



Forum 1

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Exceptionalism

by Joe Escobar - Saturday, April 11, 2015, 12:03 PM

This forum thread is for Exceptionalism Topic posts and replies.

After studying the required materials, address the various questions. For purposes of encouraging discussion, you should group your responses into SEPARATE posts. To make your POSTS, click the reply link in this, MY post. To reply to another student's post, be sure to click the reply link within in THEIR post.

IMPORTANT - SUBJECT LINES

BE SURE to use an informative subject line for your post. Do NOT simply leave it RE: Exceptionalism

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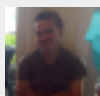
Tradition/religion is not always the best way for exceptionalism.

by James Haynes - Sunday, April 12, 2015, 11:27 PM

In the article "IN DEFENSE OF AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM" it talks about a speech by President Obama where he answers the question "Do you think that America is exceptional?" His reply had a lot of controversy from mainly conservatives because he made exceptionalism not special and seem like it could be achieved by other countries(The American Spectator). I believe President Obama does truly believe that America is exceptional. We are not exceptional because of traditional values. Progressing and changing our country for the better is what makes the United States exceptional. If we stuck to tradition all the time America would not be the land of the free. Child labor, poor food sanitation and many other horrible things would all still exist if it was not for progressives. Today religion plays a big part in politics and it really shouldn't. This nation was made because we wanted to get away from religion imposing on our freedom. However, people that have conservative views are doing exactly what we wanted to get away from and bringing religion into politics. If we were to get away from religion running government I believe that America can be more exceptional and that can go for other countries as well.

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I wouldnt agree

by Samuel Black - Friday, April 17, 2015, 2:20 PM

You said "[Obama] made exceptionalism not special and seem like it could be achieved by other countries" but it's not that he made it seem like any country could become exceptional, it's that he implied no one is and that the belief in your country's exceptionalism is solely based on the fact that you live there. You could also say he believes every country is exceptional since every country believes they are, and if, as you say, Obama does believe America is exceptional, then everyone must be. If you search in Google define:exceptional (1) you will see that is means "unusual; not typical" and "unusually good; outstanding". If every country is unusual / unusually good / outstanding then it stands to reason that no country is outstanding. Something even you clearly don't believe.

How do you propose that ditching religion would in any way make us exceptional? We would not be the first, Turkey is already a fully secular government and society, and it’s even illegal for Muslims to wear full headscarves (2) there as well as in France (3). Therefore, removing religion would be nothing exceptional.

You also state that “This nation was made because we wanted to get away from religion...” when the truth is a little different. This country was made for, and by religion and religious people, particularly Christians. I’d recommend Joe’s history 201 class, I found it very helpful on the topic of our nation’s founding. Now don’t get me wrong, there were many other reasons why the Pilgrims boarded the Mayflower and set sail to a new land. But if you are going to argue those points, then you cannot also argue that they came here just to get away from religious tyranny. Or you cannot argue that religious freedom did not play at least a decent role in the reason for separatists to come to the new land.

(1) [https://www.google.com/search?q=google&sourceid=ie7&rls=com.microsoft:en-us:IE-Address&ie=&oe=&gws_rd=ssl#rls=com.microsoft:en-us:IE-Address&q=define:exceptional]

(2) [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Headscarf_controversy_in_Turkey]

(3) [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/French_ban_on_face_covering]

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American Exceptionalism; a valid excuse.

by Tyler Dennis - Monday, April 13, 2015, 7:15 PM

After reading the article “Defense of American Exceptionalism”, I would have to say that yes, we as a nation, and our government still use exceptionalism as we did at the turn of the 20th century. America’s leaders have always believed that a free, democratic society should be the goal of every established government. From the turn of the 20th century until modern times Americas leaders have used this belief to justify and rally support for military intervention against various tyrannical leaders and alliances that have threatened the American way of life. From the World wars, the Vietnam war, the cold war, and the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, Americas leaders have used the idea that America’s ideals of freedom and democracy were so exceptional and ideal for humanity, that fighting for them all across the world whenever they are threatened is moral, justified, and even required of the worlds democratic superpower. The majority of our population in America has gone along with this idea from the turn of the 20th century to modern day. The idea of American exceptionalism has been the driving factor of our country’s foreign policy over the last century and beyond.

