

# Don't Let the Race-Baiters Divide Us

The America that I love, with all its warts and blemishes, voted for a black man to be our president eight years ago and welcomed a black family into the White House. The America that I love, with all its faults and failings, reveres the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King and regrets the legacy of slavery and segregation. That same America is being torn apart today by race baiters and race agitators. We must not let them divide us.

We will always have racists and haters in our midst. We will always have provocateurs who feed on discord and strife. We will always have those who call for separation and division.

But that doesn't mean we need to listen to them. To the contrary, we need to isolate them and marginalize them rather than make them mainstream.

Unfortunately, today, it appears that the secular media is determined to mainstream the margins and to highlight the hate. This will bring nothing but destruction, deepening our divides rather than healing our wounds.

Let the alt-right and the Neo Nazis and the White Supremacists rage. They will hold their rallies and make their speeches, and within certain bounds, they have the constitutional right to do so. But rather than magnify them, we should ignore them. The less attention they get, the better, since they represent a small fringe of the population at best.

In the same way, rather than making every conflict in America a conflict about race, we should focus on the real justice issues in America—and that means real race-related issues where they exist. Otherwise, when talking heads on TV constantly pull the race card, they blunt the point they want

to make, creating more opposition than solidarity.

Take, for example, the claim that the recent remarks of White House Chief of Staff John Kelly were somehow racist. Yes, as bizarre as it seems, Gen. Kelly was accused of making a racist comment when he referred to Democratic Rep. Frederica Wilson as an “empty barrel” for her attack on President Trump’s call to a Gold Star widow.

According to Wilson, “That’s a racist term. We looked it up in the dictionary, because I had never heard of an empty barrel. And I don’t like to be dragged into something like that.”

Racist? Seriously?

Others joined in the fray as well, including MSNBC’s Lawrence O’Donnell, who claimed that the insult was racist because it was intended to “dehumanize Frederica Wilson,” herself a black woman. And MSNBC’s Joy Reid went even further, suggesting that Kelly himself was racist, being raised in segregated Irish Boston.

Fox’s Tucker Carlson was right to lambast them, stating, “According to Joy Reid, the problem isn’t just General Kelly. It is the Irish, they’re the problem. This is grotesque, obviously. The morons making these arguments are sick. It’s the centrum of disease to imagine racism behind every disagreement. This also by the way the death of traditional political debate. You can argue with people who disagree with you who are just wrong, but there is no reasoning with bigots, you can only crush them. Your opponents suddenly become your enemies. They must be destroyed. And that by the way is how many on the left now see General Kelly not to mention you and me.”

I happened to turn on CNN, where a panel of talking heads was debating this very question, namely, whether Gen. Kelly’s rebuke of Rep. Wilson was racist, thereby fueling the fires of racial division and strife and, quite literally, making

something out of nothing. (Go ahead and study the reference to an “empty barrel” to your heart’s content. You’ll find nothing racist about it.)

One of the panelists, an African-American male whose name I didn’t see, stated that, if you’ll look at those whom President Trump criticizes, you’ll see that he criticizes black Americans much more harshly than those who look like him.

This is just plain crazy, not to mention inciteful and dangerous.

Just think back for a moment. How did candidate Trump treat the other Republican candidates? Did he not try to savage Jeb Bush and Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio, none of whom were black? One could even argue that he was the least harsh with Dr. Ben Carson, the one black candidate. And did he hold back in his criticism of Hillary Clinton, a female, but a white female at that?

What about his attack on “Psycho Joe” Scarborough? Correct me if I’m wrong, but he’s not black either. And on and on the list goes. To claim that Trump attacks black Americans more harshly than white Americans is to expose one’s own racism, not expose his (alleged) racism.

Unfortunately, the race-baiters are winning the day, and now everything is seen through the lens of “white privilege,” to the point that universities are reevaluating their curricula lest too much emphasis be given to major white voices in history. (For a case in point, last year, reported that, “Some Yale University students are demanding changes to the English Department curriculum: specifically, they don’t think it should feature so many English poets who were straight, white, wealthy and male.”)

The tragedy in all this is twofold. First, racial tensions are being inflamed and, in some cases, manufactured out of thin

air, since rhetoric like this only produces negative reactions. Second, the real issues—I mean issues of racial inequality where they still exist in America—get ignored.

So let's refuse to be drawn into the fray. Instead, as fellow-Americans and fellow-human beings, let's work together for the good of all our fellow-citizens, listening, learning and serving.

Together we stand. Divided we fall.