



NAVIGATING THE 21st CENTURY

America's present course in the world disturbs me greatly. I would like to suggest what I believe the United States' priority should be to come back on course – as a nation and a member of the world community.

We are at a philosophical divide politically today. I believe the issue is whether our role in the world is to further promote the self-centered creation and enrichment of wealthy, individual people, or to help guide the entire earth's people toward economically-dignified, mutually-sustaining livelihood.

Through modern communication, the world is becoming a single global nation. Except for the poorest of us, we each daily know what is going on almost everywhere. Despite our political geographical boundaries, we are increasingly dependent on one another economically.

However, we Americans spend more money on defense, on weapons of mass destruction, and intelligence than the next ten nations of the world combined. That money has bought us neither security nor the world's respect. As the arrogant, upstart youngster of the so called developed world, our most recent prime contribution to world society seems to be the emergence of a class of political leaders with a militantly-stunted sense of humanity.

If Progressives are to exert a meaningful influence on American and world politics, might we not champion the interdependence of the world's ecology and economy, particularly in regard to its struggling poor? Our nation's declarations of freedom and democracy will fall on deaf ears if we do not promote policies that proactively sustain the environment, our own poor and those of the world, and our dwindling economic middle class.

Where we start is simple. We start by becoming economically more frugal than the political right, which under the deceptive guise of smaller government is spending us, our children, and their children into a tenuous future.

Our domestic economy vacillates decade-to-decade between volatility and lethargy. Our foreign aid, which could earn us increased worldwide loyalty, is embarrassingly inadequate to our own diplomatic interests. The earth's assets, over which we wield substantial influence, *could* be shared in service of the entire human family. Such initiatives as the Kyoto Treaty strive to such service while America, the world's greatest polluter, declines to participate with 140 other nations.

Imagine the consequences if we would articulate how environmental and human concerns may collaborate with sound economic strategy? What if we will collaborate with business and labor interests to define and accomplish that? If we will, progressives will reemerge as the dominant political life force of our country, and the world.

Millions of worldwide poor, who philosophically support the terrorists, believe we are an aggressive, militant nation. They need practical reassurance that we are on their side. Millions of them and our domestic poor, if liberated economically, would constitute a massive new market for the world's business. It would truly be a win/win potential.

Progressives talk repeatedly about a new political rhetoric. May I suggest our need is not one of rhetoric. We need to take the high ground. Our task is to articulate what is right. Right does not need rhetoric. Right needs right thinking.

In thirty to fifty years, the United States economy will shift to second or third behind China and India, perhaps behind the European Union. When we have become this second, or third, or fourth rate nation economically, the most commanding political power we can retain will be the high ground of ecological and ethical integrity.

We need to define for Americans, in very practical terms, a new collaboration among human ethics, the environment, and economics. And the ethics should not have to do with the personal morality of individuals, their sexual preferences and such, but with a reinvigorated American people whose progressive leadership offers the world a vision of how the nations may collaboratively contribute to the advancement of the human race on this earth in our time.

Progressive Americans need a vibrant philosophical reorientation. I believe Progressive Americans want a vibrant philosophical reorientation. That, in my opinion, as Progressives, is our job.



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