The United States: Exposing the hypocrisy of a nation
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"The feeling of the nation must be quickened; the conscience of the nation must be roused; the propriety of the nation must be must be startled; the hypocrisy of the nation must be exposed; and its crimes against God and man must be proclaimed and denounced."— Frederick Douglass, Black American leader, writer, editor and lecturer.¹

On the Fourth of July in 1852 in the American city of Rochester, New York before a celebratory crowd that included then President of the United States Millard Fillmore,² the abolitionist, former slave and gifted Black orator Fredrick Douglass, in what was perhaps the most caustic speech he ever delivered, spelled out in no uncertain terms what the American Independence day meant to slaves ensnared in the so-called empire of liberty.³

"There is not a nation on the earth guilty of practices more shocking and bloody than are the people of the United States," declared Fredrick Douglass and this was in 1852!⁴ Over the next century and a half, the United States would add a plethora of abominations, unknown to Mr. Douglass, to its ever-expanding list of condemnable practices, including the following to name but a few: being the first nation to attack another with nuclear weapons⁵; invading and occupying sovereign nations in defiance of international law;⁶ using depleted uranium weaponry;⁷ firebombing civilian population centers with napalm and other incendiary munitions;⁸ spraying carcinogenic chemical defoliants;⁹ engaging in assassination drone warfare;¹⁰ starving half a million children to death by economic sanctions;¹¹ overthrowing democratically-elected governments by covert operations;¹² detaining foreign citizens indefinitely in concentration camps;¹³ torturing detainees during interrogation and legally justifying the practice;¹⁴ leading the world in incarcerating prisoners and privatizing the prison industry;¹⁵ and spying without cause on peace activists,¹⁶ corporate protestors,¹⁷ Muslims,¹⁸ and other minority groups.¹⁹

But one need not look any further than the racist American republic’s subjugation of its nonwhite population to understand the atrocities Mr. Douglass was condemning over 160 years ago. Popular patriotic mythology narrates the saga of the American Civil War (1861-1865)²⁰ in terms of a group of rebellious racist southern states of the Confederacy clinging tenaciously to the morally repugnant institution of slavery against the collective will of the “progressive” northern states of the Union, however the truth is quite different. Consider, for example, the sacrosanct American national myth every schoolchild knows that the enlightened President Abraham Lincoln “freed the slaves” by issuing the Emancipation Proclamation on 1 January 1863.²¹

During the American Civil War, Black slaves fled the south and headed north to be “free men” only to be returned to their rebel owners, as was the policy of President Lincoln’s administration, which also barred Blacks from joining the Union Army. In the month of August 1862, Lincoln confided that he would rather resign than use Black soldiers and had no intention of freeing the slaves.²² So, when one foresighted Union general, John C. Frémont, boldly issued a command to free the slaves formerly belonging to Missouri rebels, Lincoln annulled his order.²³

In truth, Lincoln wanted to cleanse the U. S. of free Blacks, but not necessarily of slaves,²⁴ going so far as to advise a group of five Black leaders on 14 August 1862 that it was their duty to leave...
America. Lincoln told the Blacks quite bluntly that they would have to go, saying, "There is an unwillingness on the part of our people, harsh as it may be, for you free colored people to remain with us," and, with typical racist mindset, proposed the formation of a Black colony in Central America, asking the leaders to recruit Black settlers who could think like white men.  

What is not widely understood is that the Emancipation Proclamation was not universal in scope but only applied to those states of the Confederacy which had seceded from the Union but were not yet under the military control of the Union forces. Lincoln’s proclamation did not free the people of color still enslaved in the northern and border-states or in Confederate states occupied by the Union army. In short, Lincoln’s proclamation “freeing” the slaves only applied to the Confederate strongholds where he had no power to enforce its provisions.

Furthermore, Lincoln’s reason for signing the declaration was not altruism; it may have been out of fear that Great Britain, France or other European powers would recognize the legitimacy of the Confederate struggle against the oppressive U.S. central government and provide arms and financial aid to the south. At that time, cotton held the same economic importance as oil does today and was the United States’ main export to Europe, which depended on the U.S. for its supply. By an informal embargo of cotton, primarily from the south planted and harvested by slave labor, the Confederacy had hoped to force Britain to its side, but the maneuver backfired and compelled the English to turn to other sources such as India, Egypt and Brazil. Consequently, it seems more likely that Union generals viewed freed Black slaves as potential recruits to fight against their former rebel masters and convinced Lincoln to sign the document.

