

Beat: Miscellaneous

PATRIOTISM WITHOUT BORDERS IS A COMPLEX NOTION

OFTEN DEFINED AS ALLEGIANCE

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USPA NEWS - Patriotism is often defined as an allegiance, dedication or loyalty to one's own country. As Bernard Shaw said "Patriotism is your conviction that this country is superior to all others because you were born in it"...

Patriotism is often defined as an allegiance, dedication or loyalty to one's own country. As Bernard Shaw said "Patriotism is your conviction that this country is superior to all others because you were born in it". Therefore, the notion of patriotism is complex and has changed over the centuries.

The problem with patriotism being thought of as nation-based idea of "my country, right or wrong", is that we have witnessed much death and destruction caused by this ideology. And the notion itself gives sanctuary to those who commit crimes against humanity.

In the 21st century, it has been used to justify preemptive warfare based on the argument that the possibility of being attacked provided an excuse for striking first, even when it turned out that the supposed "possibility" was completely false.

Patriotism is a virtue so long as the actions it encourages are not themselves immoral. So long as devotion and loyalty to one's country do not lead to immoral actions, then patriotism can be quite laudable. When concern for their own country blinds people to the legitimate needs and interests of other nations, then patriotism becomes a vice.

When patriotism is in the service of valuable ends and is limited to morally legitimate means of attaining them, then it is a virtue. It is quite clear that there are large disagreements about patriotism in our society. It is plausible to suggest that the range of conflicting views can be placed on a spectrum with two poles. At one end is the view, taken for granted by almost everyone in the nineteenth century, that "patriotism" is a virtue. At the other end is the castrating view, expressed in the nineteen sixties, that "patriotism" is a vice.

There is no pretense any longer that a policy of humility in foreign affairs, without being the world's policemen and engaging in nation building, is worthy of consideration.

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