

America's Image in the World

Transcript of a Dialogue between Ambrose I. Lane, Sr. and special guest Dr. Acklyn Lynch
December 21, 2007 – We Ourselves – WPFW 89.3 Washington

(Dialogue Portion ONLY. No Listener Comments Included)

AMBROSE: And of course that was Ray Charles. Top of the morning this is We Ourselves and I'm Ambrose I. Lane, Sr. We have an extremely special show for you today. Before we get to our special guest let me take care of some house cleaning. I want to thank everyone who attended the 30th Anniversary Gala that was held at the convention center. You don't know how much we appreciated that and the kind of support it indicates we have out there in the community. And I especially want to thank everyone who purchased tables thinking we were going to sit together. I don't know what happened but I met a lot of people that I had met before and it was just a joyful occasion, both at the dinner and at the reception. And I can't thank you enough and I'm sure that you have been thanked over and over again for your participation. And before I get to my special guest we want to give our concern to Dale Dixon who has lost her daughter Stephanie. Unfortunately we were unable to be with her – huh – Wednesday because we were out of town. I want to say publicly “Gale if there's anything that my wife and I can do all you have to do is call.”

AMBROSE: Now, we have a person who is a personal friend, who has a brilliant analytical mind, he's former professor at Howard University, former chair of UMBC's Department of African-American Studies, none other than someone who is very familiar with our listeners, Dr. Acklyn Lynch.

AMBROSE: Acklyn thank you so much for coming in.

ACKLYN: Thanks you so much for inviting me Ambrose. It's always a wonderful experience to share with you and your wife Joan these moments of not only oral dialogue but spiritual unification. Thank you so much and I wish you the best and I hope that health and wellbeing will be part of your -- both of you – of your on going lives in the coming year and through this season.

AMBROSE: Thank you. You know, one of the things I wanted -- Acklyn goes in and out of the country – he travels a lot and I wanted him to give you his view of what is happening in this world as a result of what our government is doing both at home and abroad. Now as you travel I'm sure you get a lot of opinions of the Bush Administration and America's standing in the world and what role Iraq plays. Just share with our listeners what you have picked up.

ACKLYN: Well, at this point in time one of the problems we're faced with is that there is a great deal of disappointment in the Bush Administration as it relates not only just to the war in Iraq but in general in the arrogance of American foreign policy and the way it is being projected out into the world. I think, outside of Tony Blair that we have found ourselves somewhat lonely in terms of how people have respected us, in terms of the UN, in terms of the Washington consensus, in terms of our attitude to the rest of the world with regard to how we export so-called democracy and Imperialism. We have found a response to that around the world. For example, in Chile and in Argentina we have two women who have elected as President of those respective countries and they have been challenging our abuse of power and our relationship to them in terms of foreign policy and international trade. Etc. etc. etc. You have Lu Lu – Lula (Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva) in Brazil who is really concerned now about a new identity for Brazil and how do you lift Brazil out of poverty and make Brazil one of the formidable countries in the Americas.

ACKLYN: Of course there is the nemesis, there is Chavez. Hugo Chavez has created an image for himself in the Americas and also in African and in Asia but the telling point about it is that Chavez has created this image as a result of being able to challenge American foreign policy, American economic policy, and of course the personality of George W. Bush. That has been important to see how Chavez has stepped up on the world stage and has become a person who has a certain kind of respect. No one may say well that they had an election recently or not an election a Referendum recently in Venezuela and Chavez lost by a small margin. But that's not the issue, the issue is the respect that he has earned in Ecuador and Bolivia and Chile and Argentina and Brazil and countries throughout Africa and the Caribbean. Of course part of that also is Venezuela represents a significant part of OPEC and Venezuela is as a state that depends largely upon the Petroleum industry remains a very important state at this point in time.

