



WHY I LOVE AMERICA

DENNIS PRAGER

I am a third-generation American—my parents and my maternal grandmother were born in Brooklyn, New York. But I didn't know I loved America until my early twenties.

In my third year of college, I studied in England and began a life of travel that eventually took me to one hundred and thirty countries. That was when I began to understand how important America was to the world—and still is. That was when I began to understand how unique America was—and still is. That was when I began to appreciate the decency of the American people.

Being away from America for a year, spending the Christmas season in Morocco, where there was no Christmas season, and ending the year with a month in the Soviet Union, where there was no freedom—this all had a life-changing impact on me. I realized how lucky I was to be an American. I even realized how much I simply enjoyed being an American.

I'll explain:

1. How important America is to the world.

Without in any way diminishing the enormous sacrifices made by England and France, it was America's entry into World War I that made the defeat of Imperial Germany possible and ended that horrible war. It was America that made the Allied victory possible in World War II and kept Western Europe free during the Cold War. Thirty-seven thousand Americans died fighting the North Korean and Chinese communist regimes. Were it not for America, *all* of Korea would have no human rights and would endure the mass torture, starvation, and murder that have been routine in North Korea until today.

The next time you hear the lie that America fought in Vietnam for colonialist reasons, ask that person: Why did America fight in Korea? I'll tell you why: to stop the spread of communism, the greatest genocidal and totalitarian ideology in history, and thereby enable more than half of Korea to live in freedom. Another fifty-eight thousand Americans died in Vietnam to enable the South Vietnamese to live in the same freedom America made possible for South Koreans. Neither Vietnam nor Korea had any natural resources that America wanted. Americans died in those two countries solely so that their people could be free.

And, without diminishing the role of the great British prime minister, Margaret Thatcher, and the great pope, John Paul II, it was America that ended communism in the Soviet Union, Poland, East Germany, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Bulgaria, and liberated, among other nations, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia.

2. America is unique.

America is the only country that was founded not on a race, ethnicity, or nationality, but on an idea: limited government—because the founders of America believed, first and foremost, in liberty. America became the freest country in world history, which is why France gave the Statue of Liberty to one country: America.

And America has given more liberty and opportunity to more people from more nations than any country in world history.

Yes, America allowed slavery in half of its states. But every society in the world practiced slavery. What rendered America unique is that Americans killed one another in its bloodiest war to abolish slavery, and that it eventually became the least racist multi-racial country in history. It remains the only white-majority country to have ever elected a black leader. And Africans know how good America is, which is why, by the 1980s, more black Africans had come to America voluntarily as immigrants seeking freedom and opportunity than ever came as slaves.

3. Americans are decent people.

Ask visitors what they think of Americans, and they are likely to tell you how friendly Americans are. There are mean and bad Americans, and there are kind and good people in every country. But having travelled abroad every year of my life since college, and to all 50 American states, and being sensitive to people's goodness and happiness, I have been continually amazed at the essential decency of most Americans.

I fell in love with America at the age of 20, and given the freedom, the opportunities, and the religious tolerance I have experienced, I realize all these years later that America has loved me too.

I'm Dennis Prager.