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Overall, the least the world expects from the United States is that it do no harm. Given its size and importance, that is no small matter. In a more positive sense, we can divide what the US can do into four categories: political, economic, education and social.

As for the political category, there are also two categories. The first is external. Ideally, the very presence of the US can serve to deter hostile acts and would be aggressors. For example, there is the need for a strong US presence off the coast of Somalia in order to deter the pirates that operate there now with considerable freedom. There is always a danger however that the US will sometimes act in the world at large without restraint and in ways that are opposed by those in the region and the world at large.

The US can also set an example in the way that it behaves politically within the boundaries of the US. In the best of all cases, its can serve as a model of how a state and a public at large can handle the human and political rights of its population. Nor is it enough simply to set out that model—it should show that such models are workable and that it can and has put these models into practice. As an example, the US constitution calls for the creation of a government which has 3 branches of government designed to restrain each other's powers. It also provides remedies to address abuses which might arise out of such a system. That this system can attract outsiders is suggested by the fact that the US has long served to attract migrants from other countries when their present political regime is much less attractive.

The US can also serve as an economic and social model. One of the most attractive aspects of the US is that even after 225 years, the US still encourages economic and social mobility. There are not many other countries in the world outside of Africa where a black man can establish himself economically and then politically and rise to be elected leader of his field. Thus the head of Time Warner is a black as is the president of the US. The emphasis on material accomplishment, while offputting to some, allows those with talent and ability to achieve recognition, regardless of color or religion. By no means is the system perfect, but it is impressive how important talent is in overcoming prejudice.. There is no denying that inherited wealth does provide an advantage, but the richest man in the US, Bill Gates achieved that distinction with remarkably little help from his family.

It is also important that the US still puts enormous emphasis on the importance of fostering and educating entrepreneurs. We have programs in our high school as well as our colleges and business schools which are designed to promote the concept of entrepreneurship. We provide awards and publicity for those who manage to start up their own businesses. This also brings with it social status. One of my sons for example entered a start up business contest at the Yale School of Business. He and his partner won. As it happens, he did not actually implement the concept he drew up for the contest, but the exercise forced him to go through the process of starting up a business so that a few years later when he actually decided to start up his own business, he knew what he had to do. As a result, his company Honest Tea (which he started in his kitchen) has become the country's best selling bottled organic tea company, so successful in fact that Coca Cola has entered into an agreement to buy the company and expand it. The US has also adopted tax laws which encourage the formation of venture capital firms. The Small Business Administration provides support from the federal government but the private firms are much more successful. In fact there are numerous ways in which US institutions encourage small business. MIT, for example has set up a special office to encourage faculty members and students to open up their own businesses. Those who discover new products in their laboratories are urged to list those inventions with the MIT New Product Office which then seeks out venture capital firms in an effort to arrange financing for these inventions. There are also parts of the US where the local governments do all they can to provide low rents, tax holidays and general support for new businesses such as Silicon Valley in California, the Research Triangle in North Carolina and the highway 128 and 495 corridors around Boston.

Nor are such efforts limited to large organizations or governments. Kathryn W. Davis for example, a 102 year old widow, has established the Millennium Fund Competition which awards grants of \$1000 each to 100 students who



present the best proposals to make the world a better place. She realizes that not all of her grants will generate immediate results, but she expects that out of the 100 awards she makes each year, a few will indeed make the world a better place.

A report card for the United States evaluating these last 8 years does not look too good. There was an initial positive response to the US after the terrorist's attack on September 11, 2001. But the George W. Bush Administration squandered much of that sympathy by moves that were often ill considered. However, the fact that the US in 2008 seemed willing to consider a black man for its president (who would indeed go on to be elected) is something that is bound to win respect both among Americans for their own willingness to move beyond words to act out their rhetoric about equal rights and from foreigners, few of whom are likely to be as bold as Americans have been.