

## The Enemy Among Us!

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For the Almaty Herald

Indeed we must ask who is the enemy among us? If we know not the face of our foe then we live in constant peril!

Our adversary is the one who steals from us our profit, the one who steals from us our natural resources, the one that pollutes our heritage and perverts our faith, the one who takes from us our women and children – this is our enemy, the enemy of the people, the enemy of our homeland and the target of the great struggle for our cherished way of life!

How overly dramatic! - How ludicrous a diatribe! - A total load of horse hockey!

If you open your eyes and ears, look very closely and listen intently you shall recognize that sentiments such as I have written above are being quietly expressed here and in many nations. A rather quaint variation on these thoughts are being expressed by the Americans with regard to the war on terrorism and the “great battle” for freedom and democracy in Iraq.

Words are dangerous – perceptions are deadly!! It does not matter if what is being thought or discussed is truth or not. What matters are the driving perceptions that precipitate potential actions. Shall I remind you of the words of a once great loony, Dr. Josef Goebbles? He once very accurately stated that: “A lie told often enough becomes truth”. For our consideration truth or untruth matter very little as the game is perception. During a recent airing of the O’Rielly Factor on Fox TV, Bill O’Rielly commented, with relation to the US government, said “perception is truth”!

The relationship between expatriate and local is by no means rotten to the core. In life there are few absolutes. What can be said is that others and I have noted a uniquely acidic quality to the nature of the relations. It may best be described as tolerating each other because we have to. The lower one goes on a socio-economic scale the more likely you are to hear disenchantment and resentment against the “system”. In Kazakhstan the “system” represents a dramatic change in what has been considered a more predictable way of life and foreign influence has disrupted a previously held feeling of normalcy. Happens everywhere, to any group of people, it is a very predictable human reaction. The further up you go on the scale of the “haves” vs. the “have-nots” there is still animosity and resentment – only it is for a different set of reasons. In this neighborhood it is due to nationalistic feelings and greed.

Hey, tell me something – where do all those locals find the money for a Mercedes, shopping at the upscale stores, taking vacations in Dubai, and really nice homes? Oops, I forgot as I am VERY often told – Mr. Wright you do not understand, this is Kazakhstan we are a poor country. WHO are the poor? I suggest both sides are forgetting them. The ones least affected by the positive changes brought to this reason, and I have personally witnessed indifference towards these people by local nationalities in three regional countries, are the mentally disabled, the orphans, the elderly pensioners and those without work. It is by changing the quality of life for these people first and foremost that can work as a catalyst for change in the relationship between expatriate and local residents.

The enemy among us is that which is inside of us. The enemy is our mind. The enemy is in each of us individually. The enemy is never from the outside; it is not just a person and is debatable if it can be a country. The enemy is the perceptions you dream up in your mind to rationalize your behavior! The enemy is in OUR failure to test our perceptions!

Care to comment?