ACKLYN: But the question is the individual, the democratic practices that have been carried out in Venezuela, even allowing the Venezuelan people to say—ah-- to express themselves in certain kinds of ways, even in opposition to him. So that there is--the anti-Bush feeling emerges in certain kinds of political behavior. I am quite certain that what has happened in South Africa recently, with Mbeki and the emergence Zuma (Jacob Zuma) has been something that we have to look at carefully, because Zuma has – the people of South African – ANC – have been very critical of knee pad, of US foreign policy in Africa, and also the leadership of Mbeki. The same situation is taking place in Afghanistan with the return of the past President and the rejection of the President who represents the interest of the Bush Administration.

ACKLYN: Now all of that leads us up into Iraq and Iran and to the Middle East where we have critical issues. And if they any place that the Bush Administration finds its strongest opponents, finds people who are resilient and prepared to be very critical of a United States foreign policy and the United State's vision of the world in the 21st century, and the United States' arrogance that insists that there should be new kind of execution of its military capacity and its military capability, and the immorality that follows that with regard to what happens in terms of military expenditure and its impact on the economies and the populations and the life and death, and the tragedies that taking place in the Middle East as the United States continues to support Israel and continues to have a foreign policy that is both backward and certainly non-progressive. So we see that.

ACKLYN: And then finally in the European Union we are having problems with our so-called allies in the European Union. In Germany for example, we had serious problems with the new leadership in Germany. It is very obvious that even though as the new leader of Paris – ah -- France claims his alliance to the Bush Administration, that he too will have problems not just in terms of the migrant populations in France where Paris is burning but also in terms of what will be the implications for that. We have seen in Spain where by the government of Spain changed fundamentally. And as a result Spain's involvement in the Iraqi War in support of Bush the new government immediately withdrew the troops.

ACKLYN: So that Iraq has had an enormous impact on our society. Not only has it weakened American society with regards to its economy because in the final analysis when history is written we will see that this venture, this crazy venture of the Bush Administration which he was warned not to do but of course followed the Neo-cons and followed your arguments that we have had a fascist plutocracy in this society, in this new administration in which Naomi Wolf writes about is her book *The End of America* or which Chalmers Johnson writes about in his book called *Nemesis*... that these decisions are impacting on us in fundamental ways and there is a great deal of dissatisfaction with the leadership here and its vision of what globalization should represent and what the world should look like in terms of the future.

ACKLYN: Now, it doesn't mean that we can't have a critique of national leadership in Africa, the Caribbean, South America, Asia, etc etc. But that is quite independent of the question you asked. What is the impact of Iraq on the image of the United States around the world?

When we take a look at that it has had a very negative impact over that last 5 or 6 years. And even the sympathy that might have developed as a result of 911 it has been so totally – it has disappeared totally because in essence it did

not represent what the world was in search of, a new pursuit if the human experience.

AMBROSE: And – huh - Let's take a look at the policy of this Administration toward Iran. You know they don't tell the world's people or us Americans that Iran has the right to produce nuclear fuel for nuclear power plants. And now we have Russia delivering nuclear fuel. What's your opinion on what were doing there with Iran and if we're trying to go in and invade Iran just like we did Iraq.

ACKLYN: Well, it is very obvious that the recent info that we had, that the CIA, the FBI Intelligence Service knew that Iran was not pursuing a nuclear expansion in terms of -- from 2003, 04 -- that has become a scandalous affair. It was the same excuse that was against Saddam Hussein and it was the same embarrassment that fell upon Colin Powell in his speech that he had to make before the U.N. and he's never recovered from that because the immorality that comes with it challenges the world in that one has to lie to order to fix and make policy a reality rather than provide the facts and the truth about what it is we are looking at. So that remains a very critical issue for us and we're continuing to do that.

ACKLYN: In the situation of Iran and the notion of the right of a country, whether that country be North Korea, China, India, Pakistan. What really are the rights of countries to have a nuclear capability, defensively and offensively? We've talked about that for a long time. Well that is a continuation of the Cold War that has taken place as the Soviet Union bankrupted itself in the pursuit of trying to get a nuclear – to get the kind of capability, defense capability that comes out of the research and armaments and the cost of it. We are yet to examine whether that it also one of the problems that we are faced with; whether we too have bankrupted ourselves in the pursuit of that. That is going to be a body of work that is going to show up in the next five years or so, where we're going to see that the costs, particularly after the Berlin – the collapse of the Berlin Wall – that our on going cost of our nuclear capability was part of the problem of the economic crisis that we are now looking at. So it is not just the war in Iraq alone but our determination to have nuclear superiority so that we may execute a foreign policy that does not provide for genuine equality in the world with regards to defending ones national sovereignty.

