

A Nation in Decline?

Just in time for Independence Day, the bible of the American left, the *New York Times*, continues to opine that the United States is a “nation in decline.” Hoping to see a Democrat in the White House, the newspaper has been hammering home that theme on its editorial pages.

The *Times* bases its claims on two primary situations: The negative view of America abroad, and income inequality at home. So let’s take a look at the supposed “decline.”

Overseas, the world is largely a mess. Africa remains a chaotic cauldron of corruption, China continues its authoritarian rule and there’s no letup in the India-Pakistan hatred. Would you like to live in those countries?

Russia continues to lead the league in corruption, Mexico is fighting a brutal war against its own drug traffickers, and South America remains mired in poverty. Call me crazy, but I don’t see many immigrants pounding on those doors.

Of course, many liberal Americans blame the USA for the world’s misfortunes and side with those who, for whatever reason, verbally downgrade the United States. However, considering the sad state of a world that will not even unite against a nuclear weapons-seeking Iran, our so-called “decline” is a terrible misreading of the global picture.

Against all odds, U.S. forces have almost single-handedly defeated Islamic fascism in Iraq, one of the most complicated battlefields in history. In Afghanistan, U.S. and NATO troops continue to hammer the vicious Taliban on every front. The only reason those fascists are operating is that Pakistan protects them. If the Pakistanis would ally themselves with NATO, the Taliban would be wiped out.

Back home, the Bush administration has succeeded in making it

ultra-difficult for terrorists to kill us. The FBI and other federal agencies have been effectively reorganized, and the nation is much safer for it. That doesn't sound like a decline to me.

But what really has the *New York Times* furious is the gap between rich and poor Americans, a gulf that is now being exacerbated by escalating gas prices that rob workers of take home pay. Never mind that it is largely liberal policies that have shut down much U.S. oil exploration and made America even more dependent on foreign oil; the left believes that capitalism must now be "tempered" by the federal government. That means income redistribution through higher taxation on wealthy Americans.

In this month's *Harvard Magazine*, the liberal position is clearly stated: "Americans, on average, have a higher tolerance for income inequality than their European counterparts. American attitudes focus on equality of opportunity, while Europeans tend to see fairness in equal outcomes."

"Equal outcomes," of course, means socialistic entitlements, something many European countries have embraced and a philosophy the *New York Times* deeply endorses.

So, it comes down to this: the committed left believes that America has been too aggressive fighting the war on terror and not aggressive enough when it comes to government mandated economic and social engineering. Thus, in their view, the country is in decline.

But that's opinion, not fact. There's no doubt that times are tough right now but, from this vantage point, the American people are still as creative and hard working as they've always been. Our pinheaded politicians have mucked it up recently, but we are certainly not a nation in decline. With another Independence Day upon us, we remain strong and the

world's greatest hope.