

Kanada?

In the era of colossal nuclear proliferation and intense superpower tension, it is good to know that ABC is aggravating the Cold War a few more degrees with "Amerika."

ABC is asking us, in daily installments, to envision the United States ten years after a Soviet takeover. No more freedom to say, think or worship what you want. The land of the free is a puppet in the hands of the militaristic Soviet marauders. You may think you're seeing the TV version of the 1985 movie "Red Dawn," an equally paranoid assessment of things to come.

But you are not. "Red Dawn" portrayed Americans with a "C" as fierce defenders of the hearth. It was extreme diatribe with thinly veiled anti-gun-control and authoritarian home discipline messages interspersed between the bloody violence. You could chuckle at it, you could get very angry at it, but at least the message was there. "Amerika" with a "K" doesn't have such a clear point. It shows our citizens with Jell-O backbones. It shows an internally diseased America rolling over and playing dead while steely-eyed Russian imperialists impose global domination.

Makes people pretty angry, right? But what's the point? If there is a message to be learned, we can't figure it out.

No average American is going to sit still while the Russian Bear trudges down Main Street, U.S.A. And no one likes to see that on TV. ABC is manipulating its audience. Why?

Will a brainwashed child point a pistol at his father and yell for a squad of Reds (or Soviet-ized Amerikans) to gun down his own dad?

Will a stripper sing demurely about being "raped" by the Russian Bear, saying it wasn't so bad?

These scenes are designed to rankle folks, and we don't know why. Is there some kind of right-wing vigilance lesson to be learned? Are we supposed to go out and purchase our shotguns and handguns and wait with our eyes to the skies for the evil Red horde? Dig a few more bomb shelters? Subscribe to *Soldier of Fortune* magazine? Join the Birchers?

If ABC is telling us this will befall America because of some internal moral decay, they are wrong. If they are telling us the Soviets lay in wait to extend the bloody tentacles of communism through every American hamlet, they are simply being insulting.

Even if we extend the benefit of the doubt to ABC and believe there is a valid message, we think it could have been done a whole lot more tactfully.

ABC has taken chances before, and maybe "Amerika" was just some bad judgment. The uncomfortable drama "The Day After" made a statement about Cold War tensions and the reality of nuclear war. ABC seems to have undone that statement and set the clock back.

Americans do need to understand other people and other cultures. If this is the message, ABC missed the boat with this dramatization. All this redbaiting "Amerika" business has just irritated Americans with a "C," and insulted Soviets here and abroad.

Some people may have enjoyed the miniseries, but for us ABC's meal of warmed-over Cold War beans left us hungry enough to wonder what the point was.

What next? Kanada?