

# American values threatened

**A**merica is under siege. We are threatened by an enemy that is undermining the very foundations of our Constitution and the American values that have created, in the words of Ronald Reagan, the world's "shining city on a hill."

This war against the heartland is not being waged by our traditional global adversaries or even the jihadist terrorists who have vowed to destroy America and everything in it. This is a battle being fought from within. It's a war that cannot be defended nor defeated by our great military or policed by our brave law enforcement.

This is a war that can only be won by understanding the real threat, and rising to defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, both foreign and domestic.

On the surface, it would appear that the driving motive behind the angry and often violent protests is to correct "social injustices" and fight "institutional racism." Admittedly admirable goals.

If this were true, then no doubt meaningful reform would address the undisputed causes and not just the symptoms. Identifying under-performing communities (regardless of race) and making sweeping changes in education, job creation, and encouraging local investment would be a tangible and welcome start for all Americans.

Instead, protesters loot and burn communities in the name of "equal justice" while terrorizing the same neighborhoods that likely need the most help.

"Institutional racism" alone is difficult to reconcile when Americans of all religions, races and genders have long fought and died defending the rights and freedoms of others. The marble tombstones at Arlington Cemetery should be proof enough.

Granted, America is not perfect; she is just the best system yet devised. America

can and should address the cause of societal cancers such as homelessness, racism and poverty, but common sense would say one does not burn the barn down simply because the front door is broken.

In the case of the shameful death of Mr. George Floyd, it made no difference that the four

arresting officers on scene were black, Hispanic, Asian and white or that the incident occurred in the progressive city of Minneapolis where the police department is led by black law enforcement professionals.

Facts alone could not temper the rage. The call for "justice" was quickly transformed and replaced by left-wing agendas demanding gun control, defunding the police and immigration enforcement, and confiscating private property.

If school safety was a legitimate concern, why then would anyone think defunding public safety

officers is a good idea?

John Muir, the founder of the Sierra Club, is now labeled a "racist" and a statue of America's greatest conservationist, Teddy Roosevelt, toppled. Even our history, either right or wrong, is being torn down, and the Fourth of July is labeled a "white supremacist holiday."

The censorship and the "shaming" of different opinions, the threatening of elected officials, and government banning freedom of assembly (except in case of protests) is a dangerous path against our most basic freedoms and inalienable rights.

In short, the "social justice" movement has been hijacked into a well-armed attack on the Constitution and the individual rights it protects.

Do not be fooled, the battle being fought in America is not about supporting "liberty and justice for all." It's about the radical mob's pursuit of socialism and dismantling the American values for which the pledge of allegiance stands.

## Ryan K. Zinke

*The writer is a former U.S. secretary of the interior as well as a former congressman and former Navy SEAL commander.*