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Date: 9/13/2013 11:17:30 AM  
Subject: Thoughts on American Exceptionalism

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## Palmetto Policy Forum

September 13, 2013

### Thoughts on American Exceptionalism

This week, Russian President Vladimir Putin took to the pages of *The New York Times* to counsel Americans about "what is in our best interest" as a nation. He proceeded to chide President Obama for insinuating that there is something exceptional about America, ironically, picking up a theme with which President Obama himself is all too familiar. Compare each man's quote:

*"I carefully studied his [President Obama's] address to the nation on Tuesday. And I would rather disagree with a case he made on American exceptionalism, stating that the United States' policy is "what makes America different. It's what makes us exceptional." It is extremely dangerous to encourage people to see themselves as exceptional, whatever the motivation. There are big countries and small countries, rich and poor, those with long democratic traditions and those still finding their way to democracy. Their policies differ, too. We are all different, but when we ask for the Lord's blessings, we must not forget that God created us equal".-* Russian President Vladimir Putin in the 9/12/13 edition of *The New York Times*

*"I believe in American exceptionalism, just as I suspect that the Brits believe in British exceptionalism, and the Greeks believe in Greek exceptionalism."-* President Barack Obama at a G-20 press conference in 2009

This diminution of the idea of American exceptionalism has been a popular theme among many left-leaning thinkers for the last 50 years. We hear that America is too assertive on the world stage. Too arrogant. Too rich. Too dismissive of other nations. None of this defines American exceptionalism; it is a clever bait and switch.

American exceptionalism is not an opinion. It is not a warm 'n' fuzzy feeling of patriotism or a conceit of brash Americans trying to make ourselves feel culturally superior.

It is the sacred trust of freedom that we have inherited. It is the untold blessings of liberty in which we live each day. It is as much a fact of history as the D-Day invasion in 1944; it is the very foundation of our Republic.

Thousands of years of recorded history detail tyranny, despotism, and bare subsistence as the harsh reality of humanity. Nowhere else in the history of the world has there been another country so "conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." Even in our darkest times, Americans of every generation have fought and died to maintain and expand this ideal.

Thanks to this exceptional founding, grounded in fundamental first principles such as the rule of law, we still stand today, shoulder to shoulder as neighbors and free Americans of every creed and color. This *idea* of America is what makes it far greater than a mere sum of its parts. This idea has been the lamp of hope lifted beside the golden door of opportunity that has beckoned millions to our shores.

If we ever cease to study, understand and defend this historic fact, we will have lost America's exceptional essence...to the detriment of the entire world.

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Common Sense Society's Summer Academy attendees enjoy debating their mock Constitutions.

Palmetto Policy Forum believes that cultivating a strong understanding of the First Principles that form the core of America's exceptionalism is essential for our state and nation. Recently, we were pleased to partner with the newly-formed Carolina Common Sense Society for a week long, in-depth training of young leaders.

Please [LEARN MORE](#) about the Carolina Summer Academy and [SUPPORT](#) Palmetto Policy Forum's efforts in this endeavor to preserve American exceptionalism.

We rely on the generous, tax-deductible contributions of South Carolinians who share our vision for a free and prosperous Palmetto State.

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*Palmetto Policy Forum is an independent, nonpartisan educational foundation committed to policy entrepreneurship, consensus-building and transformative solutions to South Carolina's policy challenges.*

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