

# Re-Thinking –National Security“ oan Essay in 3 Parts

I wrote this essay by combining and editing three documents I had previously written:

- I. Some fresh thinking about “national security” for a previous speaking engagement
- II. My article titled, “A Peaceful and Just Foreign Policy Would Make Us Much More Safe”
- III. My “True Security” document and table.

## Introduction to this essay:

Politicians keep promising to increase our “national security.”

Their glib rhetoric is really just a euphemism for a bigger military and more military weapons.

But the “national security” slogan is simplistic, limited, and deceptive.

It totally overlooks what our nation needs in order to be truly secure.

This essay helps people re-think what “national security” should mean. It makes three main points.

- I. Our traditional assumptions about “national security” are simplistic, unethical, and have failed us.
- II. Actually, “A peaceful and just foreign policy would make our nation much more safe and secure.
- III. My concept of “TRUE Security” would make our nation and the whole world more secure.

**I. Our traditional assumptions about “national security” are not only unethical, but are so simplistic and misguided that they have failed us. Therefore, we must re-think “national security” in fresh ways.**

## A. What has –national security“ traditionally meant for the U.S.?

The “national security” slogan is so simplistic that it actually interferes with smart thinking. Therefore, it also prevents us from devising public policies that would be ethical and truly effective.

Instead of mere “national security,” I support a peaceful and just foreign policy that goes beyond narrow nationalism.

Security is NOT a “zero-sum” game in which one nation makes itself secure by making other nations insecure. No nation can make itself TRULY secure without ALSO supporting the TRUE security of all other nations. We can achieve TRUE security ONLY IF we treat all other nations fairly and help ALL nations feel truly secure.

Instead of assuming or pretending that a huge military makes us secure, we must understand the concept of “security” in a much broader way. **All** of the world’s nations need **all kinds** of security – including equal human rights for all kinds of people (all races, religions, etc.), **and** fairness in **all** nations’ economies, **and** sustainable ecosystems and climates, and so forth.

A nation can be secure **only if** it recognizes that here on Planet Earth “we are all in this together” – and that **our** security and well-being depend on **all other nations’** security and well-being.

For many, many decades the U.S. has utterly failed to recognize this humane and sensible reality. The U.S.'s foreign policy has relied on using our military to serve American geopolitical interests and American business interests in other parts of the world. Our foreign policy has relied on threatening military violence, conducting wars, overthrowing governments – including a number of democracies that the U.S. government and business elites did not like – and acting in other ways that have caused horrible suffering and deaths in other nations. The U.S.'s wars also have hurt American people too.

**As I said, traditionally the U.S. has thought of “national security” as a “zero-sum” game in which we increase our own security by making other nations less secure. That has caused global turmoil and instability. The U.S.’s selfish approach has actually turned many nations – and sub-groups within nations – into enemies and terrorists, so our traditional foreign policy has actually weakened our security!**

In order to be more secure, we should help other nations become more secure by respecting their sovereignty and by respecting their health, their human rights, their economic justice, their environments, and so forth. We must become friends with all nations’ **ordinary people** – not just their political elites, their military elites, and their business elites. If we would become friends with other nations’ ordinary people, they would not want to hurt us.

**The “national security” slogan has traditionally been defined by the military-industrial complex for their own self-serving benefit.** They wrongly assume that more weapons and more military interventions make us more secure. Actually, they make us LESS secure. But weapons manufacturers have enormous amounts of wealth, and they donate very generously to political candidates of both political parties, and they spend huge amounts of money lobbying Congress, the White House, and federal agencies.

As a result, the military has been taking more and more of our tax dollars – currently MORE THAN HALF of the discretionary budget that Congress has the power to spend. This has short-changed all other kinds of spending – the things that **ordinary** Americans need for **our own security** – Americans’ health, food, housing, education, jobs, relief from poverty, environmental protection, and so forth.

**On April 16, 1953, President Dwight D. Eisenhower said:** “Every gun that is made, every warship launched,

every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children. This is not a way of life at all in any true sense. Under the cloud of threatening war, it is humanity hanging from a cross of iron.”

