



## Mary Frances Winters *President, The Winters Group*

Diversity is no longer a “U.S. phenomenon” or simply a “corporate issue” ... the global discussion here has been too late and too little. Diversity conversations cannot stay sequestered inside the walls of U.S.-centric enterprises. Granted, these pervasive issues may present themselves differently throughout the world, but the quest for human rights, justice, and equality spans the globe.

The events of September 11, 2001, the most extreme form of intolerance of difference, jolted us from our myopic perspective about the nature of diversity work, and the ongoing threat of more terrorism, war and other forms of violence has widespread ramifications.

The growing anti-American sentiment caused by political dissension over the war in Iraq will linger for a long time because these feelings go deeper than just this current conflict. The differences that are playing out along country (ethnic) lines could have significant impact on multi-national companies’ ability to successfully conduct global business.

**There is a lot at stake.** U.S. companies have expanded manufacturing sites in international locations and U.S. companies buy large volumes of components offshore.

Workplace conflict will increase as workers around the world listen to political arguments and naturally form opinions and take positions that could lead to greater tensions and less tolerance for diversity.

I have heard numerous times that people from other countries are baffled by U.S. preoccupation with creating inclusive workplaces. Values are so different around the world, that the egalitarian philosophy the U.S. espouses is not always understood or accepted, which is precisely why we should pay more attention to the issues of inclusion on a global level.

This new conversation about global diversity is important for the entire world. It is not just about employees getting along, representation, upward mobility, and marketing to diverse customers, it is about the ability to effectively conduct business!

**... the events of  
September 11th  
jolted us from our  
myopic  
perspective ...**

There should be no question about the business case for diversity in today’s world climate. There is huge global interdependence for natural resources, labor and technology. If we do not work collaboratively with each other, it could lead to the demise of the world economy.

The future of diversity is here now. It didn’t come gradually but suddenly and with a mighty force. It requires a whole new definition and approach.

**PDJ**