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## **True Internationalism**

**by Scott McPherson**

Speaking to a Georgetown University audience on January 23, Sen. John Kerry of Massachusetts, one of six Democratic hopefuls for the presidential nomination, called for a “bold, progressive internationalism” to combat terrorism against the United States. “What America needs today is a smarter, more comprehensive and farsighted strategy for modernizing the Middle East,” he said, making use of “all of our nation’s strengths: military might, the world’s largest economy, the immense moral prestige of freedom and democracy, and our powerful alliances.”

In an attempt to explain the reasons for terrorism against the United States, he blamed a “combination of political repression, economic stagnation, population growth and lack of education” for having created “an explosive mix” of “hostility to the West,” reported the *Washington Times*.

Senator Kerry couldn’t be more wrong. The United States does not need its military, its large economy, its alleged “moral prestige,” or any of its “powerful alliances” to restore a peaceful relationship with the people of the Middle East. Nor can one logically trace Arab hatred for the United States to such red herrings as “economic stagnation, population growth and lack of education” among Arab peoples.

What is needed to fight terrorism is a leader with the courage to remove the U.S. military from foreign soil, declare armed neutrality (as opposed to pacifistic optimism) towards the rest of the world, and replace the foreign policy of intervention, manipulation, and bullying with peaceful coexistence and mutual goodwill. A truly “bold, progressive internationalism” would also require that the United States set an honest example of freedom at home — by returning personal and economic liberty to our own residents and citizens, while extending a hand of friendship to the rest of the globe, and by opening our markets to foreign goods and labor in the peaceful, leveling, and mutually beneficial arena of international economic competition and free

trade.

Could these represent the foundation of the “immense moral prestige” Senator Kerry claims we currently enjoy? If so, we’re a long way from deserving to be held in such high esteem.

Middle Eastern terrorists didn’t wake up one morning and decide to hate the United States. Their “explosive” hostility has its roots in decades of U.S. government intervention — often violent intervention — in the affairs of foreign countries. Let us not play word games about how to diffuse terrorist hatred — let’s begin behaving towards others as we expect them to behave towards us.

Senator Kerry is highly critical of what he calls President Bush’s “blustering unilateralism” in the “war on terrorism,” yet he nonetheless voted in favor of the congressional resolution authorizing military force against Iraq. His own blustering inadequacies in understanding the definition of true freedom (he supports the welfare state, trade unionism and protectionism, and the war on drugs), his lukewarm appreciation for the causes of terrorism (see above), and his obvious zeal for “military might” show that, his aspirations to statesmanship notwithstanding, the good senator is just another of the many people who, as Ludwig von Mises described, “are not at all clear as to what conditions would have to be fulfilled in order to secure peace.”

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