ACKLYN: Because the question at hand here is a question of sovereignty. It's not a question of just having independence or having a nation and the nation having its own ideas. But the question at hand with regard to the Bush policy is the challenge to the sovereignty of the nation and using the nuclear question not only to confront – not only to confront – ah - military issues but

more importantly to confront political and economic issues. Do you see? That's where it is and if you can then confront those military and political issues of the country then the culture of the country, the sovereign identity of the country becomes undermined by this superior power. Now this, in the imperial order from the 16th century through colonization through the imperialism of the 20th century, that pursuit which lead us to the development of the military-industrial complex and lead us to a type warfare and a type of intelligence gathering that no longer affords the human being the right and the privilege of being human. You see what I'm saying? That is an attack on the sovereignty of not only the person-- I mean of the country but of the very person.

ACKLYN: So that we find that in the development of Guantanamo, in the development of these prisons, and the development of the laws that Alberto Gonzales tried to push through here in this country, that an individual is also at risk with the preservation of his voice, his ideas, if you see what I'm saying, because he can be accused at any minute of being a threat to the state, do you see, and a dangerous person. So not only is the state, Korea, or Iran a danger or a threat to the United States but individuals who will the have to suffer the kinds of torture that we have.

ACKLYN: At the same time you have not only the presence of the United States military capability, etc, but you have Blackwater. You have the emergence of a civilian company, do you see what I'm saying, highly attached to Dick Cheney and others now playing a major role not only internationally in Iraq or Afghanistan but even nationally in New Orleans, etc. What role will they play now in Cuba and Venezuela, and Bolivia and El Salvador? You see what I'm saying now? The real possibility is now of the sovereignty of a person as well as a nation is now being threatened in which now we will be re-colonized by consumption.

AMBROSE: There's that word..

ACKLYN: We will be re-colonized in this by consumer items in which that's all we can do because we are being made to be impotent. Do you see? And that is danger you call when you talk about a Fascism Plutocracy. A very different kind of fascism than we understood with Mussolini and understood with Adolf Hitler. But it's a Hobbesian kind of fascism which calls – which talks about the world as being nasty, cruel, brutish, and short. Do you what I'm saying? Moving away from John Locke, a Hobbesian kind of thing that makes life dangerous and impossible. So that the problems we are looking at now with Iran, Iraq, etc. being extensions – being extensions of the conquest of the Americas by the West. And the genocide that took place in terms of wiping out of the indigenous populations.

ACKLYN: The conquest – or the domination of Africa as a result of slavery and colonialism -- as they followed each other – and so on. And now the brutality – the horrors of the wars of the 20th century now leading us into a new matrix. Do you see what I mean?

AMBROSE: Let me ask you this...

ACKLYN: A matrix in the 21st century in which our re-examination of this notion of fascism threatens us. So that even at the very successful, and beautiful, and magnificent WPFW – ah - ...

AMBROSE: ...Gala...

ACKLYN: ...Gala that was held on Saturday, both Amy Goodman and Harry Belafonte had to bring our attention to that – together with others of course. But Amy Goodman moved us into that understanding of the crisis of our presence in the 21st century. Not that we wouldn't life on, but that we are faced with problems that have new dimensions to them. You see, your work – your on going work on this program is bring to us an attention. Do you see what I'm saying?

AMBROSE: Let me deal with something else.

ACKLYN: Go ahead.

AMBROSE: You know we known, this country has known, this leadership has known since the Nixon Administration that Israel has atomic weapons...

ACKLYN: Nuclear capability too...

