

ESSAY

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One of the headlines in the Waco Tribune-Herald of Wednesday, September 3, 2003, read as follows: “Americans in Poverty Climbed to 34.8 Million, subtitled, “Number Grow by 1.4 Million in 2002. Then in the opening sentence, “nearly 1.4 million more people in the United States fell into poverty last year—almost half of them children—even as the country emerged from recession according to a census bureau survey.

In this particular article there was no mention of the \$400 billion a year that we spend on armaments—that is more money than all the nations in the world combined spend in this category. I suggest that we might consider a reallocation of our resources.

We say we are fighting against terrorism, and we are! Consider, however, that there is the possibility of terrorism from within as well as without! I’m reminded of Joseph Lyford’s admonition that “poverty produces a state of wantlessness! Nothing contributes to terrorism more than poverty. Here we are the richest nation in the world and we are willing to accept that one out of every seven or eight Americans is in poverty.

It seems that if we are in a state of hubris that we would have a sense of “well, by golly, opportunity is here for everyone in America!”—Fact! It really is for those that have an education and have a sense that they are someone worthwhile. It’s a very difficult feeling to possess if one is in a state of poverty. Think about what Dr. Ravi Batra reminds us:

“CAN IT HAPPEN AGAIN?

Economists generally blame the cataclysm of the 1930s on faulty monetary and fiscal policies of the U.S. Government. In fact, the primary cause of that depression, or of any other, has so far eluded the experts. There was nothing new in the monetary and fiscal policies of those times. The government had followed similar policies during previous recessions. What was so different that turned an ordinary recession in 1930 into an unprecedented collapse? The answer lies in the unprecedented concentration of wealth that peaked in 1929. The concentration of wealth is again rising in the 1980s and beginning to assume the menacing levels of the 1920s.”

We need to recognize that we are in a war against greed and we are losing! This, notwithstanding, we cannot give up. Our only chance to win is to change. There is a situation that one can want too much. A democratic society requires limits!! That is why we have a constitution!

Yes, corporate America may be guilty of wanting too much and individual Americans may also be guilty of wanting too much. The truth is that “too much” is “too much” and this “too much” leads to where we don’t want to be when we get there.

Yes, too much wanting too much gets us to what Paul Woodruff (Professor at the University of Texas in the English Department) wrote:

“When law is the ruler, no one is above the law. This seems like an idea everyone would welcome, but in truth it has had many enemies, and it still does. Individuals are always looking for ways to put themselves or their governments above the law. Big business seeks endless protections against the law, world leaders scoff at international law, and ordinary citizens see nothing wrong with obstructing justice.”

Well, the big question! Is this a correct conclusion? Now comes the bigger question! If this conclusion is correct, what are we going to do about it?