

FACING RACE IN ASIAN AMERICA

FACING RACE CONFERENCE 2016 – ATLANTA, GEORGIA

AGENDA

1:45 WELCOME & FRAMING

2:00 PANEL DISCUSSION

2:45 Q&A / DISCUSSION

3:15 END

Our America?



The critical examination of whiteness...
involves the effort to break through the
illusion that whiteness is natural,
biological, normal, and not crying out for
explanation.

– David Roediger

“...the two great divisions of society are not the rich and poor, but white and black; and all the former, the poor as well as the rich, belong to the upper class, and are respected and treated as equals, if honest and industrious; and hence have a position and pride of character of which neither poverty nor misfortune can deprive them.”

– U.S. Senator John C. Calhoun of South Carolina, 1849

**The very definition
of 'blackness' is as
broad as that of
'whiteness,' yet
we're seemingly
always trying to find
a specific, limited
definition.**

Issa Rae

RACE IS RIVALRY

- The **outcome of political strategies** by European elites to build and maintain wealth and power during the formation of the United States
- A **mythology** that sorts humanity into false categories to explain who is deserving v. undeserving of freedom, prosperity, and rights, that was used to justify slavery, which drove settler colonialism and imperialism
- A strategy to **“resolve” the contradiction** between slavery/capitalism (freedom for some) and democracy (freedom for all) by saying certain people’s freedom requires other people’s enslavement, while making the division between free/slave seem “natural”
- A **changing set of boundaries** that intersect with dominant norms of gender, class, sexuality, ability, nationality, religion, and other kinds of identities to build and maintain wealth and power for a few, at the expense of the many

