

Were President Trump's Recent Tweets Racist?

There is a national outcry over the president's "go back" home tweets directed at "'progressive' Democrat Congresswomen, who originally came from countries whose governments are a complete and total catastrophe, the worst, most corrupt and inept anywhere in the world (if they even have a functioning government at all). ..."

People from Hillary Clinton to rank and file Democrats, have condemned Trump's remarks as "racist, xenophobic and bigoted."

His tweets, which were three in number, accused these Congresswomen of "viciously telling the people of the United States, the greatest and most powerful Nation on earth, how our government is to be run."

He then asked, "Why don't they go back and help fix the totally broken and crime infested places from which they came. Then come back and show us how it is done."

He added, "These places need your help badly, you can't leave fast enough. I'm sure that Nancy Pelosi would be very happy to quickly work out free travel arrangements!"

Then, in typical Trumpian fashion, after the tweets produced a severe backlash, he doubled down on his comments, tweeting, "So sad to see the Democrats sticking up for people who speak so badly of our Country and who, in addition, hate Israel with a true and unbridled passion. Whenever confronted, they call their adversaries, including Nancy Pelosi, 'RACIST.' Their disgusting language...."

"... and the many terrible things they say about the United States must not be allowed to go unchallenged. If the Democrat Party wants to continue to condone such disgraceful behavior,

then we look even more forward to seeing you at the ballot box in 2020!”

How should we respond to these tweets? Was the president guilty of crass, open and vile racism?

To put things in context, Trump was clearly responding to comments from Rep. Ilhan Omar, who claimed that, “We live in a society and govern in a body that might value the life of a dog more than they value the life of a child who might not look like theirs.”

But out of the “progressive” Democrat Congresswomen whom he targeted, only Omar was born outside the USA (in Somalia, specifically). The others, including Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Rashida Tlaib and Ayanna Presley, were all born here in America.

So, the president’s tweet was certainly inaccurate in claiming that they “originally came from countries whose governments are a complete and total catastrophe.” (Hillary Clinton, for her part, was quick to pick up on this, tweeting, “They’re from America, and you’re right about one thing: Currently their government is a complete and total catastrophe.”)

And, whatever Trump’s intent may have been, I cannot support him saying to these Congresswomen: “You can’t leave fast enough.”

That being said, and as much as I continue to wish that the president had found a less offensive way to express himself, I didn’t find his tweets to be racist.

Inaccurate, yes, insofar as only one of the Congresswomen in question was born outside of America.

Inappropriate, yes, insofar as Mr. Trump is still the president of the whole country, and he does more harm than good when he unnecessarily alienates other Americans.

But, to repeat, I don't personally find his tweets to be racist.

America has opened the door to people like Ilhan Omar, whose family escaped from the horrible place Somalia has become. And America has given Omar and other immigrants like her incredible opportunities to succeed and flourish.

In Trump's perception, Omar and her political colleagues are biting the hand that feeds them, showing ungratefulness rather than appreciation and criticism rather than gratitude.

In Trump's mind, these women are quick to condemn "the greatest and most powerful Nation on earth." Then, they turn around and radical, socialist solutions to our national problems.

This, to Trump, is more an issue of patriotism than of race, more an issue of national solidarity rather than skin color.

And as much as headlines proclaim, "Trump Tells Freshman Congresswomen to 'Go Back' to the Countries They Came From," a racist would not say, "Then come back here once you help fix these other countries."

But that was Trump's whole point.

If you have so much know-how, then go back and fix the countries you came from, "Then come back and show us how it is done."

If America is so terrible and you have the solutions, then go improve these other countries that are in such terrible shape. And once you've transformed those nations, then by all means, get back over here and show us a better way.

Again, I have issues with some of the language in these tweets like many others, but I do not personally find them racist.

Of course, the president could have found a much less

offensive way to get the same message across. But if he did, he would not have been Donald Trump.

We do best, then, to interact with the substance of his tweets rather than defend him at any cost or condemn him as a racist monster.