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## **Is world more dangerous?**

Columnist Robert J. Samuelson (Nov. 17) thinks the U.S. government should raise taxes and cut entitlements to raise more money for Pentagon spending “as the world grows more dangerous.” Is that what you want for your life personally: higher taxes and fewer benefits? At least Samuelson admits that a growing defense establishment and wars abroad will require huge amounts of additional revenue. The exorbitant financial cost of war is a reality that most other war enthusiasts leave out of the discussion. They also don’t care to discuss another cost: soldiers coming home with hard-to-treat PTSD.

But is Samuelson right that the world is growing more dangerous? Actually, no. Stephen Pinker, scientist and author of “The Better Angels of our Nature,” disagrees. He performs extensive statistical analyses showing that the long-term trends in world violence are down. He argues that the present is probably the most peaceful time in the history of the human species. Could it be that building up armed forces and weapons, instead of keeping the peace, will disrupt our relatively peaceful present and usher in new dogs of perpetual war?

— *Thomas F. Lee, Peace Coalition of Monterey County*