AMBROSE: Yes. And before they got power with George W. Bush these Neo-cons wanted Israel to invade Syria and others. And in the mix you have to throw Hamas. Now, Hamas was financed by this country against Arafat. And here we have an administration that allowed Sharon to keep Arafat boxed in that Head Quarters that he had bombed until they had to let him go because his health was so deteriorated. And suddenly now Condi and Bush are saying we've got to do something about bringing it together, 2 states now. What in the world should the people believe about this whole mess?

ACKLYN: Well the road map - The road map has collapse, and it has collapsed even from the time of the conference in Stockholm once we were not prepared to go forward with the agreements that were made, because the Palestinians have made several agreements with the Israeli for their existence, for their

national pride, for their national dignity, for their national landscape. They have done that. However those have always been aborted simply because of that mentality that the military capability speaks. And Armaments industries speak. And it speaks volumes not simple to the people of Palestine or the people of the Middle East but it speaks volumes to the World. And it is to that extent. For example we supported Iraq and Saddam Hussein against Iran. But it is to that extent there is a critical concern about Iran and about the developing a nuclear capability, when I talk about nuclear capability for an offensive not defensive or for civil, if you see what I'm saying. Not for the advancement of science and technology and peace, but for offensive use. It is in that extent that I think we have entered into what I call the Hobessian approach that we have entered into this new century believing – we used to say that money talks but now I think also it is both money as well as it is military capability and ability to execute it even if it fails.

ACKLYN: You know we talk about failed states in Africa and Latin American, etc. etc. - but this country now, in its undertaking in the 21st century under the Bush administration has been a failed state. There's a challenge to the banking industry, there's a challenge to credit in the country, there's a challenge to the economy so that Greenspan and others – I just picked up Greenspan's Book - are saying we can't go forward on this. You understand what I am saying? Companies are collapsing in New York. Major companies

AMBROSE: Yeah...

ACKLYN: Now, all of that fits, all of that fits in to what is happening in the Middle East and the Israeli question. Sharon has left us with a burden. Sharon was a military man who was fixated—fixated in his own insanity.

AMBROSE: Yes.

ACKLYN: That he would preserve the region as a (Unintelligible word) sanity so that the world may bow down before him, if you see what I'm saying. That's what happened and we are left in the hands of leaders – whether they be Sharon, whether they be George Bush, whether they be who ever they are – where ever they are – Mobutu and the list goes on and on and on – I could call them from all over he world. And we know them whether they be Stalin, if you see what I am saying. Who ever it is. We are faced with leadership that is not only one dimensional and non democratic and authoritarian in pursuit of its visions, but it is also wicked, as the Rastafarians would say, wicked in its denial of people who say "NO" to what it is they are doing. So they then move to eliminate that voice. And that is subject to a certain corruptibility that exists everywhere.

ACKLYN: It is the corruption now in the leadership – the bankruptcy of leadership, lead by George W. Bush around the world, whether it is left and right. Whether it is on the Stalinist side or the Neo-con side or the Conservative side. It is that bankruptcy of leadership and in that bankruptcy of leadership there is a pursuit of wealth at the expense of poverty so that the gap continues to widen. And they can even turn to the Church and ask the Church to validate and justify. So that the pursuit of wealth by the Church is also part of the bankruptcy of what is happening to support the leadership, the political leadership of countries that no longer – that no longer are able to find the roots and the beauty of democracy inside of their streams of consciousness of the people.

AMBROSE: And here we have them frontally assaulting the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, everything -- Habeas Corpus – everything that was suppose to protect the American people.

ACKLYN: That is what Naomi Wolf is writing about in her book The End of America – what Ambrose I. Lane has been saying for the last 5, 7, 10 years.

AMBROSE: Yep...

