I've not thought of, but I still contend that those are the main ones. Before we choose one for ourselves, however, we might want to consider how much innocent blood has been spilled since our first Revolution in support of our values and how much true progress we've made since then, despite our failings. American exceptionalism has never meant to be seen as THE best form of governance on the planet nor something that negates or downplays the values of other countries' systems. It is an attitude that enables us to realize our true potential within a cultural, economic and laws-based framework that relies on the power of the individual to prove the system's true worth each and every day. It is the ultimate trickle up/trickle down system that is based on a mutually-beneficial idea: that which benefits the individual without adversely impacting those around him is good for the rest of us. The Progressives have it backwards.

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