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Trump should stop making enemies

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Entering Brazil, like most countries, is simple. The passport line was long, but the process was elementary. I had to apply for a visa, but there was no special vetting.

Put simply, Brazil isn't afraid of the world. The government in Brasilia apparently isn't cowering at the thought of a people visiting or refugees resettling.

Contrast that with the U.S. Fear drives President Donald Trump's infamous "travel" restrictions.

American officials are afraid of foreigners coming to the U.S. Not just from failed states. But also from supposedly friendly countries, "liberated" by American force of arms.

Much of the world is in flames, but Brazil enjoys peace and security. Not so the U.S., despite having the world's biggest "defense" budget and most powerful armed forces, and possessing the most military bases, carrier groups, and allies on earth.

So President Donald Trump believes that America's only hope is more rigorous self-isolation. That's a sad course for a country which has long seen itself as being a democratic model, a city on the hill, a light to the world.

Of course, the president justified his executive order in terms of U.S. security. But assume that the administration is right that the only way to protect Americans is to keep lots of foreigners out. It is time Americans seriously asked: why do so many people apparently want to kill us?

It's not because Americans are so free and virtuous. In fact, if Islamist terrorists want to target godless decadent hedonists, there are many contestants to wear that crown. Plenty of other countries are "free" in ways which offend Islamic radicals.

There is one very important difference, however. Washington's foreign policy. America is far more likely than Brasilia to interfere in other nations.

Support authoritarian and overthrow democratic governments. Bomb other lands. Invade other countries. Occupy other places. And kill other peoples.

These days one nation seems to go out of its way to create enemies. Stir hostilities. Generate anger. And make every one of its citizens a terrorist target. Thanks Uncle Sam.

This international approach goes back years. But the end of the Cold War freed Washington policymakers to see themselves as Masters of the Universe unconstrained by anyone or anything.

Then the U.S. went into overdrive in its inadvertent campaign to create terrorists. Unfortunately, the Trump administration is exacerbating the problem in virtually every aspect.

President Trump appears ready to embrace just about every regime which jails and oppresses its own people. Administration officials are getting all giggly over the Egypt's new Pharaoh Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, who makes ousted dictator Hosni Mubarak look like a sissy.

The administration has been trying to make nice with Turkish Sultan wannabe Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who is attempting to formalize his Putinesque presidency after reigniting the civil war with his nation's Kurdish residents. Washington also has warmed ties with Bahrain, where a repressive Sunni monarchy, backed by Saudi Arabia, holds a Shia majority in bondage.

A case can be made for working with all three regimes. However, abandoning the slightest pretense of caring about the people as well as the dictators is not likely to be forgotten.

Similar is the impact of the president's tighter embrace of Israel's radical Netanyahu government, which seems determined to kill any possibility of a two-state solution, consigning Palestinians to a status akin to that of Sparta's helots or Apartheid South Africa's blacks.

Worse, though, is the administration's apparent intention to intensify every war started or continued by President Barack Obama. At least the previous administration felt some embarrassment about the Saudi royals, even as it backed their murderous campaign in Yemen. However, the Trump administration has announced a fulsome embrace of a frankly totalitarian regime, as it kills people who not only have done nothing to hurt Americans.

President Trump ran for office criticizing the Bush administration for its foolish intervention in Iraq. Yet he embraced the Obama campaign against ISIS, supplanting the regional powers which had the most incentive to destroy the Islamist menace. Now the Trump administration is intensifying the U.S. military commitment to Syria and talking of a well-nigh permanent presence in Iraq.

It is almost as if President Trump is inviting more terrorist attacks on America.

Washington's foreign policy explains why some others want to do the rest of us harm. That

doesn't justify terrorism, but understanding it should help us better combat it. The starting point should be to stop making so many unnecessary enemies.

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