

Let's Hear It for the Good Guys

For once, let's hear it for the good guys. If every country in the world fought terrorism as aggressively as the USA and Great Britain, the truly bad guys would be beaten down, perhaps forever.

But hoping that the nations of the world will respond cohesively to the savagery and potential mass destruction of modern terror is a lost cause. We live in a world of denial and self-interest. You have as much chance of finding the Wizard of Oz as you do persuading some timid and misguided countries to join the fight against the Islama-fascists.

Even countries like Canada are no longer dependable allies. According to a Macleans poll, 38% of Canadians say their attitude toward the USA has worsened since 9/11. Almost half of our friends to the north see America as arrogant, bullying or dangerous.

To be sure, the Bush administration's non-compromising stance in Iraq and insistence that terror-enabling states be confronted (Axis of Evil) have put off many foreigners who embrace a far more passive approach toward terrorism. But the Canadian situation exemplifies what is truly going on in this world.

Over the past two decades, Canada has become committed to secularism and government entitlements. Subsidized medical care, decriminalization of marijuana, gay marriage, extensive welfare for newly arrived immigrants and an aggressively liberal Canadian Broadcasting Company have all become part of the culture. The eastern Canadian press is especially anti-American, and delights in hammering their more traditional American neighbors.

Thus, it should not have come as a surprise when some high school hockey players from Massachusetts were booed at a match in Montreal. Many Americans were annoyed but quickly forgot the incident. Now, however, our Canadian ally has a far more serious situation on its hands.

Last January, Army Private Jeremy Hinzman deserted from 82nd Airborne Division and fled to Canada. In March, he was followed by another 82nd Airborne private, Brandon Hughey. Both had voluntarily enlisted in the US military and split only after their unit was ordered to Iraq. They have been granted temporary residence in Canada and hearings will be held on their cases this summer.

But here's the salt in the wound. The Canadian Broadcasting Company and the Toronto Globe and Mail have reported on the deserters and put them in a sympathetic light. The CBC reporter, Gillian Findlay, said Hughey wanted no part of "George Bush's war..." her words, not Hughey's.

And the Globe and Mail columnist Heather Mallick says the two guys are "fine American men."

Canada has an extradition treaty with the USA, and its law says that political asylum can only be granted to those who could be executed or persecuted if returned to their home countries. Since Iraq is not a declared war, Hinzman and Hughey cannot be executed, and, if returned to the US, they would most likely face five years in prison—hardly a persecution for a crime as serious as desertion.

Most Canadian observers believe the two will be extradited to the USA, but if they are not, a serious situation will erupt. A country harboring deserters would undermine the US war on terror and demonstrate outright hostility toward America.

These deserters should have been detained, and their cases quickly heard. Instead, they have websites, media sympathy and a forum in which to bash their country. This circus is

insulting to America and especially to those American soldiers who have lost their lives fighting terrorists and supporters of the brutal dictators Mullah Omar and Saddam Hussein.

On my television program, I have advised the Canadian government that if the deserters are not returned post-haste, I will no longer buy Canadian products or visit the country. I believe many Americans will take the same stance.

A true friend does not hurt you even if he or she disagrees with something you do. Canada may reject the Iraq strategy and we respect its dissent. But actively undermining the U.S. military is quite something else. Ottawa best remember that cold fronts can originate from the south as well.