

The Lincoln Curse (Obama Edition)

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In an essay entitled "Lincoln, the Declaration, and Secular Puritanism: A Rhetoric for Continuing Revolution," the late literary scholar Mel Bradford explained the ideological genesis of American military and foreign policy that has prevailed since 1863. Lincoln's "erroneous understanding of the Declaration of Independence" as espoused in The Gettysburg Address, wrote Bradford, established "a rhetoric for continuing revolution" and "set us forever to u2018trampling out the grapes of wrath."

What Bradford meant by this is the way in which Lincoln quoted the "all men are created equal" line from the Declaration and reinterpreted it to mean that it was somehow the duty of Americans to stamp out all sin in the world, wherever it may be found, so that ALL MEN everywhere could share in equal freedom. Hence the "rhetoric of continuing revolution." The "Battle Hymn of the Republic," which referred to the death of some 850,000 Americans (the latest estimate of the "Civil War" death toll) as "the glory of the coming of the lord," went a long way toward implanting this vision in the minds of Americans. The decades-long deification of Lincoln after his death (by the Republican Party with the help of the New England clergy) served (and serves) the same purpose.

Prior to 1863 American foreign policy was based mostly on the Washington/Jeffersonian ideology of commercial relations with all nations, entangling alliances with none. It was considered a virtue to remain neutral in disputes between two other countries. As Murray Rothbard wrote in an essay entitled "Just War," in those days "neutrality was considered not only justifiable but a positive virtue." In the old days, "he kept us out of war" was a great tribute to any political leader, wrote Rothbard, and "standing idly by" while other nations warred with each other was "a mark of high statesmanship." Lincoln and his political descendants in both major political parties, but especially the Republican Party, changed all that with their enormously successful implantation of Lincoln's imperialist fantasies about perfecting the entire planet as the bedrock of American foreign policy ideas.

Only a believer in such fantasies could work as a speech writer for President George W. Bush and put in his mouth words about "eliminating evil from the earth," which Dub-Yuh declared as his goal in commencing his "War on Terra." (His speech writers never could teach him to enunciate the words "terror" and "nuclear," as opposed to "terra" and "nuke-you-ler"). Indeed, Republican Party Propaganda organs such as the Claremont Institute have been almost exclusively devoted for decades to spreading this Lincolnian propaganda by pretending to be the One Sole Source of Truth about THE REAL MEANING of the Declaration of Independence (in sharp contrast to the meaning intended by the author of the Declaration, Thomas Jefferson). It is the rhetoric of continuing military aggression, which of course is why the Claremont Institute has handed out "Statesman of the Year" awards in recent years to such figures as Donald Rumsfeld, Dick Cheney, and war propagandist Victor Davis Hanson.

This Lincolnian rhetoric has been the ideological cornerstone of all American wars ever since the "Civil War." It is usually used to disguise from the public the fact that war is always and everywhere a racket, as General Smedley Butler proclaimed in his famous book, War is a Racket. In reality, war is almost always waged over some hidden economic reasons for the benefit of the politically-connected class. As Rothbard pointed out, in the old days, "interventionists were more correctly considered propagandists for despotism, mass murder, and

perpetual war, if not spokesmen for special interest groups, or agents of u2018the merchants of death.' Scarcely a high ground."

But today, armed with this hoary Lincolnian ideology, the American empire continues its generations-long crusade of "perpetual war for perpetual peace" where "we are obligated to take up the sword and wage a perpetual war to force Utopia on the entire world by guns, tanks, and bombs," according to Rothbard. We are "humanitarians with a guillotine," as Isabel Patterson described us in her book, *The God of the Machine*, pursuing "freedom and equality" for the people of other countries, even if we must kill them by the hundreds of thousands and bomb and wreck their civilizations. "The humanitarian in theory is the terrorist in action," wrote Isabel Patterson.

Which brings us to the latest rendition of Lincolnian humanitarianism with a guillotine, Obama's recent speech before the United Nations. The speech could have been written by the Claremont Institute's Harry Jaffa himself, the high priest of Lincoln idolatry and keeper of political correctness when it comes to interpreting the Declaration of Independence. In his September 25 speech before the United Nations Obama eulogized the American "representative" to Libya, Chris Stevens, who was murdered by anti-American protesters. Obama praised Stevens for having gone to Libya as his representative, and having "crafted a vision for a future" for Libyans. Think about that from the perspective of a Libyan. A foreign government instigates a revolution; imposes a puppet government; and then announces the "vision" that you must live by, presumably forever. You and your fellow citizens have nothing whatsoever to do with the elements of that "vision" or its enforcement by the puppet government.

Obama then went on to boast of all the recent American military aggressions in the name of humanitarianism, including interventions in Iraq, Afghanistan, Egypt, Yemen, and Libya, while threatening future wars with Syria and Iran ("We again declare that the regime of Bashar al-Assad must come to an end . . .").

Then came the "justification" for all of this military interventionism in the form of a textbook example of Lincolnian rhetoric of continuing revolution:

"We have taken these positions because we believe that freedom and self determination are not unique to one culture. These are not simply American values or Western values — they are universal values. And even as there will be huge challenges that come with a transition to democracy, I am convinced that ultimately **government of the people, by the people and for the people** is more likely to bring about the stability, prosperity, and individual opportunity that serve as a basis for peace in our world" (emphasis added).

Obama then promised more perpetual war for perpetual peace by declaring that "America will never retreat from the world" and that "No government or company; no school or NGO will be confident working in a country where its people are endangered . . . our citizens must be secure and our efforts must be welcomed."

That is, since Americans work and travel all over the world, any time "we" detect "danger" in any country anywhere, "we" believe that we have the "right" to either invade that country or to have our CIA orchestrate a bloody revolution there which may well cause the death of thousands. All men everywhere must be made equal — or else.