

Karen Palmer
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Professor Barry Smith

Nationalism

After the September 11 attacks, the United States experienced a resurgence of patriotic feelings and nationalistic pride. While the United States has always had a strong sense of patriotism around election times, the Fourth of July, and numerous military engagements and situations, with the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the United States began to feel an unprecedented nationalistic and patriotic surge throughout the citizenry.

Nationalism can be defined as a “belief that the shared characteristics of the nation are valuable and need to be preserved.” (Baycroft, 1998, 4) Nationalism is more than patriotism. While patriotism is loyalty and sentiment to the nation that a person belongs to, nationalism takes it one step further. Nationalism includes the belief that perceived threats or enemies to the nation be eliminated, destroyed, or defeated. (Baycroft, 1998, 4)

The United States while it in many views has the right to defend itself against terrorism of any kind, the nationalistic feeling that spread can have a devastating effect for what the United States stands for. After the attacks, the increase in nationalism in the United States is evident in the actions taken in the “war on terror.” It is also evident in anti-Islam feelings that were sounded throughout the country. Nationalism can threaten the very ideals that the United States has fought for throughout the world. When the United States turns patriotism and nationalism in to hatred of other cultures, it threatens the very diversity, freedom, and civil rights that it protects.

Work Cited:

Baycroft, Timothy (1998). *Nationalism in Europe 1789-1945*, Cambridge University Press. United Kingdom.

Imperialism

Is imperialism the future of nation-building? Should the United States become more of an imperialistic superpower within the Middle East and Afghanistan? Some would say yes while others would disagree. There are many motives for imperialism as there are many negatives and positives to imperialism.

Imperialism can be defined as the practice by which powerful nations or peoples seek to extend, control and/or exert influence over weaker nations or peoples. Imperialism can be associated with the economic expansion of capitalist states. The meaning of imperialism is similar to that of colonialism. Imperialism can be conceived as a relationship between the southern and northern regions of the world. Or it can be conceived as the way in which the first world relates to the third world. There are three main explanations for imperialistic actions taken by nations. They include economic motives, political motives and ideological motives. States are motivated to dominate others by their need to expand their economies, to acquire raw materials and additional sources of labor, and to find markets and outlets for surplus capital and goods. Economic Imperialism has mainly occurred within the third world. States are also motivated to expand primarily by the desire for power, prestige, security, and diplomatic advantages. For example, the Soviet expansion into Eastern Europe after World War II was mainly for security and power. Political, cultural, or religious beliefs force states into imperialism as a "missionary activity." For example, Britain's colonial empire was motivated by the idea that it was the "white man's burden" to civilize "backward" peoples.

Many consequences can come about due to the imperialistic actions of a nation. Imperialism is destructive of other traditional and cultural institutions and ways of living by replacing them with the traditions, thinking and habits of the primarily the Western World. Culture and tradition play an important role in everyday lives for many of these people. It tells them who they are and where they are from. It gives these people insights to how past generations lived. When developing, as many imperialistic actions seek to do, in an underdeveloped nation it is important that the local knowledge and customs be taken into account and consulted on. Imperialism needs to not tread onto these traditions and cultures.

There are also positive sides to many features of imperialism. Imperialism throughout history has been given a bad name, but it has also allowed access of third world nations to the global market. It has also in some cases led to the establishment of democratic values of civil rights and liberties and it has led to increased communication between peoples.

In the current situation within the Middle East and Afghanistan, a more imperialistic nature by the United States is held by many to be warranted. If the United States were to take a more active/imperialistic role, Democracy could be instituted into these regions. Civil Rights would be instituted as well. However, at the same time these are not the traditions of these places, so where is the line to be drawn? There must be a balance between the negative and the positive effects of imperialistic actions taken by a country.

Work Consulted:

Peter J. Taylor and Colin Flint (2000). *Political Geography: world economy, nation-state, and locality*, Pearson Education Limited. United Kingdom.