Not only did the Emancipation Proclamation not free any slaves on 1 January 1863, but also it either re-enslaved or continued the slavery of some 500,000 human beings, more, in fact, than the misnamed document ever freed. Certainly, it did nothing to stem the overt racism that had infected the white society to the core. Those Black soldiers who fought alongside white men in the Union army were not even paid the same salary. “They were promised thirteen dollars per month. They were insulted with an offer of seven dollars,” lamented Col. N. P. Hallowell.

In one of the most brutally racist incidents of the civil war, Major General Nathan Bedford Forrest led a group of Confederate forces in a massacre at Fort Pillow, Tennessee in which 300 Black Union soldiers as well as civilian men, women and children were slaughtered after the fort had surrendered. Shouting, “kill all the niggers!” Forrest’s troops shot Blacks in cold blood, nailed them to logs and buried them alive—men along with women and children. While Blacks fought valiantly in hopes of achieving a modicum of racial equality, the superiority of white Americans was ultimately reaffirmed which led to a renewal in the 1890s of an imperialistic U.S. foreign policy, which intensified after the financial panic of 1893. All of this was bad enough, but perhaps the worst atrocity to come out of the Civil War was an affirmation of what was to become a predominant American political pattern; that war unifies the citizenry and fuels the economy like nothing else, a view that unfortunately still persists among the U.S. leadership today. Huge war profits flowed to the likes of John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie and other plutocrats then just as they continue to do now as a result of the U.S.-initiated Global War on Terror. And in the same way that in our times Washington pursues a policy of spreading global conflict and chaos to divert American citizens’ attention from their own country’s internal social and economic woes, in those days U.S. Secretary of State William
Seward proposed starting a war with one or more of the European colonial powers to unite the American people and avert the outbreak of civil war at home.34

And let us not overlook the steadfast white racism that remains embedded in the U.S.-led War on Terror. Initiated supposedly in response to an 11 September 2001 al-Qaeda attack on the New York World Trade Center, the War on Terror has thus far claimed the lives of 49,000 in Afghanistan,35 36,000 in Pakistan,36 1.4 million in Iraq,37 7,000 in Somalia,38 1,050 in Yemen,39 and many more elsewhere. In total, close to 1.5 million victims in the Middle East and Central Asia, virtually all of whom are people of color, have been sacrificed to placate the god of self-righteous white-racist U.S. anger over an incident that claimed 2,996 lives40—roughly 500 people mostly-of-color killed to atone for each single mostly-white-American life lost—a powerfully damning testament to the enduring American credo of white supremacy.

To conclude, please permit the writer the sublime privilege of borrowing a few words from the eloquent Black orator Frederick Douglass to make a prediction concerning the U.S.; for its revolting barbarity and shameless hypocrisy, like slavery itself, the doom of the United States of America is certain.41 And I'm confident that when the insufferable U.S. imperium finally implodes, most of the world’s people will breathe a huge sigh of relief, as also shall I.

Endnotes

4 Ralph F. Young, ibid. p. 211.
5 The first use of atomic bombs on Hiroshima, 6 August 1945 and Nagasaki, 9 August 1945. The U.S.-Japanese Radiation Effects Research Foundation indicates a range of 90,000 to 166,000 deaths within the first four months. See Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, URL: http://www.ctbto.org/specials/infamous-anniversaries/6-and-9-august-1945hiroshima-nagasaki/ (Accessed 7 January 2013).
9 Agent Orange, a chemical herbicide containing carcinogenic chemicals was used in Vietnam, Korea and elsewhere. See Howard Zinn, ibid., p. 478.
The U.S. government and the CIA has been involved in overthrowing governments around the world since 1953. Among the countries whose governments have been toppled are Syria, Iran, Guatemala, and others. For Iran, see Stephen Kinzer, *All the Shah’s Men*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2003. For a complete list, see Steve Kangas, *A Timeline of CIA Atrocities*. URL: http://www.huppi.com/kangaroo/CIAtimeline.html (Accessed 7 January 2013).

Foreign nationals have been detained at Guantanamo prison camp and elsewhere since November 2001. See Michel Chossudovsky, *ibid.*, pp.205-207.

While torture under the rubric of enhanced interrogation techniques has been used at Guantanamo, it was used in Vietnam. See Howard Zinn, *ibid.*, p. 478.


Lerone Bennett, Jr., *ibid.*, pp. 179-180.

The *Emancipation Proclamation*, *ibid.*


Lerone Bennett, Jr., *ibid.*, pp. 184-185.

Lerone Bennett, Jr., *ibid.*, p. 186.

Lerone Bennett, Jr., *ibid.*, p. 186.


Walter L. Hixson, *ibid.*, p. 79.