**In any case, the Pentagon and our nuclear weapons cannot protect us from the worst dangers recently and now:**

- **On September 11, 2001, a few men with box cutters hijacked airplanes** and crashed into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon (the very headquarters of the U.S.’s gigantic military). No amount of militarism – nor our thousands of nuclear weapons – stopped them.
- **The climate crisis threatens the lives and well-being of everybody on earth.** Military weapons cannot protect us from the climate crisis. Military spending wastes money that we need for solving the climate crisis. Ironically, the U.S. military pollutes the atmosphere with more greenhouse gases than any other entity on earth. Our military is a major cause of the climate crisis.
- **The Coronavirus pandemic is killing many people, especially in the U.S., which has the VERY WORST rate of infections in the entire world!** The U.S. has the biggest military in the world, but our troops and weapons did not protect us from this pandemic or future pandemics.

**Furthermore, our nation is NOT “secure” when:**

- Half a million Americans are homeless
- Tens of millions of Americans have no health care
- Republicans have been eliminating environmental protections and deliberately making our air and water more dangerous and deliberately allowing big businesses to pollute our nation with cancer-causing chemicals
- The Republican-dominated Senate has been cutting the funding for anti-poverty programs, causing more people to be hungry, sick and homeless

## B. Wars do not solve problems.

Politicians and mainstream news media talk about “the use of force,” but that is a very dishonest euphemism for “violence” or “war.”

I think of “the use of force” when I really need to apply muscle to open a pickle jar. That’s very different from bombing innocent civilians in other countries. The government is deliberately trying to deceive us when they advocate “the use of force.” That’s not honest.

We must replace violence with **honest diplomacy, cooperation and collaborative problem-solving.**

If your only tool is a hammer, you will treat every problem as if it is a nail. For many decades the U.S. has relied so much on militarism that we have neglected honest diplomacy and nonviolent ways of solving international problems.

War has a terrible track record. Besides being violent and cruel, it is NOT practical! In every war, one nation – and often both nations – end up losing. Instead of militarism, we need diplomacy that can solve problems without violence – and possibly create “win-win” solutions.

Very often a nation that lost a war armed itself again and started a war for revenge. Examples:

1. The nations that won World War I (France, England, the U.S., etc.) imposed the extremely harsh and humiliating Treaty of Versailles upon Germany. Germans reacted with anger and nationalistic pride that elevated Hitler to run their nation and seek revenge by conquering other European nations and starting World War II.
2. 150 years ago the U.S. army decisively defeated the Confederate army in our nation’s Civil War, but the Civil War did not end racism. Instead, it angered the racists who are still flying the Confederate battle flag now, 150 years after they lost the Civil War.

When the U.S. bombs or uses drone violence against wedding parties, neighborhoods or towns, the U.S. is antagonizing people and provoking them to become enemies of the U.S.

Just like powerful people in the U.S. wanted violent revenge after 9-11-2001, so the U.S. attacks against other people provoke them into wanting violent revenge against the U.S.

Trump thought his very harsh, militaristic actions against Iran would force them to cave in, but he only strengthened their hard-liners. Trump repeatedly threatened horribly violent war against Iran. The “Iran nuclear deal” (JCPOA) was working well, but Trump pulled the U.S. out of it. Iran responded by enriching uranium in order to poke a finger in Trump’s eye. Trump assassinated Iran’s top military general. (How would the U.S. like it if another nation assassinated the Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff?) Trump’s actions threatened Iran’s national security, so – instead of caving in to Trump’s violence – Iran’s voters elected hard-liners who strongly oppose the U.S. Trump also angered the rest of the world, which wants peaceful relations with Iran.

**War does NOT solve problems!** Americans – and our government – need to appreciate and use diplomacy and other nonviolent ways of solving problems. In conflict situations, nonviolence actually has been proven to work better than efforts that include violence. If you want more information about this, contact me. I can provide things to read about nonviolence, and I conduct free online workshops.

We need to learn about nonviolent ways to accomplish various kinds of goals (foreign or domestic). Contact me if you’d like to learn about how a nonviolent national defense would actually be practical and workable – and save enough money to fund the things our nation really needs, such as health, education, housing, ending poverty, and protecting our environment and climate.

