



Written by [Thomas Sowell](#) on February 3, 2015

Obama Versus America

In his recent trip to India, President Obama repeated a long-standing pattern of his — denigrating the United States to foreign audiences. He said that he had been discriminated against because of his skin color in America, a country in which there is, even now, “terrible poverty.”

Make no mistake about it, there is no society of human beings in which there are no rotten people. But for a President of the United States to be smearing America in a foreign country, whose track record is far worse, is both irresponsible and immature.



Years after the last lynching of blacks took place in the Jim Crow South, India’s own government was still publishing annual statistics on atrocities against the untouchables, including fatal atrocities. The June 2003 issue of “National Geographic” magazine had a chilling article on the continuing atrocities against untouchables in India in the 21st century.

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Nothing that happened to Barack Obama when he was attending a posh private school in Hawaii, or elite academic institutions on the mainland, was in the same league with the appalling treatment of untouchables in India. And what Obama called “terrible poverty” in America would be called prosperity in India.

The history of the human race has not always been a pretty picture, regardless of what part of the world you look at, and regardless of whatever color of the rainbow the people have been.

If you want to spend your life nursing grievances, you will never run out of grievances to nurse, regardless of what color your skin is. If some people cannot be rotten to you because of your race, they will find some other reason to be rotten to you.

The question is whether you want to deal with such episodes at the time when they occur or whether you want to nurse your grievances for years, and look for opportunities for “payback” against other people for what somebody else did. Much that has been said and done by both President Obama and Attorney General Eric Holder suggests that they are in payback mode.

Both have repeatedly jumped into local law enforcement issues, far from Washington, and turned them into racial issues, long before the facts came out. These two men — neither of whom grew up in a ghetto — have been quick to play the role of defenders of the ghetto, even when that meant defending the kinds of hoodlums who can make life a living hell for decent people in black ghettos.

Far from benefitting ghetto blacks, the vision presented by the Obama administration, and the policies growing out of that vision, have a track record of counterproductive results on both sides of the Atlantic — that is, among low-income whites in England as well as low-income blacks in the United States.

In both countries, children from low-income immigrant families do far better in schools than the native-



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born, low-income children. Moreover, low-income immigrant groups rise out of poverty far more readily than low-income natives.

The January 31st issue of the distinguished British magazine *The Economist* reports that the children of African refugees from Somalia do far better in school than low-income British children in general.

“Somali immigrants,” it reports, “insist that their children turn up for extra lessons at weekends.” These are “well-ordered children” and their parents understand that education “is their ticket out of poverty.”

Contrast that with the Obama administration’s threatening schools with federal action if they do not reduce their disciplining of black males for misbehavior.

Despite whatever political benefit or personal satisfaction that may give Barack Obama and Eric Holder, reducing the sanctions against misbehavior in school virtually guarantees that classroom disorder will make the teaching of other black students far less effective, if not impossible.

For black children whose best ticket out of poverty is education, that is a lifelong tragedy, even if it is a political bonanza to politicians who claim to be their friends and defenders.

The biggest advantage that the children of low-income immigrants have over the children of native-born, low-income families is that low-income immigrants have not been saturated for generations with the rhetoric of victimhood and hopelessness, spread by people like Obama, Holder and their counterparts overseas.

Thomas Sowell is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, Stanford, CA 94305. His website is www.tsowell.com. To find out more about Thomas Sowell and read features by other Creators Syndicate columnists and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate Web page at www.creators.com.

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