

Racism is a national security issue

Politicians and TV demagogues constantly remind us to be grateful for the freedoms that we enjoy as outlined in the United States Constitution. They tell us that the citizens of Cuba, Venezuela, North Korea and Iran cry out for freedom. We, “the American People” are fortunate to live in a land governed by laws. We are blessed, or so they say.

The fact that you are reading this column is nothing short of a miracle. I consider the opportunity to express my opinions here on these pages an incredible privilege. I am thankful. But now, I am starting to question our nation’s greatness.

We were great when we liberated Europe from the Nazis; Asia and the Pacific from imperialist Japan in 1945. We took the moral high ground when we freed the Jews from concentration camps.

But now, with the acquirement of a nuclear arsenal and the establishment of a standing army that is dispersed worldwide, we have become a de facto empire. Has the prestige of the surviving super-power cor-



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rupted our morals? Have we slipped from our high perch of exemplary values?

President Jimmy Carter, and Dr. Bill Cosby, said recently that much of the hateful criticism directed at President Obama’s administration is born from racism. I agree.

Three years ago, I worked at a manufacturing firm near Danville, PA. One day, a huge piece of equipment was delivered from Alabama. A crew of workers had accompanied the monstrous machine to off-load it from the flatbed trailer. The head of our maintenance department, a black guy, took charge and began to give instructions to the white trucking crew. One fellow balked. He said, “I don’t take no orders from no (n-word)!” An argument ensued and a physical altercation seemed imminent. The president of the company

intervened, “You will take orders from my maintenance department manager or you can take the machine back!” The truckers complied and they completed the job without further incident.

I have heard of similar circumstances since the 1960’s when African-Americans were finally allowed integrate into mainstream America. Black managers had trouble filing reports on time because their secretaries hated working for black supervisors. Black foreman had to coax line workers to follow proper instructions. Black department heads complained of a lack of respect from their “direct-reports” (which were both black and white). Black executive authority was new and alien in the U.S. workforce.

When our nation’s top executive offered encouragement to the country’s school children, parents feared that America’s first black president would indoctrinate their kids. In many school districts, President Obama was not allowed to speak to America’s children! Outrageous.

Congressman Joe Wilson, (R) South Carolina, accused the President of lying as Obama spoke before a joint session of Congress. Seasoned political observers thought Wilson’s outburst was inappropriate and unprecedented. At the behest of the Republican Congressional leadership, Wilson called the White House to apologize for his rude behavior.

Uncivil behavior is intensifying weekly. Right-wing fringe groups are armed and warning of a second Civil War and major politicians are suggesting that their states could seek secession from the Union! While most will agree that our healthcare system is not sustainable, the opposition to Obama’s healthcare reform seems to be petulant, intractable and unreasonably defiant.

President Obama gets no respect from certain quarters of our society. Such attitudes have been encoded into our laws. In the Dred Scott Decision of 1857, the United States Supreme Court said, in effect, that Blacks were not citizens and therefore not entitled to rights under the constitution.

Chief Justice Taney said, “Blacks had no rights which the White man was bound to respect.”

It appears those words have come back to haunt us.

Yes, dissent is an American tradition. But, embedded in the vitriolic jeers is something that is old and ugly.

During the past eight years, when the Left squawked about President Bush’s policies, they were accused of being unpatriotic and treasonous. Now, the far Right seems bent on bringing down Obama, regardless of the consequences to the country.

In the end, such rancor only serves America’s enemies. The de-legitimizing of Obama’s Presidency robs us of our greatness.

Racism is a cancer that destroys from within. It divides the country and tarnishes our world image. Racism is now a national security issue.

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