Beyond the budget trade-offs, in 1976-1977 I researched how military spending hurts the economy’s functioning AS AN ECONOMY. I researched the potential to convert our economy – especially the economy of Washington State – away from military bases and building military weapons – to actually meet human needs and create better, more sustainable jobs and better local communities. The problems are worse now than they were nearly a half century ago.

## C. Instead, we need a truly peaceful foreign policy and we need to practice nonviolence throughout American society.

Our nation needs to seriously re-think the assumptions about the U.S.’s role in the world – what it has been and what it should be. Our nation needs to understand that militarism does NOT work and that we should engage with

the rest of the world cooperatively for the well-being of ALL people worldwide, instead of for selfish nationalistic interests of the U.S. military, government and business interests.

We need to inspire and empower ordinary Americans to practice democracy by actively informing themselves and actively shaping U.S. foreign policy through the peace movements and the many excellent non-profit organizations that help people and environments around the world. Presidents and Congress members will NOT lead the way. We must organize from the grassroots up, so either they will bend to our will or we will vote them out and elect better “leaders.”

Howard Zinn wrote, “War is manufactured by political leaders, who then must make a tremendous effort—by enticement, by propaganda, by coercion—to mobilize a normally reluctant population to go to war.” We must organize people to build grassroots peace movements, including:

- Organizing “Citizen Diplomacy” with person-to-person solidarity and connections with ordinary people in other nations).
- Bringing together organizations and constituencies that would benefit from cutting the military budget in order to fund human and environmental needs
- Teaching people about the rest of the world how International Humanitarian Law and various international bodies serve peace and justice
- Promoting honest diplomacy instead of militaristic threats. People need to learn how to mediate disputes. Take local training, such as the 40-hour training offered by the Dispute Resolution Center of Thurston County, (360) 956-1155,

[www.mediatethurston.org](http://www.mediatethurston.org). We can apply those principles and methods in our daily lives interpersonally, locally, nationwide and worldwide.

Let’s recognize the relationship between what the U.S. does abroad and how it replicates those behaviors within our nation:

- We train U.S. military troops to occupy foreign nations (often with people whose skins are darker than ours) and use violence to suppress those occupied people. Then the troops leave military service and are hired by local police departments who deploy them to occupy U.S. cities (often with darker-skinned people) and use violence to suppress those people.
- The U.S. military provides many kinds of violent military equipment to local police departments.
- The U.S. experiments with various kinds of oppressive policies in other countries and then applies them here at home.
- The U.S. has been doing cruel and violent things to other countries. Then the U.S. does those to us at home.

I invite you to see much information at various parts of my blog, [www.parallaxperspectives.org](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org), including the categories for “Peace,” “International Affairs,” “Nuclear Weapons,” “Terrorism,” “Military Spending,” and “Nonviolence.”

## **II. A peaceful and just foreign policy would make our nation much more safe and secure.**

### **A. A peaceful and just foreign policy would make us much more safe and secure:**

A worldview based on nationalism – and empire – has persisted for thousands of years in many parts of the world. This worldview assumes **competitive, violent** nationalism – and empire – and it has been underlying our foreign policy for more than a century. **It is thoroughly embedded in both of our big political parties.**

Instead of accepting the status quo as “just the way things are,” we must challenge the status quo and actually work to solve the long-standing problems. Many sensible, humane people around the world want peace, human rights, and fairness. I am one of them – and I hope you are too.

If we were to ask the public whether they want peace, nearly everyone would say yes. But violence and war have

become so “normalized” that many people think war is the way to achieve peace. Indeed, the U.S. Air Force’s motto – proclaimed at the entrance to its academy in Colorado Springs – proclaims “Peace Is Our Profession.” This is the same Air Force that bombed Vietnam, Iraq and other nations into smithereens – and is always ready at a moment’s notice to drop atomic bombs that would destroy life on earth.

I truly believe that deep down, most Americans actually would prefer values that are humane, compassionate, peaceful, fair to everyone, and environmentally sustainable.

