

Claire Hoy ? It's still the best country in the world

Thanks to several decades plying the trade of journalism, your loyal correspondent has been fortunate enough to travel to every part of the world.

Not to every country, to be sure, but to every continent and to several countries within each of those continents.

And, unlike the vast majority of Canadians, I've also been lucky enough to visit every province of Canada ? and every territory as well ? having covered elections at least once in all of them, plus a host of federal elections as well.

What I have learned is that ? at least for me ? that despite wonderful experiences abroad, and recognizing that there are many terrific things to see and do outside of our boundaries, I still think that we Canadians live in the best country in the world.

We don't say that often enough. We really don't.

But this being the week of Canada Day and all that, it seems to me as good a time as any to make the point that Canada need not play second fiddle to any other country.

Sure, we've got problems. But for the most part they're pretty petty compared to the issues facing many other countries. Yet we too often treat our minor spats as if they're major scandals, somehow comparable to the real problems facing a good chunk of the rest of the world.

There are, however, some things that puzzle me, first among them this enduring strain of anti-Americanism that inflicts many Canadians. I just don't get it.

I've traveled a lot in the U.S. Been to every state. Most of them several times. And for the most part, I like it, and I'm really glad we have them for neighbors.

But many Canadians ? I suppose it's an inferiority complex ? try to show their love of Canada by dissing the Americans. This really struck me once again when I received my latest copy of Maclean's Magazine in the mail.

What does it really say about our self-declared national news magazine that their front page for their ?Special Canada Day Double Issue? features the headline: ?Canada vs. America: 99 Reasons Why It's Better To Be Canadian.?

Why can't they simply write stories about how great it is to be a Canadian without having to take cheap shots at our neighbors?

Are they really so insecure that in a feeble effort to build up Canada they attempt to tear down the U.S? Apparently.

And while we're at it, what does it say when NDP Leader Thomas Mulcair, the Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, actually maintains two ? count 'em, two ? citizenships, i.e. France and Canada, instead of putting all his political eggs in the basket of the country he wants to run some day?

And what does it say about the value of Canadian citizenship ? a citizenship many people throughout the world can only dream of having ? when the left-leaning wingnuts on Toronto City Council voted to ask the province to allow non-citizens the right to vote in municipal elections?

If these councillors ? along with Mulcair ? really valued their Canadian citizenship they wouldn't dream of playing this kind of game. But there you have it.

We can look at pretty well any country in the world and find things to admire. And things to criticize.

We can find things right at home to criticize as well. No country ? or no person ? is perfect. That's reality.

But I don't understand the need that some Canadians have to denigrate others, especially Americans, in order to make a case about how great Canada is.

As you know ? or should know ? we turned 146 years old this week, the result of a coalition between French and English leaders of the day, and by the provinces of Upper and Lower Canada, along with Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

Since then we've managed to build a proud history despite our relatively small ? although rapidly growing ? population base. We certainly did more than our share in the two great wars of the last century ? something many seem to forget when they promote the notion that our history has been one of UN peacekeeping alone.

And we've managed to be the world's most welcoming country for newcomers ? the numbers absolutely bear this out ? along with building a caring, humane society which stands second to none in the entire world.

I for one am proud and happy to be a Canadian. I hope you are, too.