WHITE SUPREMACY

SLAVERY

CAPITALISM

LABOR

GENOCIDE

SETTLER COLONIALISM

LAND

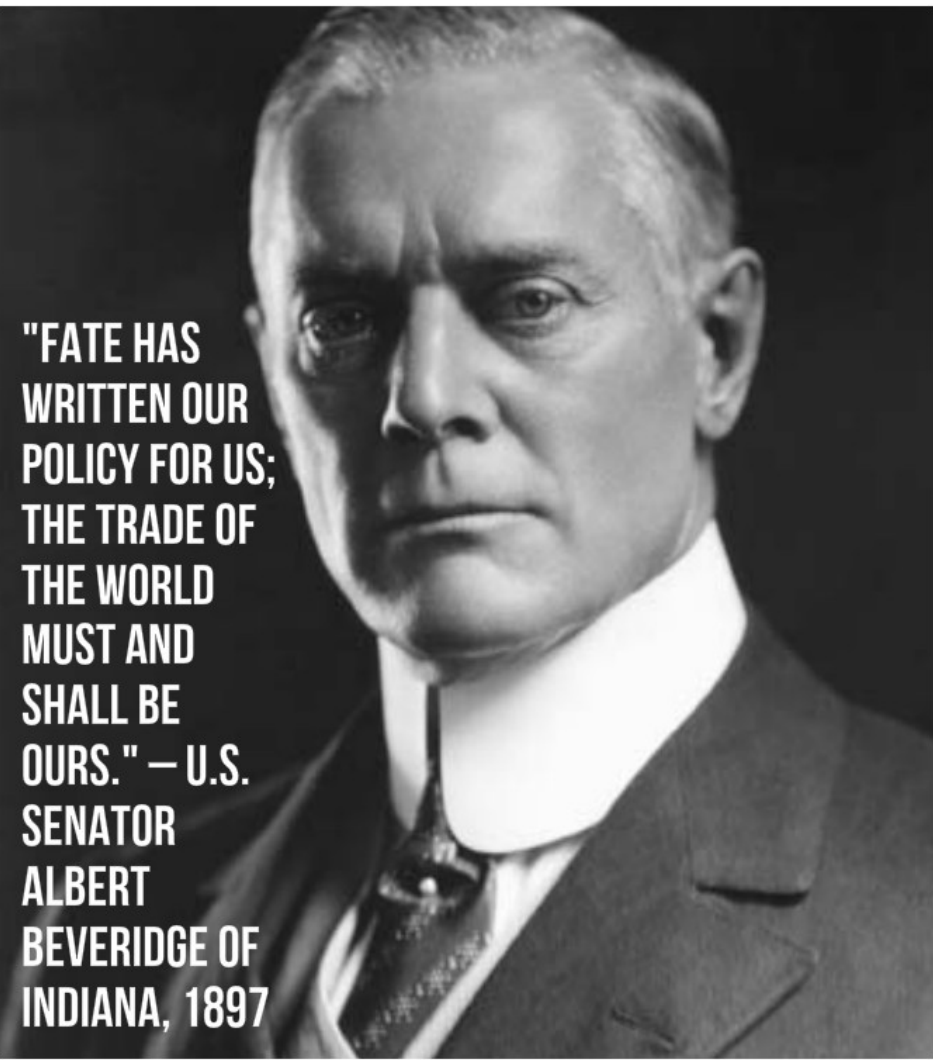
WAR

IMPERIALISM

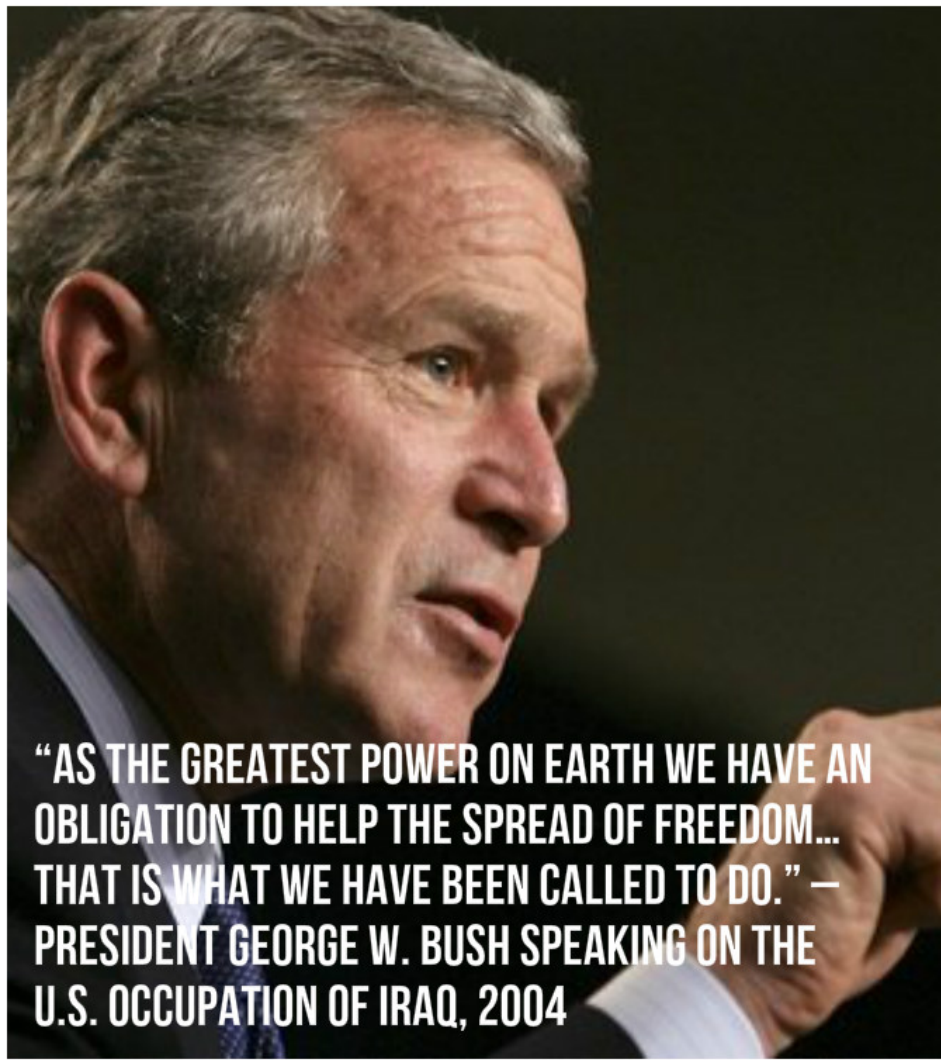
EMPIRE



Christian
heteropatriarchy:
the hammer and nails
used to build the stool.