**I like what the World Social Forum has affirmed: “Another world is possible!”**

Yes, we can imagine a better world and work with other people to organize to bring it into being.

## B. Six dominant assumptions and much better alternatives:

Now I will list six dominant assumptions.

Then I will propose that we replace them with their OPPOSITES to become our new public policies:

- #1. Polarizing into “us” vs. “them” and fearing “them” does not work. It leads to injustice and war. Instead, we must recognize that ALL people are ONE human family, and that our safety – and everyone’s safety – depends on helping ALL people feel safe.
- #2. The U.S. is NOT entitled to dominate or bully other nations. Actually, NO nation should dominate or bully any other nation. We would be more secure if we promoted compassion, fairness and cooperation among ALL nations.
- #3. Violence does NOT solve problems. Violence only makes problems worse. And war is suicidal.
- #4. Everything is interconnected, so when the U.S. treats other nations badly, that bad karma returns in what – for decades – the CIA has called “blowback.” The U.S.’s mistreatment of other nations causes people to flee those nations as refugees and de-stabilize other nations. Also, the U.S.’s bad behavior in other nations causes people to feel anger at the U.S. and provoke terrorist violence.
- #5. Instead of assuming “zero-sum” games with winners and losers, let’s recognize that we’re all in this together. Let’s plan how to nonviolently achieve “win-win” solutions.
- #6. Let’s replace the U.S.’s selfish, ineffective “national security” model with the egalitarian, compassionate “TRUE security” model that I will flesh out in Part III of this essay.

## C. Let’s flesh out the opposite alternatives to these six assumptions:

**C.#1. Polarizing into “us” vs. “them,” and fearing “them” does not work. Instead, we must recognize that ALL people are ONE human family, and that our safety and everyone’s safety depends on helping ALL people feel safe.**

For a long time – and in many ways – we have been polarized into thinking in terms of “us” vs. “them.” Nationalists polarize us by nationality, just like domestic oppressors polarize us by race, religion, sexual orientation, and other factors. Oppressors use this “divide-and-conquer” strategy in order to keep oppressed people – including ordinary people from all nations – from joining together into a large powerful majority to nonviolently protect ourselves

from the oppressive elites. This is true both within nations and at the international scale.

Instead, let’s reject all polarization into “us” vs. “them.” Let’s affirm that ALL people are ONE human family – both within nations and across nations. Let’s affirm that we are ALL in this TOGETHER. Then we can move toward a peaceful world instead of endless wars.

**C.#2. The U.S. is NOT entitled to dominate or bully other nations. Actually, NO nation should dominate or bully any other nation. We would be more secure if we promoted compassion, fairness and cooperation among ALL nations.**

Some men think that their maleness entitles them to dominate women. Some white people think their whiteness entitles them to dominate people of color. Likewise, the concept of “American exceptionalism” is similar.

A longstanding problem within the U.S. is our mistaken notion that our nation is “the beacon of liberty” – that the U.S. is so righteous and so blessed by God that we are **entitled** to dominate the world. This notion of “American exceptionalism” causes many Americans and our government to think that the U.S. is exempt from international law and other realities. Some people even

think we’re exempt from the laws of science and the climate crisis.

Nationalism and “American exceptionalism” allow powerful Americans to feel entitled to exploit other nations and rip off their natural resources. Instead, let’s recognize that other nations’ **ordinary people** – not their elites or the U.S.’s elites – have the right to determine what to do with their respective nations’ natural resources.

Our militaristic foreign policy has “normalized” war and other kinds of violence and injustice – both in how we treat

other nations and ALSO in how police function within the U.S. – as if poor and minority communities were enemy countries and police were troops deployed as an occupying army with a license to kill.

Defining “victory” in militaristic terms is cruel, stupid and counter-productive. The U.S. government kept saying that Vietnam’s “body counts” showed we were winning the Vietnam War – but actually the U.S. lost the war. The Pentagon Papers exposed how the Vietnam War was based on lies. Lies drive our foreign policy, our nuclear weapons policies, and other abuses – regardless of which party is running the government.

