

IN DEFENSE OF ARROGANCE

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No, I don't think we should pull out of the United Nations. No, I don't think we should stop paying our dues. The organization has its uses. But the U.N. stands guilty of self-inflicted smirch, and we ought to understand what's going on.

The case in point: Sudan, whose government practices slavery, has been chosen as a member of the United Nations Human Rights Commission. Meanwhile, the United States has been denied a seat on UNHRC for the first time since the commission's inception in 1947. Question: Does the United Nations any longer have the right to claim it has a commission endorsing human rights?

Why did it happen? Some nations lied to us about how they would vote. And many nations voted against America in order to give the U.S. some symbolic comedownance for the arrogance displayed in recent years by the winner of the global lottery, the sole surviving superpower. (That's us: the United States of Arrogance.)

Shame on arrogant America! Just think of what we've been doing! We unilaterally committed truth by acknowledging that the Kyoto treaty was a hoax. We won't support a land mine treaty because there are times the only way to protect American troops is through land mines. We believe in the death penalty for Timothy McVeigh. During the last meeting of the UNHRC America sought to condemn human rights violations in China while the other member nations chose to bow and scrape to the Chicoms. And arrogant America is actually planning to try to defend itself from the potential extortion from rogue states with nuclear-tipped missiles.

How dare we? Why is America "going its own way?" Why have we alienated world public opinion? Why isn't America behaving like a good dues-paying member of a great global organization?

It is not a great global organization. America has recently been recalcitrant in paying U.N. dues because we have come to believe that while the U.N. has some real value, it is in many ways a wasteful, bloated, bureaucratic, unctuous, subversive and sanctimonious organization. Enough sugar-coating. Worse, there are misbegotten people, including some Americans, who believe that the U.N. is an important part of the true voice of world public opinion. We are expected to care about that and change our actions accordingly. Fie!

We should ask whether this pipsqueak incident has a lesson in it for us. I hope so. I hope the people who claim that America is "going its own way" prove to be correct. In a world where governments and their global organization give Sudan membership on what was once a human rights commission, we have a duty to stand in opposition. Shame on us were we not.

Do not buy for a minute the idea that world public opinion is against America. Votes in the United Nations and the voices of anti-American propagandists, typically unelected, are not the voice of global public opinion. Public opinion is measured by what people think and what people do.

Today people everywhere try to emigrate to America to get a piece of the American dream, personal and economic. People everywhere listen to American music, watch American movies and American television -- some of it grand, some of it crummy. They seek American technology and American medicines, although they like to take a free ride on American research costs.

The world speaks American. People everywhere aspire to American standards of liberty and human rights. They know that by saving the world from the swinish hordes of Nazism and communism, America saved the 20th century. Even the two-faced diplomats want a strong American military and diplomatic presence in their own bloody neighborhoods lest the locals start slaughtering each other once again.

The striped-pants cookie-pushers in the U.N. know this. The anti-American elitist politicians who send their children to America for an education and their parents to America for medical treatment know this. And they fear it.

And if I were they, I might too. They fear that the globalization of culture and trade is an inextricable link to American ideals. Globalization may break up their little game. If globalization goes much further, women may get rights in Iran. Christians may get rights in Sudan and China. Free market economics may force Europeans to put out a day's work for a day's pay.

Clinton was bad enough. But this Bush fellow -- this, this Texan -- may actually mean what he says, and do what he means.

If all this be arrogance, make the most of it. And if the folks at the U.N. don't like it they can always find another spot from which to pontificate, maybe Khartoum.

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