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President Obama and American Exceptionalism

by Colt Eubank - Monday, April 13, 2015, 8:16 PM

After reading the article I feel as though Obama truly believes America is the greatest country on Earth. I cannot disagree with him on this. I as many others have been raised to believe and even brag that America is the best country the world has ever seen. I myself have served in the United States Army as a Combat Engineer (12B) and did one tour in Iraq for Operation New Dawn (2010-2011). I believe this gives me a unique perspective on the situation. I do not believe America should intervene into conflicts unless explicitly asked to help. Don't get me wrong I was willing to give my life for this country when my Commander In Chief (Obama) gave my Unit orders to deploy to Iraq. But at the same time I don't like the fact that so many soldiers gave their lives defending a country that did not want us there in the first place. I've known many people that have lost friends and family over seas, and I cannot say at all it was worth it. I know that I would give any thing for my friend and brother in arms to be back in this world today, and not to have lost his life in a conflict that we should not have be involved in, Rest in Peace SPC Jose Torre.

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Elements of exceptionalism

by Jose Camarillo - Monday, April 13, 2015, 8:42 PM

The difference between the leaders of chapter 22 and our current leaders is that the leaders of chapter 22 were trying to keep American exceptionalism going with imperialism. The current leaders aren't sure where to stand on American exceptionalism because that is our current state. Like Charles Murray we use to be, but currently it doesn't feel like we are.

We definitely don't use exceptionalism as it was used in the 20th century. I feel like the decline started around the time period of chapter 22 when we finally started running out of frontier. I agreed with Charles Murray the most because he phrased it exactly like I would have we have some elements of exceptionalis, but not like we use to, and it would be difficult to get back to where we were. I disagree most with Evan Sayet because I feel like Barrack Obama did his best answering that question and not because of lack of being American, but because he is like the rest of the country and is unsure where we stand.

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Political Dichotomy

by Woodrow Elsasser - Monday, April 13, 2015, 8:44 PM

In the visible history of American politics, it is clear that there are two, and only two sides that matter - Democratic and Republican. Each of these two parties can only view one another through the lens of their own rifles, fixed to wound the opposition. It is this dichotomous approach to politics in America that I believe is forcing us to lose touch with our exceptionalism as a nation. There is such a gap between either side of the political spectrum that all middle ground is lost completely. In reading both of these two articles, it is challenging to read anything of value beneath all of the bullshit banter that has become American politics. Someone's placement on the political spectrum completely decides ones analysis of any issue in politics today, where its not about doing what is necessarily good for the Unites States or the world, but rather what is best for the democrats or the republicans. This is not how this country became exceptional, and it will not remain exceptional if it stays this way.

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Re: Political Dichotomy

by Tyler Dennis - Friday, April 17, 2015, 8:24 AM

I agree with you completley, and you may think that we are not exceptional, but do you think America as a whole BELIEVES we are exceptional? I feel like no matter how much we democrats and republicans disagree we always have the thought of exceptionalism in our back pocket. For instance, democracy, flexible labor markets, etc, we have a lot to fall back on.

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Re: Political Dichotomy

by Woodrow Elsasser - Friday, April 17, 2015, 5:16 PM

I never said I thought that America wasn't exceptional, and I actually think quite the opposite. I have always thought of the USA as the greatest country on earth for a myriad of reasons, but with that being said, I think we are losing touch with what has made us exceptional. If you look at the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, arguably the greatest empire in the history of western civilization, you can see the same forces in affect that took down Rome in America today. Looking throughout history, it is inevitable that you cannot stay at the top of the totem pole forever, as all of the greatest empires have fallen eventually. I still think America is exceptional, but the problems are adding up.

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we are no longer exceptional.

by Jared Trapp - Monday, April 13, 2015, 9:38 PM

When Obama said that every country thought of its self as exceptional, I couldn't help but agree. We, as Americans, think that we are unstoppable. That we are the best. I watched this video on Youtube, here is the link https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZPHSXUS0_1c . If that doesn't work, just Google why America isn't the greatest country anymore. There will be more that enough information to open the eyes of anyone who claims otherwise. I think Obama said what he said because he was being honest. We are not exceptional. We are average just like everyone else. (except of course for our military, that can reduce Anything, Anywhere, to rubble in a matter of hours)

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Re: we are no longer exceptional.
by [Tyler Dennis](#) - Wednesday, April 15, 2015, 9:21 AM

In the beginning of this article, Barack Obama downplays the term of American Exceptionalism when he relates it to other countries feeling the same way about their homelands and according to the article implying that “American Exceptionalism is nothing terribly special and instead simply chalked it up to the romanticism of patriotism.” Later in the article we get a different response. Barack Obama then say’s “America is the greatest nation on Earth. We are not just any other nation, and we are certainly not analogous to our friends in Europe and elsewhere. Our exceptionalism is forever ingrained in our founding documents that spell out exactly the roles of the federal government in relation to individual rights and states' rights. Weather politicians think we may or may not, we still have the idea of American exceptionalism to a degree. I believe America is the greatest country in the world, as do many. As Obama addressed in this article and according to my research English writer G. K. Chesterton noted, "America is the only nation in the world that is founded on a creed", and that is what sets us apart from many other countries.