During the Vietnam War, U.S. Senator William Fulbright denounced what he called “the arrogance of power.” The specific context was the Vietnam War, which he strongly opposed. The U.S.’s “arrogance of power” persists throughout our international business dealings as well as throughout our foreign policy and the U.S.’s perpetual willingness to use nuclear weapons that could easily escalate into destroying most life on Planet Earth.

Let’s reject the cynical, militaristic assumption that “might makes right.” Instead, let’s support honest, profound ethics and replace militarism with an egalitarian worldview that seeks every person’s well-being.

### **C.#3. Violence does NOT solve problems. Violence only makes problems worse.**

Many movies (Westerns, crime movies, spy movies, etc.) end with a big shoot-out or explosion or other violence at the end. In these fictional movies, this violence is what solves the problem. This is called “the myth of redemptive violence.”

“The myth of redemptive violence” is the wishful thinking that underlies our militaristic foreign policy. Just like fictional movies, we pretend that violence will solve our problems. Mainstream public opinion – and both big political parties – believe that fictional myth and base our foreign policy on it. But real life is NOT like the movies.

We waste hundreds of billions of dollars on endless, unwinnable wars that only make problems worse, because of the widespread and mistaken assumption that violence solves problems. Violence only makes problems worse.

Let’s help people understand that the real problem is **violence itself!** Let’s create a foreign policy that affirms truth, fairness and peace! Let’s commit to **nonviolent** ways of solving problems – at both international and domestic levels.

### **C.#4. Everything is interconnected, so when the U.S. treats other nations badly, that bad karma returns in what for decades the CIA has called –blowback.“ The U.S.’s mistreatment of other nations causes people to flee those nations as refugees and destabilize other nations. Also, the U.S.’s bad behavior in other nations causes people to feel anger at the U.S. and provoke terrorist violence.**

When we study the environment, we learn that everything is interconnected. No animal or plant or body of water can pretend that it is isolated from other parts of its ecosystem. Neither can we practice “isolationism” from other nations. We must **interact with them based on fairness and honest diplomacy** instead of exploitation and war. Whatever we do to other nations produces feedback loops. When we treat other nations unfairly, we provoke feedback loops that hurt the U.S.

Some religious traditions refer to *karma* –whatever we do comes back to us. So, for example, more than half a century ago the Pentagon and CIA recognized that people elsewhere would retaliate against the U.S. because of bad things our nation has done to them. The CIA calls it “blowback,” which includes terrorism. That’s bad karma.

The U.S.’s greed, exploitation, and other sins against the earth’s environment also come back to hurt us in the form of the climate crisis, and refugees fleeing environmental devastation. The U.S. keeps supporting dictators and cruel governments in other nations, so their oppressed people flee as refugees, but the U.S. fails to accept those people who are seeking asylum here.

We must stop grabbing more than our fair share of the world’s natural resources. We must stop using threats and violence against other nations. We must stop allowing big businesses to mistreat other nations’ people and environments. If the U.S. would start behaving ethically, responsibly, and nonviolently, we would create friends instead of enemies. We’d be able to solve global problems through sincere diplomacy, mediation and other nonviolent methods.

**C.#5. I Instead of assuming –zero-sum“ games with winners and losers, let’s recognize that we’re all in this together. Let’s plan how to nonviolently achieve –win-win“ solutions.**

The assumption that underlies U.S. foreign policy is that the U.S. is GOOD and the nations we disagree with are EVIL. Therefore, WE feel justified in using violence but THEY are not allowed to defend themselves from our attacks.

When people – or groups – or nations – are in conflict, EACH side sees the conflict in absolute terms and does not understand the other side’s perception of reality – or what the other side needs. Each new act of violence by either side only reinforces the other side’s fear and anger. Then it feels self-righteous in using violence to start or retaliate in a cycle that will certainly end badly. In this cycle of violence, each side justifies its own violence – while at the same time it denounces the other side’s use of violence.

Many of our nation’s political, economic and social problems were caused by a shortage of empathy – a failure to recognize our common humanity and the legitimate needs of people other than ourselves. We need to replace

selfishness and oppression with a humble appreciation for every person’s inherent value, dignity and rights. We can solve conflicts through empathic listening, objective criteria and even-handed justice.

