The Problems With 'The Star-Spangled Banner'

I was born in Malaysia but my family and I moved to the US when I was three. I've experienced first hand what America is like and I know for a fact that the US has a very diverse community. People migrate from all over the world to live in America, ranging from China, India, Germany and so on, which explains why any form of discrimination including racism has no place in a developed country like America. This is why the American national anthem is not appropriate and should be changed. "The Star Spangled Banner" is sung on many occasions from sporting events to national occasions and I have heard it many times myself.

"The Star Spangled Banner" was written by Francis Scott Key in 1814 and contains racism in its third verse. It reads, "No refuge could save the hireling and slave from the terror of flight, or the gloom of the grave." The word "hireling" refers to a poor person who is paid small amounts to do work. A hireling would not be able to afford a property, which meant they would have very minimal rights. It was a different case for African American slaves as they were considered the property of their owners who they were controlled by. If a slave were to escape, their likely punishment world be death, or as "The Star Spangled Banner" reads, "the gloom of the grave". Therefore, modern African Americans can find the anthem very offensive. According to the 2010 United States Census, there were 42 million African Americans in the US at that time, which accounted for 14% of the total American population. This shows that African Americans are not a minority group in the US which makes the "Star Spangled Banner" unacceptable for a national anthem of a nation whose declaration of independence states that "all men are created equal" and "that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

"The Star Spangled Banner" does not mention national unity in any way. Instead, the commonly sung first verse implies that military strength and victory is America's only national quality. The purpose of the anthem's first verse is to basically just describe what it is like at a war. It describes it as a "perilous fight" and describes "the rocket's red glare" and "bombs bursting in air". I do acknowledge that there is no doubt that the military is essential to maintaining peace and freedom in both the US and the rest of the world and that the soldiers who risk their lives to keep us safe do deserve our deepest respects. However, war is a very traumatic event which should not be promoted anywhere, let alone in a national anthem. "The Star Spangled Banner" then spells out the reason for going to war in the fourth verse. "Conquer we must, when our cause it is just." Who decides that we MUST conquer? Since when did the US or any country have receive the right to conquer other nations?

On the other hand, "America the Beautiful" has already been recognized as a national anthem of the US by many people. It has also been passionately performed at the inauguration ceremonies of presidents in the past. "America the Beautiful" begins by respecting what mother nature has gifted America with. "O beautiful for spacious skies" gives credit to the clean air, providing life to the people. The "amber waves of grain" and "fruited plain" honors the land that provides food and safety, while the "sea to shining sea" honors the water that allows for life. "America the Beautiful" also says to "crown thy good with brotherhood" which represents national unity through brotherhood, which is ideal for a powerful nation.

In conclusion, “The Star Spangled Banner” is not the best national anthem for the United States. Instead, it is racist and does not support the correct symbols for a developed nation like America by promoting war. “America the Beautiful” is the perfect replacement anthem as it has already been recognized as a national anthem and promotes national unity while respecting the land of the United States. Therefore, the American national anthem is not appropriate for its role, and should be replaced by “America the Beautiful”.