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Have We Humbled Yet? The Other Side of the Tracks By Perry Redd BC Columnist

I wrote a commentary over a decade ago; as a matter of fact, 11 years to the day: September 11, 2001. I wrote on what has become an ongoing theme: the arrogance of America. I said, "Today, America's arrogance was rectified."

Suffice to say, I was lambasted and attacked as being unpatriotic, un-American and even, treasonous. On the day of the attacks, I watched in disbelief with my co-workers at Whirlpool Corporation in Knoxville, Tennessee. As others hefted blame on "those Middle Eastern terrorists," I advised my co-workers to look elsewhere...inward.

Since that fateful day, we've learned a lot about our country, our government and ourselves. We've witnessed America go from anger, to fear, to deliberation, then to growth. It took years for the facts of the matter to leak out and expose our culpability. It took years before blind loyalty turned into outright dissent. It took years before the outright lies told to us by our trusted leaders turned our scrutiny into rightful skepticism and cynicism. It took years before we came to the point where we realized that America is not always in the right.

During the Democratic convention last week, I was surprised to hear the term "American Exceptionalism." That term, coming from the more liberal side of the aisle is unusual, but then I realized, it's an American thing. The Democrat who made that statement then tempered it with the reality that others are exceptional too. I am of the mind that we're in serious competition for an exceptionalism that places us at the top

of the food chain. We cannot run roughshod over others and not expect them to respond in-kind.

My commentary from this day 11 years ago looked like this:

September 11, 2001 is a day that will live in infamy...I can live this life and say for sure that there was a day that I will **never** forget. Some recall where they were when events commenced, such as Pearl Harbor or the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy - and for African-Americans, Martin Luther King, Jr. The September 11 attack on America is one of those incidents. But there's one factor *about* the attack that makes it almost as disturbing as the attack itself. The September 11 attack could have been avoided.

I am committed to telling the truth. Today, America's arrogance was rectified; its vulnerability, exposed. American's were, for lack of better words - stunned. There was, I believe, a most significant event leading up to this tragedy and massive loss. After last week's walk-out at the Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa, to address Racism by America and Israel, this episode of retaliation was a time bomb waiting to happen.

Taking the view of the Black Radical Congress, it is without question that US imperialism has brought genocidal levels of death and destruction to people around the world. Whether one looks at the situation in Iraq with the continual blockade and air bombardments, the situation in Palestine where the US continues to give virtually uncritical support to the Israelis in their national oppression of the Palestinians, or the economic blockade against Cuba which aims to undermine its economy and weaken its population, or any number of other US-backed incursions, one clearly sees the callousness and evil intent with which US imperialism treats the lives and property of others, especially non-white peoples around the globe.

Yet, even with a firm understanding of the causes of this act of desperation, fury, and hatred of US

imperialism, turning to terrorism to fight global oppression and exploitation is not an acceptable strategy.

In retrospect, I can say with confidence that I was right. The imperialist strategy hasn't worked for us - especially, the poor and working class of this country. The economy has worsened - for working-class Americans, that is; war contractors looted Iraq's money; and Republicans didn't even invite the architects of their response to 9/11 to their own convention this year! There was no Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld or even "Scooter" Libby. No Colin Powell...

We are still fighting the "War on Terror." Like the unwelcomed house guest who won't leave, we remain in Afghanistan despite Afghans desire for us to leave their country, which they show us in the form of IEDs in our path. Though the US killed Osama bin Laden (at least that's what we were told), the body didn't die. Even though we periodically manage to kill an al-Qaeda #2, we can't seem to locate #3.

As we deliberately withdraw troops from two US-invaded and US-occupied nations, our country attacks teachers whom we entrust to impart knowledge to our children. We keep spending money for war, but want to pull money from teachers, firefighters and policemen.

We haven't even completed the new World Trade Center memorial site. No progress has been made in the Israel-Palestine saga as the US continues to back an even more racist and imperialist policy of occupation than it did 11 years ago.

Americans have grown tired of the drama, but has she humbled herself? At least, this year, there was no terror alert. Maybe the terrorists weren't after *us* after all? It's such a shame it took us 11 years to figure out the boogey man 'ain't' real. How about sorting the rest of the fact from fiction? How long might that take?

BlackCommentator.com Columnist, Perry Redd, is the former Executive Director of the workers rights advocacy, *Sincere Seven*, and author of the on-line commentary, "[The Other Side of the Tracks](#)." He is the host of the internet-based talk radio show, *Socially Speaking in Washington, DC*. Click [here](#) to contact Mr. Redd.



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