Some people think that the people who want peace are naive. But for thousands of years wars have only led to more wars. World War I was promoted as “The War to End All Wars.” Has it produced peace in the 100 years after 1918?

Also, a century and a half ago the Union decisively won the Civil War, but racism persisted, and many Americans still fly the Confederate flag – the battle flag of the people who made war against the United States in order to preserve slavery and racism. War does NOT solve problems!

Therefore, the people who ACTUALLY are naive and unrealistic are those who think that military violence will solve problems.

**C.#6. Let’s replace the selfish, ineffective –national security“ model with the egalitarian, compassionate –TRUE security“ model that I will flesh out in Part III of this essay.**

The U.S.’s militaristic foreign policy does three bad things that I have said already:

- #1. It turns world opinion against the U.S.
- #2. It takes money away from spending on solutions that would really make us more secure: ending poverty and desperation, protecting the environment, developing “green” energy, etc.
- #3. It misleads the public into thinking that violence solves problems, when actually militarism makes problems worse, and the real solutions are nonviolent ones.

Instead of military violence we need to promote fairness and peace worldwide. A commitment to fairness and peace would provide REAL “national security” – both for the U.S. and for other nations too. In Part III I will propose a radical alternative to “national security” that would provide “**TRUE security**,” which would be more profound and more truly secure for **all** of us.

Nationalism and militarism are false idols. The 1980s mantra to “look out for #1” and Trump’s “America First” doctrine are selfish – and therefore are actually counter-productive. Wise people know everything is interconnected. Whatever we do will cycle back to us. Behavior that is greedy, domineering and cruel will end up hurting us. But

if we act with wisdom, compassion and fairness, everyone will end up better off.

Many politicians want us to fear other races and other religions. Instead, let’s recognize that all people really are one human family, and we really all do share one earth.

NOBODY can be secure until EVERYBODY is secure. Let’s focus on “**TRUE security**” instead of selfish one-sided “national security.”

We would be more secure with LESS militarism! We’d be more secure by pursuing “the common good” globally and a nonviolent foreign policy. In order to achieve TRUE security the U.S. should stop threatening, mistreating and dominating other countries. Instead, the U.S. should work with other countries fairly and cooperatively.

Instead of assuming that “national security” is a zero-sum game in which we compete with others, let’s instead help all nations enjoy friendly relationships, self-determination, human rights and sustainability.

Instead of military violence, let’s practice creative nonviolence worldwide.

Let’s replace fear and animosity with love and compassion. Let’s replace raw power with profound justice and peace.

## D. Conclusion to this essay's Part II:

The whole world is afraid of violence, but – ironically – it is militarism itself that actually causes much of the world's violence! **Actually, militarism itself is a root cause of people's fears and lack of security!**

We cannot achieve security by making other nations insecure. A good first step is to recognize our common humanity and refuse to let people make you afraid of “the other” (other nations, religions, sexual orientations, etc.). We must promote love, compassion, nonviolence, human rights and egalitarianism.

The U.S.'s militarism is deeply bi-partisan, so merely replacing Republicans with Democrats – or vice versa – will not solve the underlying problem. Instead, let's take positive steps toward peace. Smart steps include:

- Close **all** of the U.S.'s 800 military bases that are installed in 80 other nations.
- Support the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. By early January 2021, 53 nations have ratified it, so it will go into effect as International Law on January 22, 2021.
- Teach nonviolent conflict resolution in all schools from the K-12 level on up through college, and in adult education courses.

- Let's reduce the military budget to a tiny fraction of what it is now – and use the financial savings to help people become even more secure by ending poverty, providing everyone with education, safe drinking water, good health care, a sustainable environment, and a safe climate. De-militarizing would help **EVERYONE** be safe and secure.
- Let's replace cynicism and despair with empowerment and hope! Read what I wrote about this and posted to my blog: <http://parallaxperspectives.org/we-can-replace-cynicism-and-despair-with-empowerment-and-hope>
- Develop your knowledge and skills and tools for non-violent grassroots organizing for peace and other important issues. From time to time I offer a series of six workshops on “Nonviolent Grassroots Organizing” that will strengthen your ability to organize non-violent grassroots movements for social and political change. Contact me at (360) 491-9093 or [glenanderson@integra.net](mailto:glenanderson@integra.net)
- See relevant parts of my blog [www.parallaxperspectives.org](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org), such as the categories for “Peace” and “Nonviolence.”