A black and white portrait of U.S. Senator Albert Beveridge. He is an older man with a serious expression, wearing a dark suit, a white shirt, and a patterned tie. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights on his face and suit.

**"FATE HAS
WRITTEN OUR
POLICY FOR US;
THE TRADE OF
THE WORLD
MUST AND
SHALL BE
OURS." — U.S.
SENATOR
ALBERT
BEVERIDGE OF
INDIANA, 1897**

A color portrait of President George W. Bush. He is shown from the chest up, looking slightly to the right with a serious expression. He is wearing a dark suit and a blue tie. The background is dark and out of focus.

**"AS THE GREATEST POWER ON EARTH WE HAVE AN
OBLIGATION TO HELP THE SPREAD OF FREEDOM...
THAT IS WHAT WE HAVE BEEN CALLED TO DO." —
PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH SPEAKING ON THE
U.S. OCCUPATION OF IRAQ, 2004**

US Soldiers pose with Filipino Moro dead after the First Battle of Bud Dajo, March 7, 1906, Jolo, Philippines. Wikimedia Commons



1898

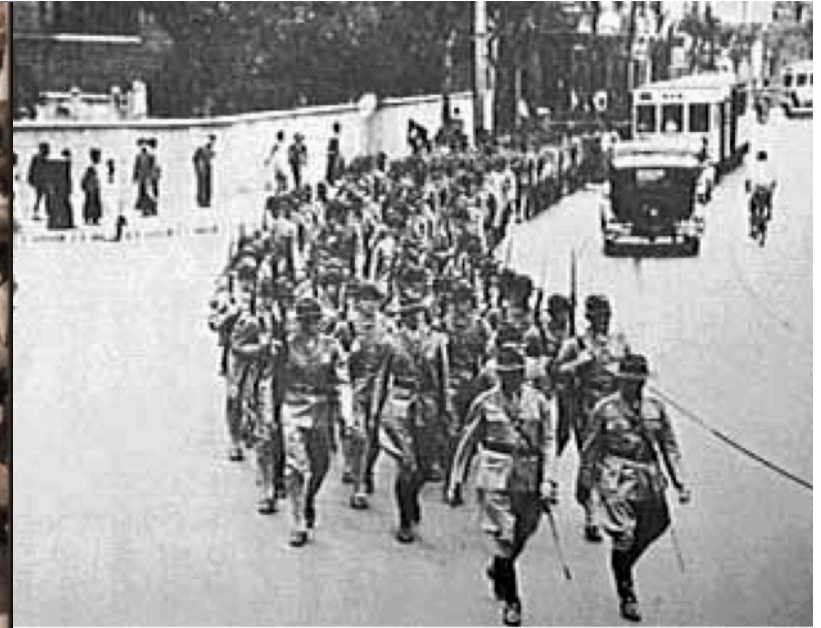
“...of the six hundred Moros not one was left alive... The enemy numbered six hundred—including women and children—and we abolished them utterly, leaving not even a baby alive to cry for its dead mother. This is incomparably the greatest victory that was ever achieved by the Christian soldiers of the United States.”

- Mark Twain

Boxers captured by U.S. Army in China, 1901



1911-1941: The US builds up its military presence in the country to a force of 5000 troops and a fleet of 44 vessels patrolling China's coast and rivers.



