

A close-up photograph of the American flag, showing the blue field with white stars and the red and white stripes. The flag is draped and slightly wrinkled, with the stars being the primary focus in the upper left quadrant. The background of the entire page is a solid dark blue/black color.

Is America a “Great” Country?

A Treatise on the United States of America

Is America a “Great” Nation?

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Written by Roy Tucker

What makes a nation great? Is it military might? Economic prowess? The soundness of its governmental foundations?

Can a nation have social imperfections and still be “great”?

In 1775, the entire world was governed by dictators- euphemistically called kings, czars or emperors. The people, as a whole, had little-to-no power to influence the decisions that greatly impacted their lives.

Then along came - as cynics call them - “old white men” (James Monroe 18; Nathan Hale 21; James Madison 25; Thomas Jefferson 33; John Hancock 40; Paul Revere 41) who forged a nation that changed the world. The people--via their elected representatives and a Constitution--finally had a say.

As a result, the rest of the world was changed. Representative democracies arose in one nation after another. This single occurrence qualifies the United States of America as a great nation. Just imagine the world without the United States to light a torch of democracy and freedom for the world.

The United States is fast approaching a milestone marking 250 years as a nation. During those years America has been the difference between oppression and freedom. America was the crucial difference in World War I and World War II, saving the world from the Nazis.

After World War II, the Soviet Union became one of the greatest threats to freedom in history. Only the United States stood between world freedom and Soviet domination. With the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990’s, America had beat back yet another oppressive regime.

In addition to being the world’s leader in the fight for freedom, America has an internal list of achievements that is so vast, it’s easy to take for granted.

Below are only a few.

- Wilber and Orville Wright invent the airplane and provide the world with air travel.
- Henry Ford makes automobiles affordable to ordinary workers.
- The telegraph makes instant communication possible.
- The telephone changes communications.
- The electric light turns night into day.
- Electricity- both AC and DC- changes energy from animals to machines.
- The gramophone brings music to millions.
- Flash freezing changes the food industry.
- The Trans-Oceanic cable changes communications around the world.
- The first nuclear reactor makes clean energy possible.
- The television brings instant visual communication to the world.
- The cell phone opens personal communication and a link to emergency responders.
- The Moon landing opens travel to space.
- The computer. The computer makes the impossible possible.
- The internet. The internet changes everything for the entire world by bringing information to us all.

There will always be cynics. There will always be haters. There will always be opportunists who will attempt to leverage whatever is **fashionable at the moment** for their own purposes.

There is a simple question for this group.

What if the United States of America had never existed?

Who would have brought about global democratic governments? Who would have stopped Adolf Hitler from acquiring the atomic bomb and the power to enslave?

Who would have stopped the Empire of Japan - after murdering hundreds of thousands of Chinese civilians- from expanding throughout the Pacific? And who would have stopped the Soviet Union from global domination?

And where would the amazing American contributions: electricity, telephone, electric grid, television, cell phone, computers and the internet come from?

American Capitalism

America has clearly achieved economic and military greatness with an incalculable impact on global affairs. But it is the American cultural and economic environment that fosters achievement that must be addressed.

John D. Rockefeller rose from abject poverty. As did **Andrew Carnegie**. As did **Oprah Winfrey**. And countless Americans. **Robert L. Johnson** was the ninth of ten children born in Hickory, Mississippi in 1946. He later cofounded **BET (Black Entertainment Television)**, became a billionaire and bought an NBA franchise. In America, rising from poverty to wealth is so common, it's a cliché to say America is the "Land of Opportunity".

But what is it about America that provides this launching pad for success? **Nikola Tesla** came to America and created an astonishing list of inventions—most notably the electrical standard for the world, alternating current.

Jerry Yang came to America from Taiwan at age eight. He later founded **Yahoo**. **Mel Martinez** was born in Cuba in the 1940's. He spoke no English when he came to America and lived with foster parents. He became the **Chairman of Chase Bank**. **Andy Grove** came to America in 1957. He spoke little English and had no money. He worked as a busboy while attending college. He cofounded **Intel** and later became the Chairman and CEO. **Sergey Brin** was born in Moscow to Jewish parents. He came to America as a child. He later cofounded **Google**, the most successful search engine in the world.

The list of American success stories seems endless. *Why is this?* Is it the freedom to pursue goals? Is the *environment* of America a launching pad for achievement?

American Imperfection

The **New York Yankees** have been such a dominant team - winning 27 World Series Championships - they became the most hated team in baseball. The **New England Patriots** went to ten Super Bowls in a span of twenty years. They became the most hated team in football.

Why would such extraordinary achievement garner such reaction?

Psychologists say this kind of reaction is an example of “venting” inner pain. People who carry anger or unhappiness can direct this anger and hurt towards a high profile target and relieve their bitterness and *increase their sense of self-importance* simultaneously. The greater the stature of the target, the greater the appeal of attacking that target.

How does this relate to the USA?

There are millions of people around the world who dream of coming to the United States. Each year America accepts the highest number of legal immigrants in the world. And there are millions who walk up to a thousand miles enduring hardship and extreme danger in order to enter the United States illegally.

And yet, many high profile Americans refer to the USA with epithets like “trash” and “racist” and more. Athletes, entertainers and people with high profiles repeatedly speak of how America is a “terrible” country. Ironically, these people are usually both incredibly wealthy and privileged and owe their success to the fact that they live in America.

America and Self-Correction

The Founders never envisioned “perfection”. (They studied history extensively which revealed every society has flaws). But they believed in the **IDEA** of America. The **HOPE** of America. A country based on a Constitutional Republic. A country based on *checks and balances*, a process that would *eventually find the right outcome* to issues where people were divided.

Slavery was legal when the United States became a nation in January 1784. This bitterly contentious issue fostered a war which ended slavery 79 years later (with Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation).

Slavery in America was and is a terrible stain on the country. It is a stain that persists and for some will never fade. But the Founders were proven correct. The country “self-corrected” and ended slavery.

Then came Jim Crow laws. And again, the country “self-corrected” and these laws disappeared. For decades Black Americans were denied the same rights as other groups. And America again “self-corrected” and Black Americans not only gained the same rights but received preferential treatment (via affirmative action) for over half a century.

Today, there are no laws which hold back any citizen of color nor any citizen because of religion, sex or sexual orientation. America has self-corrected.

No nation can achieve perfection. America was never perfect. But as Martin Luther King, Jr said: “the long arc of history bends towards justice.” This is America self-correcting.

So what do you call a nation that provided the world with a Constitutional model of democracy and freedom, while preserving global freedom against tyranny and oppression, all while providing an array of technological and scientific achievements most notably the airplane, the affordable automobile, the telephone, the electric grid, the television, the cell phone, the computer and the internet?

Great is the only adjective that is appropriate to describe the United States of America.

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Roy Tucker is a business strategist who has worked with both medium-sized and Fortune 500 companies for over 25 years.

His great-grand parents arrived from the United Kingdom (Great Britain) to the Boston area in 1638. His great grandfather (x6) served as a Lieutenant in Colonel Moore's Regiment in the War for Independence. His father fought in the European Theater against Nazi Germany. His uncles served in Korea. His brothers served in the Army and Navy. He served in the Marine Corps.

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We the People

*We the People of the United States,
in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice,
insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense,
promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty
to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish
this Constitution for the United States of America.*

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