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President Obama and exceptionalism
by [Katherine Potter](#) - Monday, April 13, 2015, 10:10 PM

Are we the greatest country on earth like Obama sais in the article? After reading the article and when obama said that "we are the greatest country on earth" all i could do was think how completely wrong that is. We may be one of the better countries but we are not the best. We have people that cant afford to go to the hospital, we have homeless people. We have freedom but we are not the only ones and we seem to forget that a lot, Japan, the UK, France all have freedom. We definitley are not the best in schooling, life expectancy. Its not a proven fact that we are the best country if we were the best how is it that are government let us go into so much debt. I love america but i hate when people say we are the best. We are not superior to any other nation and there are statistics to prove this.

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The transformation of American Exceptionalism
by [Jaalen Johnson](#) - Monday, April 13, 2015, 10:47 PM

Watching the video on American Exceptionalism where Barack Obama says "Yes, I do believe in American Exceptionalism. Just like I suspect the Brits believe in British Exceptionalism and the Greeks believe in Greek Exceptionalism." was very interesting because one of the speakers: Evan Sayet talks about why Obama doesn't believe in American Exceptionalism.

Sayet argues that Obama believes in US Exceptionalism because he simply lives here. Which I disagree with. Obviously the politician in Obama wants to feed to both sides of the argument, so it is the easy way out. Although Obama doesn't exactly boast in American Exceptionalism like a Teddy Roosevelt would because of his sense of strength and dominance I still believe the reason for Obama replying is such a vague was because what politician doesn't.

I personally don't think Teddy Roosevelt would have replied with such an answer just because its not in Teddy's personality to be so drawn back, he is much more assertive and ready to dominate.

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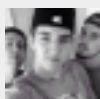
America Exceptionalist
by [Javonte Jenkins](#) - Tuesday, April 14, 2015, 11:23 AM

Being the greatest country in the world I can't completely agree to, but America is unique. Teddy Roosevelt expounds conservation of natural resources, control of corporations, and consumers protection also known as the "square deal." I feel as if America came a long way but those "3 C's" still play a big role in our legislative branch. Obama does a great job at not boasting Americas strength through our military like previous presidents, but classifying the U.S. as exceptional because you live here is not accurate. This is an eye opening subject and I believe America will get better as nation. Eventually..

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Re: America Exceptionalist
by [Tyler Dennis](#) - Wednesday, April 15, 2015, 9:30 AM



Obama did in fact say in 2008 that America has the finest fighting source the world has ever known, and i think that is exceptionalism in itself. Even if some may think Obama may not boast our strength through our military like previous presidents, the numbers often speak for themselves. America has and has had the largest military budget for awhile now and i think that ties into exceptionalism.

http://www.salon.com/2011/01/06/american_military_finest/

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Re: America Exceptionalist

by [Katherine Potter](#) - Saturday, April 18, 2015, 11:48 PM

We may have a great fighting fighting force but we tend to use it for the wrong purposes. We invade lands when we should just defend our own soil from attacks. What happened to wanting peace. I know that wars and fighting go way back in history but everyone knew the boundary's of war fare. How many life's must we lose to have the greatest fighting force. Over time the American army may have gotten stronger and bigger but now we are perceived more as a threat. Since we have gotten bigger the other nations feel the need to gear up for war. In term it is are fault for creating more fighting.

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Obama's speech

by [Mirna Becerra](#) - Friday, April 17, 2015, 7:39 PM

I do agree that Obama's speech did highlight American exceptionalism. After reading the article on salon.com I can see why the author argues the point that Obama doesn't believe in American exceptionalism even though he talks about it, it doesn't necessarily mean he's all for it. The article talked bout how Obama's mindset about exceptionalism was described as this “the United States isn’t like other countries; ours is a country with unique power, responsibilities, and moral obligations”. What I get from that is simply that Obama doesn't truly think america is the greatest, like 80% of people do. I believe that we are great but not the greatest.

Sum of ratings:1 (1)

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Exceptionalism Is (Somewhat) Still Present

by [Kendra Helgeson](#) - Saturday, April 18, 2015, 4:01 PM

I see both similarities and differences in the country's leaders from chapter 22 and today's leaders. The biggest difference I see is that today's leaders aren't as confident about being the most exceptional country in the world because it's not. America does rank 1st in the world in many things, but they aren't the most important ones that are worth bragging about. Back then America was number one in almost everything so they had a reason to brag. I do believe that American exceptionalism is still very present today, but the leaders are more aware of what every other country in the world is like. Evan Sayet makes a good point when he says that Obama saying he believes in American Exceptionalism just like the British and Greeks believe in their own exceptionalism, basically saying he doesn't believe in it. I think that Obama has a different point of view on it because he is African American another side of American history more than others.

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