

Personal Opinion(s)

The world has always been the field of selection for my students, that I tried to select according to academic potential and education, without discrimination of nationality, sex or religion. It has taken many years to understand why this was frowned upon by most of my colleagues, who considered that priority should be given to US nationals.

Yes, **“America is great again”**. We are again at these “great” times where “a good Indian is a dead Indian” (except that now the word “Indian” has been replaced by “immigrant” or “colored”), and we are free again to hunt the buffalos (sorry - now “buffalos” has been replaced by “elephants”).

I fundamentally object to applying higher admission standard to non US nationals. Perhaps it is because, where I come from, patriotism, chauvinism are banned. It was even forbidden to sing the national anthem in schools, which is at the root of most wars. This is in total contrast with the US, where children are brainwashed by having to sing the National anthem every morning at school. This is to give them some unjustified sense of superiority, eliminate critical thinking and the curiosity to learn from “the rest of the world”. There is a famous thirty years old joke that still partially applies today. I goes something like:

An organization like UNICEF tried to make a survey asking the question: “give your opinion about the shortage of food in the rest of the world.” It was a total failure because (1) the east German did not understand the concept “opinion”, (you can see it is an old joke...), (2) the French did not understand the concept “shortage” (still applies today), (3) the Africans did not understand the concept food, and (4) the Americans did not have any notion of what was meant by “rest of the world” (applies today more than ever).

This is more than unfortunate. By living with blinders, this country does not realize that it has been surpassed by the rest of the developed countries in science and education. Applying uniform admission standards to my students, only 15 of the 60 Ph.D. students I graduated are US citizen. Compared to “the rest of the world” I found the high school educational level in the US to be abysmal. The student selection process for higher education is financial wealth, rather than by academic potential and background. In the “rest of the world”, there is a national selection, to which the whole student population — wealthy or poor — participates. Unlike in the US, the student with the largest stock portfolio has to compete with those that were not blessed with a rich father. In most developed countries, higher education is free, as it should be. People are happy to pay considerably higher taxes than in the US to ensure the success of the next generation.

As seen by “the rest of the world”, the Americans have not evolved since the cowboy era, where the hero — as portrayed by John Wayne — is illiterate. This can be seen in the table manners — or lack there-off — of Americans. They still eat with one hand on their knees, ready to shoot their opponent under the table. It is still a cowboy argument that Wayne Lapierre, president of the NRA, uses to support the second amendment. As he put it on national TV a few years ago:

Everybody should have a gun. It is well known (from Hollywood) that the “good guys” shoot faster than the “bad guys”. So if everybody has a gun, there will be no “bad guy” left in the US.

He has a point, which inspires me to propose a solution to the refugee

problem. Let us deport all our “good guys” with their guns to Syria, where they will kill all the “bad guys, and Syria will become a haven of peace. We should replace the gun loving deportees by educated Syrian refugees, who do not carry guns, and will raise the intellectual level in this country. Unfortunately, I do not think our president will favor this excellent suggestion. But ... one may dream.