

OPINIONS

'Enemy' of the United States



Brian Smith
Columnist

Anthrax. Bomb-threats. Protest. When did I become the world's enemy? Sitting on my couch, a beer in my left hand and the television controller in my right, I wonder, why am I so threatening? Why do thousands of people worldwide protest against my lifestyle, my habits and my culture?

I have done nothing wrong. I have no enemies. Why am I so hated?

'Enemy' is a tricky word. If I dislike you, then you are my enemy. If the Atlanta Braves dislike the New York Yankees, then the Yankees might be the enemy.

What if the Yankees don't dislike the Braves? Are they then still enemies? To put this question in current terms: If I don't dislike Muslims, then am I still their enemy?

Perhaps that is the wrong way to look at it. After all, the protestors in Pakistan, Indonesia, Turkey and Malaysia don't even know me.

I am not their enemy, America is their enemy. America has done much to deserve such hatred.

Thomas Jefferson said in his second Inaugural Speech (1805) that "We (Americans) are firmly convinced, and we act on the conviction that with nations, as with individuals, our interests soundly cal-

culated we ever be found inseparable from our moral duties."

In other words, our primary interests, both as an individual and a nation, coincide with our moral duty. Thus, morality is a national interest and vice-versa. However, this, all too often, has not been the case.

Throughout American history moral, or humanitarian goals, have been a thinly drawn veil for broader political and economic goals.

In the early 1900's, former presidents William Taft and Woodrow Wilson intervened in many Latin American countries. The reason given was, more or less, humanitarian; they wished to civilize the poverty-stricken people who lived there.

However, by improving the people's standards of living, the United States also guaranteed foreign markets for domestically produced goods. Thus, help shadows intent; aid often has a purpose.

In 1979, former president Jimmy Carter issued a proclamation that warned any attack on the Persian Gulf region would be an attack on the United States.

This derisive statement was made, not to protect the meager people of the area from Soviet oppression, but to ensure the U.S. an adequate

supply of crude oil.

In the early 1980s, former President Ronald Reagan's "Caribbean Basin Initiative" sought to benefit American business interests in the region.

Given these examples, one might say, so what? After all, any nation, given the opportunity to promote their economic growth, would do exactly the same thing.

What about the many humanitarian/relief programs the U.S. has participated in during the recent years?

The fact is, the U.S. has a poor record when we look at situations where help has little or no political or economic purpose.

American peace-keeping troops were pulled out of Somalia in 1993 after 18 American troops were killed in local violence. The same action occurred in Bosnia in 1995 after regional conflicts left many Americans dead.

What is the image presented abroad by such actions? A man in a foreign country reads about the U.S. pulling out of a starving Somalia, while they continue to protect harsh and restrictive regimes in the Middle East and southeast Asia?

How can he not see the hypocrisy

inherent in such actions?

Our national interest is anything but our moral obligation. It becomes our struggle to remain dominant.

We expound the graces of democracy and capitalism, yet, abroad, we practice anything but this. We tote ourselves as the great moral leader, yet we continue to support China, Singapore and Egypt, despite their human rights violations.

It is these differences between rhetoric and action that have led to the deterioration of the American image abroad. Thus, we see a backlash of anti-American sentiments.

The current bombing of Afghanistan has further exasperated our problem. Unbending in our resolution to bring the terrorists to justice, we have blinded ourselves to the people we are affecting.

So, why am I the enemy? As an American, not only have I refused to help my fellow man, but I have gone so far as to ignore and prolong his pain.

My America has been perverted by politics, polluted by profit. I only hope that those who protest around the globe will realize that I am Brian Smith, and not the United States of America.

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Preparing for hunting season



Craig Lovelace
Columnist

One of my favorite times of year is here again. That's right, hunting season.

Hunting is a fine activity. The whole family can enjoy it, except the in-laws, who get a little tired of being chased around with loaded weapons.

There are two extremes of hunting behavior you'll see this time of year: those who run around in camouflage pickup trucks, shooting everything that moves and a few that don't; and those who stay indoors, away from windows, while trying to do nothing vaguely deerlike.

