

Modern Patriotism

Essays

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Independence Day is near in the US, a day when we celebrate our war of freedom from Great Britain over 200 years ago. This is a time when everyone talks about being patriotic. We should wave little flags and talk about how great our country is, how great republicans are, how great the government is, blah blah blah. Why is blind faith in the government considered patriotism? According to the right-wing (particularly their journalists), our government is always right unless it's being run by a democrat. In the process of turning every country that doesn't give us oil or cheap labor into smoldering craters, the people in charge making the phone calls are the highest moral authority in the world. Why is this considered patriotism?

Over the course of a year, we have taken over two whole nations in the name of avenging the infamous September 11 attacks, when neither nation had anything to do with the terrorism. Every country in the world contains terrorist factions, including the US, but somehow Afghanistan and Iraq sponsored their terrorists to the point where we had to bomb them both into the Stone Age in order to secure our own domestic security. It is true that both countries were run by oppressive dictatorships, but are we any better? We send a plane that bombs an entire city, followed by a plane that drops "humanitarian aid" on the same city. If we didn't bomb the city, they wouldn't need humanitarian aid in the first place! And yet, somehow we were justified in bombing civilians because there MIGHT be terrorists and enemy military hiding there. Saddam Hussein was an "evil man" with (cue buzzword) Weapons of Mass Destruction. Having reduced Iraq to rubble in an attack based on evidence that they were hiding "something", which could have been anything from weapons to a cure for cancer, we have yet to find the alleged WMDs. Also, we won't allow weapons inspectors to go look for them. Why not? Gee, maybe because WE ALREADY KNOW THEY DON'T EXIST! And we don't want a bunch of UN people making us look stupid (oops, too late).

Patriotism is roughly defined as pride in one's country. I have nothing against patriotism, by that definition. When "hatred of all things not American and blind faith in US government" are added to it, that's when it's offensive. Our government is not always correct, as witnessed in the eighties under Nixon (who was a republican). Now, Bush is making the same economical mistakes, and no one in power is paying any attention. Trickle-down economics does NOT work! It didn't work then, it isn't going to work now. Yet no one notices, because no one criticizes the government.

The hatred of all things not American isn't talked about as much as the other things I've mentioned, but it's there. The belief that we are the best and most important nation is a dangerous one, and often leads to genocide and dictatorships, as seen in Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union, Japan, and Iraq. All of these regimes held their citizens together by distributing propaganda that their nation was the best, and therefore they had a right to get rid of anyone who disagreed. Conservatives hate it when the US is compared to any of those nations, but any good historian will agree that the governmental patterns are the same. This is a crisis, and the people need to keep a watchful eye on those we elected. Otherwise, we could end up being the next world dictatorship, with those we've stomped on rising up against us.

"If you ignore your rights, they'll go away"

-Unknown

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