

# Why is Anti-Americanism Racism Too?

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## Referencing

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## Section 1: Qualification and Classification

I would like to start by addressing the ‘qualification’ of anti-Americanism as racism... that is to say by showing that it falls within the predetermined definitions and parameters of racism. The most authoritative definition of racism (in the anthropological and categorical, rather than the competitive) comes from the [Chambers 21<sup>st</sup> century dictionary, tenth edition]:

"Race /rās/n the descendants of a common ancestor, esp those who inherit a common set of characteristics; such a set of descendants, narrower than a species, a breed, a stud or herd (obs); ancestry lineage, stock; the condition of belonging by descent to a particular group; inherited disposition; a class or group, defined otherwise than by descent; a sex (obs); peculiar flavour, as of wine, by which its origin may be recognised, raciness, piquancy."

This may then be coupled with the definition (from the same source) of ‘Racism’

"Rac'ism /n hatred, rivalry or bad feeling between races; belief in the inherent superiority of some races over others, usu with the implication of a right to be dominant; discriminative treatment based on such belief."

I think that the nested implication formed from those two definitions would very much include anti-Americanism within their scope.

Some people suggest that this is an invalid use, since the use of the word 'racism' in reference to anti-Americanism is a colloquially coined figure of speech, however, unlike many figures of speech, this one holds accurate under even the most pedantic scrutiny. The “reason” for this racism is not detailed in the definition listed above. Whether the hatred is triggered by the actions of said race, the beholder’s bigotry, or superstition, it is still hatred/bad feeling, which gives rise to discriminative treatment, so therefore, regardless of reasoning and rationalisation, Anti-{anyone}ism is Racism. Substitute {anyone} for “America”, and we have the conclusion to the argument of section 1 that “Anti-Americanism is racism too”.

## Section 2: Response to Foreign Policy

It is no exaggeration that perhaps the largest complaint I hear repeated in both popular conversation and the media in this country is that Americans have brought it upon themselves by their foreign policy.

I will not for a moment pretend that the foreign policy of any administration of any country is in any way perfect or ideal. That is simply not possible in an imperfect world.

With this in mind, it does have to be said that the United States is in a particularly difficult quandary with regard to any given situation in international politics. This is because, as the only real superpower, what they decide to do usually happens. (Including instances of deciding to do nothing). It is no overly arrogant statement to make that the world's greatest massacres have happened when the US has failed to use its power to get the world to act, and by the same measure, enormous suffering has been prevented in scenarios where appropriate pressure was brought to bear.

The best way to sum up US foreign policy since the Second World War is to say that everything has been in response to a perceived threat, real or otherwise. The US involvement in the UN engagement in the Korean War was to prevent a key ally of theirs falling to communism. Given the current situation in North Korea, I doubt that anyone can say with any credibility that the South Korean people would have been better off without intervention.

Vietnam was a similar struggle, given what the world was seeing in neighbouring countries it is understandable that first the French, and then the Americans saw it as imperative to try to stop the Vietcong in their tracks. The mass deployment of US troops in Europe during those years was a direct response to the very real threat of a soviet invasion. (If this threat is doubted I recommend a conversation with any middle-aged European who can remember living through the cold war.) After the cold war was over, the Clinton years saw a very new brand of American international policy: "Don't have one unless you're asked about it." During this time, the maintenance of most existing international ties, and the forging of new ones, was done by trade in preference to government. Militarily, that gave birth to a policy of ignoring provocation, and only intervening in a situation if the United Nations or Congress requested it. (As was the case in Somalia in 1992-1993.) This is mostly because the United States had been receiving precisely the same sort of criticism that is now leveled against it with regard to interventionist foreign policy.

The overall effect of this change was to signal to the US' enemies in the rest of the world that they were weak, and no longer willing to fight for their principles. [Saddam's Secrets, by Georges Sada, Integrity Publishers 2006 ISBN 1591455049]

Because of this perceived weakness, those who had a longstanding grudge against the US felt that they could attack and not face any consequences. In many cases they were right; the attack on the USS Cole was not retaliated against, nor was the bomb truck that ploughed into the US Embassy in Nairobi, killing more than 200 people. When US troops came under significant attack in Somalia, whilst trying to save the country from starvation, they were ordered to leave rather than retaliating. As a result, Somalia has not had any form of government or authority since, and remains on the FCO's list of countries not to be travelled to under any circumstances. [<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/travel-advice-by-country/?action=noTravelAll#noTravelAll>]

Post 9/11 history is relatively well known. Baseless and unfounded conspiracy theories aside, this is no different to the general pattern of US foreign activity as outlined before: It is the response to a threat. The US army is not in Afghanistan to conquer it and claim it as another state, nor is it in Iraq to subdue the region as a colony and loot it of oil. If the primary goal of US intervention were the acquisition of oil, they would have already intervened in Darfur, since Sudan has more oil than Iraq did before the 2003 Iraq War began. Tragically, the years of pacifism and 'forgiveness politics' failed to improve the situation. The simple fact is that US foreign policy is designed with one primary purpose in mind: to allow the continuation of US domestic policy without sabotage or bloodshed from external forces and powers.