I'm to the inside of the first extreme... barely.

In order to properly go about the sport, preparation is required. First, you have to get a hunting license.

The licensing process is complex and expensive, which assures that anyone who actually engages in hunting has the means to buy off a jury of his peers, or can get off on insanity should a game warden be ventilated.

You must learn hunting safety, which teaches you how to hold your gun steady while guzzling cheap beer, and how to winch your partner's truck out of the woods after your third 12-pack.

Equipment is also important. By law, you have to wear at least enough blaze orange to be mistaken for a traffic cone. This way, you don't get shot by anyone who isn't reasonably sure you're a human being.

Many hunters like camouflage as well, not because it has any practical application, but because their favorite race driver is sponsored by the manufacturer.

Don't take anything you don't need, no matter how much you're tempted by that blaze orange jock-strap.

Transportation is important as well. By far, the most popular hunting vehicle is the pickup truck, with special hunting package options.

These include a gun rack, where you hang shotguns you've never fired, cup holders for more cheap beer, deck chairs bolted to the bed for quick naps, and oversized mirrors to use as a gun rest when you're too lazy to get out of the truck.

Many hunters opt for the all-terrain vehicle, which is famous for tipping over, rolling 27 times, and bursting into flames. They are even more dangerous once you start the ignition.

A bigger need than any of these, however, is the weapon. Bows are useless in hunting, despite their popularity.

The only purpose they serve is to let us all pretend we're Robin Hood, shooting arrows without sucker-tips into the king's deer, antelope and tax collectors.

The only real weapon to go hunting with is a gun. Not one of those black-powder jobbies either, since they only let you miss scampering animals at a slower rate.

Pistols are nice, but they really only work in certain situations, say, hunting small animals or attending a rap concert.

Logically, at this point, you need a big gun. You can get these from Army-Navy stores, large sporting goods chains, and the shady-looking character down the street (you know, the one who does business

out of the trunk of a '78 Nova).

After being properly equipped, you then have to actually go hunting. This is a direct contrast to your Uncle Reggie, who really got that boar's head at a Salvation Army rummage sale.

The best solution is to go where the animals you want to hunt happen to be. Logically, this is the zoo. It's hard to get away with that unless you're related to a congressman who can have the beasts released retroactively into the wilds of your den.

Finding wild animals is not as difficult as it sounds. The trick is not to look for them; that's when they show up. If this won't work, try to find a source of nourishment or shelter, like an elk food court.

Rabbits like briar patches down south, and foxes can be found under grape trees, of course (who said the Disney Channel wasn't informative).

I find deer quite easily, since there's a salt lick right beside my birdbath, within easy 44 Magnum shot from the bedroom window.

If all else fails, try luring the animal with the prospect of mating. All lower animals are enticed by the prospect of a little tail, especially those that hang around in hotel lounges wearing gold chains.

There are a number of good com-

mercial decoys available, and they're at least as life-like as Wayne Newton.

You can add any number of accessories that make the decoy more attractive, such as ultraviolet paint, pheromones, pancake makeup and fishnets. Don't go for the garter belts, though, since that's just wrong.

Hunting is not an easy sport, so you can start with easy targets, like the neighbor's dog that keeps crapping in your yard. It's not an easy climb to hunting prominence, but it's worth it.

Great Hunters (trademark owned by a group of mysterious foreign investors) are fine outdoorsmen, who relish the thrill of the chase, maintain safety, drink enough beer to float a battleship, and wear long underwear. They also eat what they shoot, so remember, lost redneck is very gamey.

Hopefully, you're now inspired to sit out in the woods at 6 a.m., fingers frozen to a Chinese surplus rifle, wondering why you didn't bring that bag of sunflower seeds.

Maybe you'll even go out and shoot your own turkey this holiday season. It'll be worth it to see the faces of everyone else in the supermarket, anyway.

Not to mention, you might finally bag that wascally wabbit, and the squirrels will search for easier prey.

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