

Future of our Enemies

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Lately the news has been filled with dire reports about the strength of China as an adversary and the always looming threat of Russia. It is certainly true that both are active with hostile moves today. Both are dictatorships and both are engaged in efforts to damage the liberal democracies, the US, western Europe, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and the illiberal democracies (Hungary, Latin America, Africa).

One bit of good news: one illiberal democracy, Poland, recently had an election that replaced the radical right parliament with liberal democrats.

How powerful are these adversaries over the long term? Let's start with China.

Demographics:

China's population is crashing because of their one child policy. What makes it worse is that in choosing one child, the Chinese prefer boys, which worsens their male/female percentages and also raises median age. The working population is shrinking and there is no one to care for the growing geriatrics population.

Authoritarians are always hostile to the world's modern trends: equality for women, equality for gender differences, openness to new ideas. Educated Chinese women are leaving when they can.

Environmental Problems:

China's main rivers, the Yangtze, Yellow, and Mekong get their water from the Tibetan glaciers, which are melting faster than any others. Those rivers are not reaching the Pacific in the deltas that they used to. In addition, they are exceedingly contaminated with industrial waste.

The Himalayan glaciers are in meltdown also, creating floods in India and South Asia, along with eventual river loss. This can cause political trouble between these countries and China. Also, Chinese farmers are moving into Siberia where there is still water. This will cause conflict between Russia and China. Russia will lose.

Political Problems and Instability:

The growing Middle Class in China, an element of Chinese success, is becoming tired of their Communist dictatorship. They resent having no input into how they are governed, and when mistakes are made that affect their lives, people now grumble. Soon it will be more than grumbling.

Cabinet members are being removed and jailed.

Russia:

Russia, now a virtual dictatorship of Putin, has been in a death run for some time now. They suffer population crash, not by government edict, but because women don't want to give birth to more than one child.

They have nothing but hydro-chemicals to sell, and the world is moving toward other energy sources to fight global warming. Russia's central Asian plateau is facing increasing temperatures and desertification.

The largest countries in trouble are all autocracies or illiberal democracies (people vote in rigged elections) and all of them, Russia, China, India, Pakistan, are nuclear powers. This is a powder keg.

We in the west are awake to Chinese challenges, and we must also consider their bleak futures.

Our own Problems

We in the United States have more successes in modernizing than failures, but we have problems too. Our most serious problem is minority rule, political maneuvering that gives power to radical conservatives in Congress, state governments, and Supreme Court.

The majority of Americans are deprived of what most want: complete revision of gun usage and availability, universal medical care, and liberalization of social equality. We want freedom from religious control, and legislation based on science, not faith.

We are out of step with all the other liberal democracies, a problem that can be fixed if the majority vote.

Today we suffer from violence in the streets, domestic terrorism and mass shootings, and exposure to false information and conspiracy theories. Citizens do not know who to believe.

Our minority rulers refuse to deal with gun violence, separation of church and state, and social equality. The bible is not the constitution, and never was. Minority rule is not representative government. We must vote the out of office.

These problems can be addressed, unlike the problems of China and Russia. They are up to us, the educated and good citizens, to make our country truly representative and progressive. Term limits for Senate and court judges, professional state voting maps, end to second amendment.

We can vote for these changes and save our democracy. Our adversaries cannot.

682 words

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