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War and Empire Debate

Huffington V. Hanson

In what promises to be a lively debate, Victor Davis Hanson and Arianna Huffington will square off on whether the United States is an empire. (**Change of Venue:** The debate will now be held at DeVos Place, Ballroom A, downtown Grand Rapids.)

The Proposition: The U.S. is an empire.

On the Affirmative
Arianna Huffington



Interviewed by Bill O'Reilly, July 5: "It is my job to say that the highest priority of the U.S. government is to protect the security of its people. And right now, we are conducting the war in terror... in a way that makes us less secure..... It's not about isolation; it's about security. It's not about peace. It's not 'make love, not war.' It's about security."

Interviewed by Bill O'Reilly, June 9: "Do you... really think that the American people -- 58% of whom right now consider the war in Iraq wrong -- do you think the American people believe it is the function of our government, our military and our resources, to spread democracy abroad? I don't think so."

Fanatics and Fools, 2004: "We have over 3,000 American casualties--lives lost and limbs sacrificed--young men and women who were sent to fight against a regime that did not pose a threat to us. Saddam Hussein was a monstrous dictator and getting rid of him is a humanitarian act. But how many Americans would have approved of spending over \$150 billion and seeing 3,000 young men and women killed or wounded to get rid of an Iraqi dictator who had no weapons of mass destruction? Yet that is now the administration's position."

Amazon Interview, 2004: "The most important lesson is how quickly America can lose its standing as a force for good in the world. This is what happens when the White House falls into the hands of a band of out-and-out fanatics who have set about reprogramming our democracy into George Bush's version of America. The guiding principles behind Bush's democracy are secretiveness, a deep mistrust of the American people, and an undying faith in the ability of "the elites" to decide what is best for America--and the world."

[Books by Arianna Huffington](#)

[Read excerpt from Fanatics & Fools](#)

Samuel Johnson's Definitions (1755)

Empire: From Latin *imperium*: [1] Imperial power; supreme dominion; sovereign command. [2] The region over which dominion is extended. [3] Command over anything.

Documents of American Empire

Washington's 1784-85 Letters [1](#) / [2](#) / [3](#) / [4](#)

[Jefferson to Madison, April 27, 1809](#)

[McCullough v. Maryland](#)

[The Monroe Doctrine](#)

[Jackson's Message on Indian Removal](#)

[Cherokee Nation v. the State of Georgia, 1831](#)

[Manifest Destiny](#)

[Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo](#)

[Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine](#)

On the Negative
Victor Davis Hanson



From "A Funny Sort of Empire," November 27, 2002: We do not send out proconsuls to reside over client states, which in turn impose taxes on coerced subjects to pay for the legions. Instead, American bases are predicated on contractual obligations -- costly to us and profitable to their hosts.

From "A Funny Sort of Empire" : "Athenians, Romans, Ottomans, and the British wanted land and treasure and grabbed all they could get when they could. The United States hasn't annexed anyone's soil since the Spanish-American War -- a checkered period in American history that still makes us, not them, out as villains in our own history books."

From "A Funny Sort of Empire" : "The Athenian *ekklesia*, the Roman senate, and the British Parliament alike were eager for empire and reflected the energy of their people. In contrast, America went to war late and reluctantly in World Wars I and II, and never finished the job in either Korea or Vietnam. We were likely to sigh in relief when we were kicked out of the Philippines, and really have no desire to return."

From "A Funny Sort of Empire" : "Our bases dot the globe to keep the sea-lanes open, thugs and murderers under wraps, and terrorists away from European, Japanese, and American globalists who profit mightily by blanketing the world with everything from antibiotics and contact lenses to BMWs and Jennifer Lopez -- in other words, to keep the world safe and prosperous enough for Michael Moore to rant on spec, for Noam Chomsky to garner a lot of money and tenure from a defense-contracting MIT, for Barbra Streisand to make millions, for Edward Said's endowed chair to withstand Wall Street downturns, for Jesse Jackson to take off safely on his jet-powered, tax-free junkets."

[Books by Victor Davis Hanson](#)

[Read "A Funny Sort of Empire"](#)

Documents of Republican Founding

[Declaration of Independence](#)

[Articles of Confederation](#)

[Northwest Ordinance](#)

[U.S. Constitution](#)

[Federalist No. 69](#)

[Washington's Farewell Address](#)