

"We Can't Ignore the World," Steve LaTourette for U.S. News & World Report

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July 4 traditionally has been a day when Americans reflect on our nation's many blessings. We have one of the world's largest and most productive economies, as well as unparalleled natural resources. We enjoy global leadership in technology and higher education, and the dollar remains the world's reserve currency. Our ever-evolving democracy, with its promise of freedom and opportunity for all citizens, has been a beacon to other nations.

Despite our global standing, many Americans don't often care to know much about what lies beyond our borders. When citizens of different countries take surveys asking questions about international affairs, we invariably end up at the bottom of the class. Safe behind the protection of two oceans, and secure in our status as the sole global superpower, some in our country only think about the rest of the world only when they have to.

Increasingly, however, the world is pressing in on us whether we're paying attention or not. The growing likelihood that Greece will default on its debts sent U.S stocks tumbling. If Athens exits the European Union and the euro currency zone, that could provoke a panicked wave of fund-withdrawals from other fragile economies, which may carry over to our shores. (Closer to home, Puerto Rico's governor has announced that the island cannot pay back more than \$70 billion in debt.)

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