## III. The “national security” concept is simplistic and narrow. Let's replace it with ethical and practical “TRUE security”!

## –National Security“? Why Not TRUE Security?

*Glen Anderson wrote this soon after the attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001 and edited it slightly since then.*

TRUE security cannot be won by weapons. Actually, security is rooted in social and economic justice, civil liberties, a vibrant democracy, a healthy environment, and humane values.

The American people are afraid of terrorists.

But Americans also have deep, troubling – and legitimate – fears about the crumbling economy, the loss of civil liberties, the deteriorating environment, and the future our kids and grandkids will inherit.

The U.S.'s violent foreign policy had existed for many decades before the September 11 attacks that gave George W. Bush and Dick Cheney the excuse to escalate our foreign policy's abuses into other parts of the world. Obama and Trump continued the Bush-Cheney policies – and in some

ways escalated them. The so-called “war on terrorism” **fails to address the underlying causes** of terrorism. Instead, since 2001 the federal government and politicians have been exploiting the September 11 attacks in order to frighten the American people into supporting more militarism, giving up our constitutional rights, and letting the government claim dictatorial powers – all in the guise of “protecting” us. Militaristic and repressive reactions only turn more people worldwide into enemies and escalate the cycle of violence.

When the public opposed attacking Iraq without actual evidence, George W. Bush and his appointees blatantly and knowingly lied to us about evidence in order to frighten people into supporting his totally unnecessary war.

**For many decades – and regardless of which of the two big political parties is running the government – the**



**consistent pattern has been to escalate and manipulate the American people's fears in order to increase the government's own power and to serve big business and the US's global empire.**

But ironically, that very power grab – the militarism and the centralization of power – are actually among the **root causes** of people's real fears in the first place!

**On the other hand, the public really does have valid reasons for fearing the loss of our economic security, our health security, our environmental security, our civic and voting security, and other kinds of security that we rely upon.** Since the 1970s a variety of federal laws and policies have been pushing most Americans downward, endangering our pension plans and our health care, worsening our quality of life, degrading our food supply, ruining our environment, restricting the media, corrupting our political processes, and so forth.

This is not a partisan rant about any particular administration, but rather a hard look at changes that have been accumulating since the 1970s. For example, after the George W. Bush/Dick Cheney war against Iraq, President Bill Clinton maintained the brutal and deadly Iraq economic sanctions, illegally called large parts of Iraq “no fly zones” and bombed them repeatedly, bombed several other countries illegally, dismantled the welfare safety net, vastly expanded the death penalty and reduced defendants' appeal rights, promoted horribly undemocratic “free trade” agreements, etc.

In any debate, whoever frames the terms of the debate has a tremendous advantage. If “security” means more guns and more spying on innocent Americans, then Bush provided security, so anyone who disagreed with him was defined as a threat to public security because – as Bush said – “you're either with us or against us.”

**However, if thoughtful people can help Americans understand what would REALLY would make us “secure,” then we can re-define TRUE security, promote progressive alternatives, take the moral and political high ground, and win the public over to our side!**

People want security, but we can't gain TRUE security through wars and sacrificing our civil liberties. TRUE security must be based on peace, social and economic justice, a sustainable environment, a vibrant democracy, civil liberties for everyone, and many other progressive values.

Let's help the American people see that the familiar policies of militarism, dominance and greed are a sham being foisted upon us. Let's empower the American people to reject that false notion of security and affirm the deeper, more profound kind of TRUE security. Let's collaborate with a wide range of allies in a strong movement so the

American people can choose a peaceful, just and sustainable future.

