

Arrogant Americans, Mr. President?

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As I was sitting in church waiting for the start of the service, my grandpa came walking towards me pointing his finger. No matter how old I get, and no matter how long he's been out of the U.S. Navy, that's still an intimidating sight. As he approached me, his voice quivered as he said, "We saved that continent twice...how dare my president apologize for this country's arrogance." My grandpa is right. Americans need not apologize to the world for their arrogance; rather, Americans should apologize to their forefathers for the arrogance of their president.

Barack Obama's first foreign trip as President of the United States has confirmed the naiveté so many of us feared during the election cycle. But worse than that, it has also demonstrated that our president suffers from either a complete misunderstanding of our heritage and history, or an utter contempt for it. Neither is excusable.

Garnering cheers from the French of all people, President Obama declared, "In America, there is a failure to appreciate Europe's leading role in the world. Instead of celebrating your dynamic union and seeking to partner with you to meet common challenges, there have been times where America has shown arrogance and been dismissive, even derisive." Consider that Obama spoke these words just 500 miles from the beaches of Normandy, where the sand is still stained with 65-year-old blood of "arrogant Americans."

Indeed, columnist Mark Whittington observes, "One should

remind Mr. Obama and the Europeans how America has 'shown arrogance' by saving Europe from itself innumerable times in the 20th Century. World War I, World War II, the Cold War, and the wars in the Balkans were largely resolved by American blood, treasure, and leadership." But all that appears lost on the president's seemingly insatiable quest to mend fences he imagines have been tarnished by the bullish George W. Bush.

If Obama wishes to continue trampling the presidential tradition of showing class to former office holders and publicly trash Bush for his own personal gain, so be it. But all Americans should make clear that no man - even if he is the president - will tarnish the legacy of those Americans who have gone before us. Ours is not a history of arrogance. It is a history of courage, self-sacrifice, and honor.

When abusive monarchs repressed the masses, Americans resisted and overthrew them. When misguided policies led to the unjust oppression of fellow citizens, Americans rebelled and overturned them. When millions of impoverished and destitute wretches sought a new beginning, Americans threw open the door and welcomed them. When imperial dictators were on the march, Americans surrendered their lives to stop them. When communist thugs threatened world peace, Americans bled to defeat them. When an entire continent was overwhelmed with famine and hunger, Americans gave of themselves to sustain it. When terrorist madmen killed the innocent and subjugated millions, Americans led the fight to topple them.

This is the legacy that generations of Americans have left. If President Obama seeks stronger relations with the world

community, perhaps he should begin by reminding them of these very truths, rather than condemning his own countrymen on foreign shores.

This "obsessive need to put down his own country," has caused blogger James Lewis to call President Obama a "stunningly ignorant man" who has evidently never spoken to a concentration camp survivor, a Cuban refugee, a boat person from Vietnam, a Soviet dissident, or a survivor of Mao's purges.

Unfortunately, I can no longer bring myself to give Mr. Obama that benefit of the doubt. Not after looking at the pain in my grandpa's eyes...a man who still carries shrapnel in his body from his service to this country.

As a student and teacher of history, I recognize that America has made mistakes...plenty of them, in fact. But one of the great things about our people has been their courage and humility in admitting and correcting those mistakes. God willing, they will prove that willingness again in four years and correct the mistake that is the presidency of Barack Obama.

A veteran is someone who, at one point in his life wrote a blank check made payable to "The United States of America" for an amount of "up to and including my life." That is Honor, and there are way too many people in this country who no longer understand it.

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