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America, stop withdrawing from the world

Since the ending of World War II (1945), America has been, unquestionably, the most powerful nation on Earth. It has served as a model for many countries. Our power, coupled with our democratic and republican foundations, led to many countries emulating our nation's rule of law philosophy.

America's Marshall Plan saved post-World War II Europe from Stalin's Communism. The United Nations, energetically backed by the United States, has served the interests of free-world countries. And despite critics of the U.N., the organization has reinforced America's foreign policies.

With the exception of China, which still has a lot of "catching up" to do, no other country comes close to equaling U.S.'s combination of economic wealth and military might.

This situation came about because of our power, coupled with the respect from (rational) nations about how we used this power, as well as our insistence on being a principal participant (often a founder) in international coalitions (such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund).

Yet for the past several years, numerous articles, books and television programs claim America is losing its once uncontested dominance and influence on the world's stage. These critics cite American failures in the Afghanistan and second Iraqi wars, an ideologically divided nation, and its deteriorating financial/economic infrastructure. This media claims these events have led to U.S. citizens wanting their country to disengage from world affairs; to save money; to reduce risk.

Leadership

Along with China, America emerged from the financial meltdown of the previous decade more robust than many other countries (including Russia). The United States' relative economic and military clout in world affairs was not diminished as an aftermath of this near recession. It was increased.

Just consider the near insolvency of several EU countries; of Japan's on-going flat economy; of many South American countries' near bankruptcies; of Russia's systemic corruption.

A significant aspect of America's ability to stabilize dangerous situations in the world (including the rescue of many helpless people) stems from our moral, economic, and military muscle and our willingness to assert ourselves ... usually for the common good.



Uyless Black

**GUEST
OPINION**

you are not at the table when victuals are being served, you will have no say-so in being fed." What does this adage mean? Consider these six ideas:

One: America has withdrawn from the Iran nuclear accord because Uncle Sam has judged it to be flawed. Of course it is. What international treaties are not? The result is the loss of leverage against Iran, except for marginally effective and highly provocative embargoes.

Two: America has withdrawn from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which was one way of dealing with China's competing against U.S. trade alliances with Asian nations. Who is left at the dinner table? ... China. To the exclusion of the United States, China is a member of the Asia Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA) and is foraging additional alliances with nations world-wide, as cited in point three.

Three: America has not offered any strategy to counter China's extraordinary Belt and Road Initiative, a skillful plan to bring many countries within China's sphere of influence. Meanwhile, our congressional leaders trade barbs about gay rights and gun control, while China eats our lunch.

Four: America has withdrawn from the world-wide Paris climate accords consortium. Its non-participation guarantees the country will have no influence (pro or con) about decisions coming from this assemblage.

Five: The Trump administration rightly criticizes NATO about most of its members not fulfilling their financial obligations to the partnership. Fine, but our country continues to also berate and undermine the underpinnings of this vital defense organization. To what result? Russia's increased assertiveness in Eastern Europe.

Six: A few weeks ago, the United States announced it was withdrawing its troops from the Syrian conflict. Result? A power vacuum in that part of the Middle East that is being filled by two of our adversaries, Russia and Iran. To add injury to insult, America abandoned a tenacious, brave ally: the Kurds.

Get back in that saddle

I am not suggesting "going it alone" is in our nation's psyche. I am optimistic to think the opposite. I believe the bedrock of our citizenry supports helping others; of course, while helping ourselves. If I did not hold this belief, I would be living in Canada, catching fish and slapping at mosquitoes.

My point is simple: America is far from weak in its fiscal, economic, financial, ethical, and military

entrusted with her arrangements. Please sign Betty's online memorial at www.englishfuneralchapel.com.

Inactive participation

Currently, America is voluntarily giving up its place of international prominence. I do not mean military prominence, which our defense budget guarantees our continued superiority. I mean economic, political, cultural and social prominence. Essentially, we are shooting ourselves in the foot.

An old saying sums the situation well: "If to the lack of confidence in itself and falling for political charlatans, disguised as all-knowing, never-erring proponents of disengagement.

Am I for America maintaining its decades-old role of the world's policeman? No, and other free-world countries should take on more responsibilities. But that does not mean we should passively abnegate a leadership role.

We remain the strongest nation in the world. To sulk away is beneath us. Of more importance, the vacuum we are creating is being filled by others who care less about the rule of law.

We will be left in a situation similar to a second string quarterback who has no say in how the game is being played. Why should we voluntarily put ourselves in such a position?

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Uyless Black is the author of 41 books. He resides with his wife, Holly, and pup Lilli, in Coeur d'Alene.