ACKLYN: (LAUGH) You know I just finished reading her book and I said “My God but this is what Ambrose was saying all along.” You know? Yes we have really abused and rejected and turned the corner of dealing with the privileges of the Constitution. Now where does that lead us now Ambrose in terms of the Democratic Party and the Republican Party? How do we enter 2008, you know, after 2007 being a very difficult period for us? In 2007 we were dealing with the question of death. Death was at the doorstep everywhere, whether it was Max Roach, whether it was Asa Hilliard, Sekou Sundiata, whether it was Stephanie Dixon, who ever it was as we turned every time. And now Sinclair Borne, we see Coretta Scott King – now we’ve turned from that; from guilt and sin in the Christian orthodoxy to death at our doorstep. And we aren’t talking about the other thousands and millions of people who died from war, poverty, etc. etc. We’re talking about Death from the person closest to us that we now know in our neighborhoods and our homes, etc. Their transition this year in 2007.

ACKLYN: How do we move from that into 2008? Well we want to deal with two – two or three fundamental things; one is the Elections. How do we deal - that’s very important kind of thing because Barack Obama has stepped now into history and creates a new sensibility and a new concern for people across – in terms of redefining what American politics will be. That’s one.

Two: the Beijing Olympics and Sports. What does that mean? What does the scandal in Baseball mean in terms of performance? What does Marion Jones mean? What does Michael Vick mean? Because you see what has happened in Sports in the terms of the bankruptcy and the question of money now is that even doctors – even doctors and coaches from the time kids are small – eleven, twelve, thirteen and so on – provide - give them these steroids. I know it, I've seen it, I've watched it. Give them medication so that things that are not legitimate from the time they are small so they could heal quickly and the next thing you know there is a kind of addiction or dependency one may call it if you don't want to call it addiction. Dependency. Growth. So what has happened in colleges? Is there any investigation in universities and colleges about these things? Baseball has opened up a whole Pandora's Box.

AMBROSE: Yes it has...

ACKLYN: If we expect soccer players in Europe to perform at a higher level than they ever performed in terms of speed and strength etc. etc. how do we get that? If we expect Olympians to perform at a higher level – boxers or whoever it is, I don't care where - Ice Hocking Players, Golfers - what are we talking about in terms of expectation? It means that we must damage sports. We must take away from sports the beauty of its amateur relationships because we have put it in to a professional modality where money and marketing becomes everything. Who is responsible for that?

ACKLYN: The same thing with what I call education without a soul. If we are talking about the collapse– the crisis of education here, in Trinidad, Brazil, in Argentina, etc.- how did that happen? How did education become a soulless institution so that the children are walking away with pieces of paper saying that they have performed at the highest level or with technical expertise but they don't have an inner landscape that allow them to say this is what must be done and this is the truth of what is do be done.

AMBROSE: In the middle of this Acklyn, the Washington Post tells us that it should be considered something else than a newspaper corporation. That it gets its income – only 21 cents on the dollar comes in from newspaper. Its most important thing is something called Kaplan. Now in that context I thought it fascinating that they picked up the evil force behind George Bush, Carl Rove and put him over at the newspaper. And nobody commented on it but me.

ACKLYN: That's right, that's right. What is it you're marketing? What is it you're sending out to the world? You've got to remember that whatever you put on Newsweek, 75% of the literate world is going to see it. It's not just something we're going to see in Washington, but it is all over the world – in

Japan, in Singapore, in Korea. And they're going to be absorbing that negative energy in terms of imaging.

AMBROSE: Now what I've got to do is to check out is Kaplan to see how much money they are getting from the government. Because, you know, I was the one to accuse Bob Woodward of scamming the American people by writing two books saying that George W. Bush was this heroic military leader. And people would say no, Woodward wouldn't do anything like that. But let me tell you something. He has been given total access to the White House, to the president. He's written two books praising the president. Now when things have gone wrong he writes another book saying well it wasn't so good. You have to understand who Bob Woodward is. And if you look at it they have admitted to the world, but they know most people won't read it, that they are no longer a newspaper corporation. They are an educational corporation. So, I've got to check out this educational firm that they have which produces 51 cents of every dollar they get. And you'll understand how negative the Post has become, editorially and otherwise. I've been tracing them for years, especially their op-ed page, you see? Because they started this right after Reagan was elected. Understand? They've been going right and right and right. So who picks up Car Rove, the evil force behind George W. Bush? The guy they used to - their columnist called him brilliant. He's not brilliant. He is evil and had unlimited access to unlimited money to spread his evil across this country and the world.