Progressive movements for peace, social justice, economic justice, healthy environments, etc., offer positive alternatives that can actually solve a variety of big problems. We progressives can relieve people's fears and increase their TRUE security.

Sometimes our movements debate whether to work on a wide range of progressive issues versus focus our energies on a specific issue (e.g., Iraq). If we reframe the unifying issue in the overall context of providing TRUE security, we can connect at this more profound level, so all progressives become allies rather than competitors. **A multi-faceted campaign for TRUE security can unite and support all peace and progressive movements!**

**It can also unite the broad American public** across many social and political categories (age, religion, race, class, occupation, political spectrum, etc.) into an electoral majority. Current policies threaten everyone's security, but progressive alternatives offer TRUE security for the American people.

We can organize nonviolent grassroots movement from the bottom up to help us gain **many kinds of security**, including (but not limited to):

- **Economic security:** Job security, living wages, job safety, cures for poverty, help during hard times, protection from dangerous working conditions, secure retirement income, etc.
- **Food security:** Safe and nutritious food for everybody, so we can end hunger and support small local farmers and local retailers.
- **Health security:** Access to high quality, affordable health care for everybody in our nation, respectful treatment, focus on preventing diseases, strong public health services, etc.
- **Environmental security:** Sustainable ecosystems, enough clean water, clean air, healthy forests, land use planning for sustainability, protecting all people and environments from toxics, protecting us all from climate disruptions, etc.
- **Personal security:** Thoughtful and sensitive policies and services regarding child abuse, domestic violence, gender issues, human dignity for every kind of person, safety from substance abuse, etc.
- **Community & cultural security:** Respect for all cultures and languages, freedom to practice any religion or no religion, protections from big businesses' power, accountability when big businesses abuse us, removing the underlying causes of crime, comfort in walking anywhere at any time, ways to heal and reconcile when someone hurts another person, etc.

- **Political security:** Freedom from governmental oppression or abuse, support for civil rights and civil liberties, meaningful opportunities for all people to participate in democratic political processes, etc.

**On the next page you can see a table illustrating “TRUE Security” at the global level.**

One column in this table lists the **typical American way to achieve “national security.”** The next column shows a **better way to achieve “TRUE security.”** This alternative would benefit the American people along with the rest of the world.

I invite each reader to incorporate this kind of strategy when you work on the issues you care about. How can you reach out to the public with this welcoming and supportive approach to build a better world?

I also invite your feedback. Please feel free to contact me at (360) 491-9093 or [glenanderson@integra.net](mailto:glenanderson@integra.net)

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	Typical American Way to Achieve National Security	Better Way to Achieve TRUE Security
<b>Vision:</b>	U.S. dominates all other countries.	U.S. cooperates fairly with all other countries.
<b>Axis of Evil:</b>	Iraq, Iran, North Korea	Martin Luther King never called <b>people</b> evil, but he identified 3 evil <b>systems</b> : Racism, Militarism, Poverty
<b>Goals:</b>	National security against other nations	Global security and equitable relationships among all nations
	Political, military, economic, cultural dominance	Self-determination Economic well-being for all Respect for other cultures and religions
<b>Methods:</b>	Military action, arms sales, covert operations, selective diplomacy	Sincere diplomacy Nonviolent direct action at international level ( <i>e.g.</i> , nonviolent peace force)
	Unilateral action	Multilateral resolution of conflicts
	Coalitions that the US controls and others must endorse	Support the UN, international law, treaties
	Development initiatives linked to “good” governments	A new Marshall Plan to end global poverty
	Economic practices that support US interests	Unconditional commitment to the poor
	Volunteerism and acts of charity to help the poor without changing structural inequities	Short-term: Generous actions with no selfish motives Long-term: Structural changes for justice
	Minimum wage	Living wage. Guaranteed minimum income
<b>Motivation:</b>	Hatred	Love, compassion
	Fear	Faith
	Power	Justice
	Self-centered (Greek word <i>porneia</i> : people as objects)	Other-centered for the other’s sake (Greek word <i>agape</i> )
<b>Result:</b>	Global chaos	Global community

**More information about de-militarizing U.S. foreign policy and promoting True Security:**

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