

## Americans: Good posture makes good neighbors

Democrats, Republicans, liberals, conservatives: Americans all. While our political affiliations may differ, our basic goals, were we to define them, are remarkably alike. High on everyone's list is peace on earth.

Given our natural and technological resources, reason suggests the goal of peace is attainable. Yet, on every hand, peace appears to be slipping from our grip. Peace with Russia? in question; peace in the Middle East? a mirage; peace in Central America? hanging by a fraying, often-snapping thread; peace in Asia? hiding behind inscrutable smiles.

Peace exists between neighbors within our national borders; why not beyond them? Examine our postures. Among neighbors we flourish no weapons and make no threats. While we may keep arms, we do not carry them as we meet one another at our property lines.

Nor do we measure a neighbor's arsenal against our own in anticipation of either of us assuming a defensive or offensive position. Our assumption that friendly relations exist eliminates need for shows of force.

To whom may we turn should trouble loom? To neighbors, of course. And to whom are hands extended if needs arise? To neighbors, quite naturally. In the people-next-door we take comfort, place confidence and trust; among them we feel secure. Do neighbors rattle sabers? Feud? Not as a rule.

Upon the shrinking surface of our planet, neighborliness among nations grows more rare. Within memory, Canadians were viewed by us as almost blood brothers. Today antipathies exist. Nearly a century-and-a-half has passed since shots were fired in anger between armies of the United States and Mexico. Now whisperings hint our southern neighbor could be our adversary were the Domino Theory of Communism to spread in Latin America.

What are our goals? Peace? Can peace be maintained when we take umbrage with a neighbor who complains we dump trash upon his property? Can peace prevail when teeming

millions of our neighbor's children starve in abject poverty while our spoiled brats wallow in comparative wealth?

If continued peace with our neighbors is an aim, our responsibility, clearly, is to clean up our act. (For our own good, as well as the Canadians', eliminating acid rain is as important as ceasing to defile our lovely land, and as vital as cleaning up other cesspools of pollution we allow to fester here at home.)

And, if future peace with our neighbors means sharing some of our own bounty with people who suffer deprivation, sharing should not be too high a price; the price of war is far higher. The costs of preparation for war, over the next three plus years, is now pegged at more than one-and-one-half trillion dollars. That expense, before a single gun is fired, we are expected to pay without question.

Were such an expenditure made with a view to creating viable markets among our Latin American neighbors, to building productive industries where millions of people might find employment in those countries, and to generating solid trade between our country and theirs, the problem of illegal immigration across our southern border would solve itself, opening new markets for industrial products would rejuvenate our own economy, and political threats of Communism in Latin America would fade to ghostly shadows.

International neighborliness, like residential community neighborliness, thrives in an atmosphere of mutual respect and caring for the rights of others as well as for our own.

If your posture in dealing with the man-next-door is warlike, that man will be on the offensive, will be keeping up his guard, and will be watchful to ensure we do not overstep the boundaries. If our posture is open, helpful, concerned, and caring, friendship flourishes and grows.

Peace on earth prevails.

— Andrea Leonard