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‘It is Their Right, It is Their Duty, To Throw Off Such Government ‘

by Caroline Arnold

But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.

– [Declaration of Independence](#), 1776

Since we declared independence from a tyrannical government 231 years ago, we’ve done the best we could with the idea of democracy. It hasn’t been very good, but it got us by until a few years ago.

As we grew in population, wealth and power we created ever larger systems in both the public and private sectors. We mostly managed those systems with Command & Control, providing democratic processes and Constitutional “checks and balances” to keep power from accruing to individuals or private entities in government.

But in the last few decades the idea that the marketplace/private sector will provide everything people want and need, including their inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness - as well as self-government and equal justice - has seduced a lot of people, and gone unnoticed by too many more. That idea has eaten the heart out of the best experiment in democracy in the history of mankind, and put George W. Bush and Dick Cheney in Command & Control of our nation.

He is, at this Time, transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the Works of Death, Desolation and Tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty and Perfidy, scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous Ages, and totally unworthy of the Head of a civilized Nation ...

The Bush-Cheney White House has enlisted “Armies of foreign Mercenaries” (in this case multinational corporations) to do the works of death, desolation, and tyranny. These bright angels manipulate public policy and public funds: Big Arms - corporations that profit from making deadly weapons and materials for war; Big Energy - profiting from fossil resources, nuclear technology, and human poverty and overpopulation; and Big Brokers - of services ranging from student loans and health care to mercenary soldiers, “extreme rendition,” commercial spying, and propaganda for governments, businesses and ideologies.

It is increasingly evident that Bush and Cheney believe they Command & Control the U.S. government, its people and its resources, that they need not obey its laws, or even let citizens know what they do with our money, our government, our young soldiers and our venerable ideals.

A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the Ruler of a free People

And war. David Ignatius noted recently: “The insurgents who kill our young soldiers are ruthless ...” Well, yes. We may equally say that our young soldiers who kill insurgents are ruthless. They are trained and expected to be ruthless. Wars are contests of ruthlessness; the Iraq war is a race to new depths of ruthlessness.

At 19 my son wanted to be a Green Beret. “Why,” I asked him, “do you want to become a professional killer in an authoritarian organization?” “No, mother, you have it all wrong,” he replied, “I don’t want to be a killer, I want to be a survivor - I want to be better than everyone. If you slip up, you’re dead, because you weren’t good enough.”

The appeal of the myth of heroism is strong: serious young Americans choose to risk their lives and their humanity by becoming professional soldiers. They make conscious, informed and courageous choices to kill and be killed in wars they don’t choose, often for ideals they do not believe in.

Serious young persons of other societies also choose to risk their lives and humanity in personal acts

of terror with explosives and improvised weapons. Because they recite unacceptable tropes like "Death to Infidels" we assume them to be deluded, misinformed and cowardly, deserving of death or torture.

At this time, dark angels of violence flourish in our whole society. We as a society propagate myths of good guys & bad guys, Good & Evil, heroism, sacrifice. We entertain ourselves with wars, war-games, crime, murder and mayhem. We justify torture and accept genocide. We tolerate a horrific level of gun violence, leaving the sale of handguns unregulated, and allowing people to hide guns in public. (If the point of owning a gun were deterrence, wouldn't it work better if the gun was visible? Aren't gun-owners proud to be packing?)

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It's time to declare our independence from "the works of death, desolation, and tyranny," and from "the circumstances of cruelty and perfidy" that led to them. It's time to recognize the unwisdom of secrecy and lying in democracy, the brutality of handguns and cluster bombs, the shame of torture and mistreatment of human beings, the dire consequences of myths of heroism and sacrifice, and the idiocy of the race to ruthlessness.

Each of us must deal personally with the dark angels of war, weapons, killing, torture and genocide. But it's time for loyal Americans to rise up and throw off the tyrants Bush and Cheney.

More: It is our right, our duty to impeach these unfit Rulers. Because if we do not restore safeguards to democracy and justice, there will be no life, liberty, or pursuit of happiness, and no future security, only endless war, more ruthlessness, and a polluted, depleted, hot planet, hostile to all life.

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