

## Threat Inflation Is The Real Threat to America

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May 16, 2019

John Glaser explains how absurd it is that the U.S. treats Iran as a major threat:

How is it that the United States of America can get whipped up into such a hysteria over such a weak, distant, and hemmed in Iran? Much of Washington seems unable to properly assess risk. Threat perceptions on Iran are fueled by an outdated enemy image where Iran plays the role of the villain, but presents no objective direct threat to this country.

The U.S. is extraordinarily secure from foreign threats, but our government is constantly overstating and then overreacting to threats from the other side of the planet. Glaser is right that our policymakers and political leaders are bad at assessing risk. One reason for that is they have defined U.S. interests so broadly that they are virtually unlimited. When a government imagines that it has the right and responsibility to manage the affairs of distant regions, minor challenges are then perceived as intolerable threats. The overly broad definition of our interests also involves identifying with the interests of various clients even when they are different from and sometimes at odds with genuine U.S. security interests. Our policymakers adopt our clients' enemies and make them ours when those adversaries can't do anything to us, and so we end up in the absurd position of acquiring permanent enemies that don't and can't threaten the U.S. The weaker those enemies are, the more they have to be built up through propaganda into an "expansionist" menace to justify our irrational fear of them.

A country with a relatively normal foreign policy does not constantly see enemies around every corner because its government does not presume to dictate terms to nations on the far side of the world and does not pretend to have a stake in distant regional quarrels. It would not find itself dangerously close to conflict with a much weaker state thousands of miles away for no real reason, but then it would not have been courting conflict with such a distant state in the first place. A normal country would recognize that it has no irreconcilable disputes with such a state and has no legitimate reason to be relentlessly hostile to it. When our foreign policy makes everything our business, our government starts seeing threats everywhere, and then to drum up support for "countering" these minor and manageable problems they have to be distorted and exaggerated to make the public think that they pose a danger to us. It is our constant overreaching and threat inflation that are the real threats to the United States, and we could be rid of those threats if we chose to have a much less ambitious and arrogant foreign policy.