

National Post Op ed

Enough is Enough: Are We Canadians or are we Victims?

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The lack of awareness and resentful attitude of Canadians displayed in the Pollara report (“Canadians don’t think much of themselves” by Jack Aubry) comes as no surprise to those of us concerned about the future viability of Canada. As the Canadian Forces teaches, one principle of war is the Maintenance of Morale and as this poll indicates, our national morale is in poor shape. How is morale improved? Any leader will suggest that abandoning trite slogans is the first step: you tell the truth (Yes Virginia, there is truth in the so-called post-modern world and people can sense it). Other means include stopping policies that divide the group you wish to unite and curtail inordinate focusing on the negative. Finally, it is critical that everybody in the group has a stake in improving the situation. Everybody benefits from a renewal of strength.

People admire strength and Canadians are no exception. Yet Canadians are told by the cultural elite and the education system that strength is bad. We have been bamboozled into believing that strength built on economic excellence and military prowess (and they are linked) is somehow “not Canadian,” that it is somehow exclusive to the American character, and therefore something to avoid since we don’t want to be like Americans. How can we possibly build a national identity on that-especially when it is not true? Particularly when Canada was most prosperous in the 1940s and 1950s, a period when we had both economic and military strength. These two attributes translated to global influence, which we used to great effect to further our agenda: economic prosperity and physical security.

Unfortunately, this has all been forgotten or suppressed. Canadians are caught in a dangerous External Validation game. Canadians crave external validation and since they cannot and never will get it from the increasingly narcissistic Americans, they turn to dubious alternatives like the United Nations or worse, engage in overly provocative exploits vis-à-vis our largest trading partner. How can an international organization possibly validate the Canadian identity? Does deliberate antagonism directed at American policies on Cuba, the International Criminal Court, and Iraq add to or detract from our ability to achieve the primary Canadian objectives? Clearly, such antics mimic the behaviour of frustrated adolescents, not a secure, strong nation.

We have to resist that Victorian tendency to tear ourselves down, particularly when we examine our history and what we are about as a people. I would suggest that there are many things Canadians can be proud of and they are by no means trivial. Our people expanded and built this country, a geographically formidable task, and kept it out of American hands during the War of 1812. How was this done? Anglo-celts, French, and Aborigines all banded together to make it so. This is the foundation of Canada, subsequently built on by immigrants from Eastern Europe and Asia. After a hundred years of antagonism, we even had the courage to make the United States our partner and we developed a policy of creative engagement. We benefited and protected our identity. Our prerogatives were respected by the United States until 1962 when we squandered the influence we gained because of a Prime Minister's fit of pique. I would also suggest that the defeat of Nazi totalitarianism and Canada's contribution to that enterprise should be part of a foundation for the Canadian identity, as should our very central role in standing up to the menace of Soviet totalitarianism during the first 25 years of the Cold War. I would also emphasize our vital and significant contribution to achieving stability in the Balkans throughout the Stabilization Campaign of the 1990s. Our past willingness to confront and

defeat totalitarianism and terror is a significant aspect of our national identity.

But you're not going to learn about this in school. You're going to learn all sorts of labour history where economic excellence is a crime and those who innovate are criminals. You're going to learn about every self-interest group that complains that their view of history isn't covered-to the detriment of the broader, more important issues. You're going to learn that Canada is a pacifist, neutral nation that has no control over her own destiny and is a victim state. Who can possibly be proud of the nation of wimps portrayed by the smug education system and cultural elite? Strength is and has always been part of the Canadian identity and it is high time it receives the accolades it deserves. Subvert the system: read about your nation's history.