U.S. Military Interventions in China. 1894-1949

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, emboldened by the Philippine-American War and seeking new markets beyond its borders, the United States increased its presence in Asia. It forced an “Open Door” policy that allowed it unfettered trade with China, competing with other nations from Europe vying for control over China.



U.S. Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, 1945

On August 6, 1945, during World War II, an American B-29 bomber dropped the world's first deployed atomic bomb over Hiroshima in Japan. The explosion wiped out 90% of the city and immediately killed 80,000 people; tens of thousands more would later die of radiation exposure. U.S. intelligence agencies were fully aware of Japan's search for ways to honorably surrender months before President Truman gave the fateful order to incinerate Hiroshima. A second atomic bomb was dropped on the city of Nagasaki three days later.



Cold War Interventions: 1950s

1950: America enters into the Korean War when the North Korean army invades South Korea. The U.S. had been occupying the South, while the USSR occupied the North. The millions of people who died included 2 million Korean civilians killed through bombings, massacres, and other forms of violence.

1953: The CIA overthrows democratically elected Prime Minister of Iran, Mohammad Mosaddeghin, citing the threat of communism, and gaining a share in Iran's oil production for U.S. companies.



THE AMERICAN WAR IN SOUTHEAST ASIA. 1960-1975

During the Vietnam War, in transmitting President Richard Nixon's orders for a "massive" bombing of Cambodia in 1969, Henry Kissinger said, "Anything that flies on everything that moves". Between 1965 and 1973, the U.S. dropped 2.7 million tons of explosives on Cambodia. From 1964 to 1973, it dropped more than 2 million tons of ordnance on Laos. In total, the tonnage of U.S. bombs over Southeast Asia was three times more than all bombs dropped during WWII.



1990-1991 Persian Gulf War

Fearing the loss of control over oil in the Middle East after Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in 1990, U.S. and allied forces attacked Iraq. Some estimate up to 35,000 Iraqi soldiers were killed, compared to 146 U.S. soldiers. Afterward, President George H. Bush said before the corporate-funded American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), “By God, we’ve kicked the Vietnam syndrome once and for all.” Between 1990 and 1997, there were over 30 U.S. military interventions.



A man watches a U.S. border patrol helicopter from a fence at the border between Mexico and the United States, in Ciudad Juarez March 8, 2012. Picture taken March 8, 2012
REUTERS/JOSE LUIS GONZALEZ

1965 Immigration Act

1965 The Hart-Celler Act, intended to purge racial restrictions in immigration law, particularly against Asians, Africans, and southern and eastern Europeans, abolishes the national origins quota system and replaces it with a new system that prioritizes family reunification and professional migration. It leads to a dramatic rise in authorized immigrants from Asia, but also dramatically increases unauthorized immigration from Latin America, since previously there had been no numerical limits on immigration in the western Hemisphere, including Mexico, Latin America or the Caribbean.



2000s: The War on Terror

After the al-Qaeda attack on the World Trade Center on Sept. 11, 2001, President George W. Bush declared: “Our 'war on terror' begins with al-Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped, and defeated.” The list of countries that the U.S. has bombed, invaded, or occupied since then include Afghanistan, the Philippines, Somalia, Iraq, Syria, Pakistan, and Yemen. So far the War on Terror has cost U.S. taxpayers \$1.7 trillion.

QUESTION FOR AUDIENCE

- When we say Asian American, who do we include and who do we leave out? What about API?

Facing Race in Asian America

- Aparna Bhattacharyya, Raksha (Atlanta, GA)
- Zon Moua, Freedom Inc (Madison, WI)
- Greg Cendana, APALA (Washington, DC)

FACING RACE IN ASIAN AMERICA

- Two opportunities, two challenges of Asian American identity as an organizing force for movement building?
- What issues are you working on nationally, locally, internationally where there are intersections among Asian American communities? Other communities?
- What concrete ways can and have Asian Americans built solidarity with other people of color?
- How do gender and sexuality offer opportunities to expand and strengthen our movements and issues?