ACKLYN: No question about that.

AMBROSE: And who picks him up but the Washington Post.

ACKLYN: That's right. (Laugh) Well - I mean - that's the pathway to power. But - but it's not just a question of the (unintelligible word) only but it is questions of the immorality that comes with it. There is a pretense - there is a pretense of innocence, there is a pretense of being moral at the same time. There's a pretense of freedom that you know one can say what one wants and one has the right to say what one wants, and so on. But at the same time there is the silencing of voices. But two different techniques, two different measures, if you see what I'm saying, that we are faced with that doesn't allow democracy to flourish, to grow, to expand. It doesn't get to our children at an early age. Terror and pain and suffering gets to our children at an earlier age than politics does or than democracy does. Or we can't find an ethical aesthetic that we could follow. Our children will not be able to get to Duke Ellington come Sunday but they then could get to something that would lead them into the prison complex. That's what we have set up for them.

AMBROSE: Acklyn, I know our listeners what to get involved in this conversation so if you could give the number out. The number is (1-800) 588-0893, or 202-588-0893.

ACKLYN: Say it once again. 588...

AMBROSE: 588-0893.

ACKLYN: ... 0893. And the other?

AMBROSE: And the other is just 202 if you're outside the city. Huh – let me ask you this last question before we go to the phones. Afghanistan. This is administration is getting very upset with the growth – re-growth of the Taliban and other forces there. Now - and most people don't remember but this administration first negotiated with the Taliban. They wanted to hook up an agreement with the Taliban when they first came into office.

ACKLYN: No question about that. No question about that. They supported them against the Russians. They supported them against Russians, and for Russia and for the Soviet Union that was a very bad decision, in terms of entering into that – entering into that invasion of Afghanistan and it created the fine point which compelled the antagonism which now exists between Kazakhstan and Chechnya and all these other places and so on - where you have oil and natural resources. It led into the collapse – the breaking up of the Soviet Union. And it also is having an impact on Pakistan and India. And we've got to watch that carefully because we can't win that war.

ACKLYN: That's the frightening – the frightening possibility now exists not only at the leadership level but throughout the society. In other words people are saying I think – I don't know how to organize my life and pay my bills. (laugh) I don't know what to do. They are saying in terms of the leadership we don't know how to win this war. People are asking you what do I do? In other words we suddenly are finding ourselves – we make decisions, put the decisions into place based on some bad analysis and then ask ourselves "What do I do, how to I get out of it?" You can't organize you life or a nation or your studies or whatever it is or your sports or whatever it is on that basis. You can't do that.

ACKLYN: You have to have some understanding of the critical issues that you are faced with, study them carefully; engage your families in discussions of these issues. Sit down and talk with the children around the table. How do they – and see how they see it and make sure you reduce that gap between generations. You have to do those things. And you have to be serious about it with children and grand children. You can't just, you know let something

happen and it – ah – ends up in chaos. You have both – whether it is economic, social, or juridical chaos and then military chaos and after say “What do I do and how do I get out?”

ACKLYN: I think the next thing is the immigration problem. That's very important; poverty and displacement around the world, the migration problem. It's not just only migration to the United States that creating urgency but it is migration in Europe that has its own urgency. It is – it is migration from rural areas to urban areas in India and in Brazil, from northern Brazil to Saul Paulo and to Rio de Janeiro. It is migration of peoples of different – not only just ethnicities – but religious and spiritual beliefs. And material concerns with regards to lifestyles that have now – that will continue to make the world somewhat complicated. It is an understanding of people who migrate – a clearer understanding of their oppression when they left their country. You see what I am saying? You come here and you see some tyrant here or you leave out of Congo and you go to South Africa and you see and understand the disparity. And you understand – you looking back and looking forward as you are immersed into the present. So the migratory processes are a critical process for people. And young people being born into a new society with parents who are migratory people that creates it's own challenge too. And that's what we're looking at and we just can't turn to law and to another kind of fascist approach to that.

AMBROSE: Yeah.