### Section 3: A response to allegations regarding US Domestic troubles

Once again, we must see these allegations against the background principle that no state of affairs can be perfect within the imperfect construct that is the nature of the world. One fairly pertinent allegation made against the American proponents of the 'anti-anti-Americanism' viewpoint is that The US is very racist itself, and thus should stop moaning and fix itself first. This argument is founded on a very sound principle, in fact the biblical one, of not being hypocritical. That is all very well, apart from the fact that this charge is itself hypocritical: it is a tragic reality that every culture is racist in some form. It is all very well telling others to 'sort themselves out', but unless we are willing to sort ourselves out also, our words are nothing more than graceless hillocks in fields of attitudes. A glance at pivotal moments and people in history will show that the most influential change happens when a society or people change themselves first. In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century it was William Wilberforce's demonstratively led campaign against slavery that led to its abolition throughout the British Empire. The example set by that otherwise internal change has led to slavery being illegal in almost every country in the world.

Once again it is time for us to take the lead and Change ourselves first, in the hope that by creating a culture free of racism in all its forms will lead others to do the same. If others do not follow suit, then that is a blot on their conscience, not on our responsibility. It is not up to us to peddle hatred against those who have yet to rid themselves of it, otherwise we are back to square one. The main argument against the "Americans are often racist themselves" argument is: 'so what?'

Racism as a justification for racism is pure hypocrisy.

Other common anti-American objections are ignorance, stupidity, obesity and evangelical Christianity. Briefly responding to these:

In dealing with the first two, I have no reason to suspect that the average American is any less intelligent than the average person from anywhere else. One trait I have noticed is that other cultures are generally much more ashamed of any deficit in the intellect of the individual, especially ours. [Watching the English, by Kate Fox, Published by Hodder & Stoughton 2005 ISBN 0340818867] and as such will make a much greater attempt to hide it. If all cultures bar one are scared of looking stupid and take action to prevent that happening, then that one remaining culture is inevitably going to be lumbered with that image. In keeping with this theme, patriotism is not to be confused with blind loyalty. If the population of the United States had blind loyalty then the party affiliation of the president and representatives of certain areas would never change, and democracy would be a futile waste of money.

On obesity, that is not an inherent characteristic of Americans. Many if not most Americans are fit and healthy. The decisions of a proportion of a population cannot be used to judge the whole of that population, otherwise it might be alleged that all Englishmen are binge drinking benefit scroungers.

Finally, onto Evangelical Christianity. One of the basic principles of all western culture is that a person can believe and follow any faith they choose to do so without recrimination unless following that faith calls them to infringe other people's rights to do likewise. The belief in God of an individual does not make them moronic, nor does it make them stupid or weak. The church as a whole has been guilty of ostracising people whose actions oppose its stance on various issues such as abortion etc; however that falls outside the scope of this debate and will be covered in another document on Church History to be released in the coming months.

## Section 4: Wrap-up and Conclusion

So far it has been established that Anti-Americanism is indeed racism, and as such is a problem in our society that must be eradicated for the good of both our culture and those who lie beyond it. An attempt has also been made to analyse some of the allegations and rationalisations for this racism, and determine whether or not they are justified.

In conclusion, it must be said and re-iterated that there can be no justification for racism in any form, whether it is the anti-Black racism that has dominated headlines for decades, the prevailing anti-patriotic racism that many westerners hold in hatred for their own country, or the Anti-Americanism that has spread across the world.

It is tragic that Anti-American ideas are so easily passed through rumour, while reconciliatory ideas and notions must be backed up with catalogues of evidence before they are even considered, purely because of the fact that it is so much easier to hate than to keep an objective open mind.

The United States finds itself at the sharp end of a media war waged by the main media corporations of the west set ardently against it. At a lecture to celebrate the release of his book "Uncouth Nation", Andrei Markovits was told by one European newspaper reporter that he had been instructed by the editor to "bring back dirt and filth" for an article against the US. [<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-vQxTxWe88>]

Unfortunately it doesn't matter how unpopular a magazine or newspaper becomes, if they take a few pot-shots at the US they will get sales.

The US finds itself stuck between a rock and a hard place in terms of foreign policy. If they decide upon intervention, large groups of society accuse them of imperialism and conquest-orientated ulterior motives, as happened over the Iraq war. If they decide against intervention, the same groups of society accuse them of neglecting their duty of care and prevention, as has happened in the argument over any potential US involvement in Darfur. These views are incompatible, it is not right to place the US in a catch-22 of criticism.

Our society is not perfect, neither is that of the US. However, neither of those two statements can form premises for arguing the justification of Anti-American Racism. They do not justify hatred, they justify a call to improvement, a determination to better ourselves and liberate our respective societies of so much that has held us back in the past.

They justify ridding ourselves of the last bastion of acceptable bigotry in our society and being prepared to set an example, to say loud and clear that not only are all people born equal, but that we are prepared to act accordingly and treat all people as equal, without preconceived judgments or inhibitions. It justifies making a small change for a big difference in an otherwise hate-filled world.