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Carter was Right to Denounce Racists



George Curry
 Guest Columnist

One of the major criticisms of civil rights leaders for years has been that too many decent Whites choose to remain silent on the issue of race, ceding the spotlight to mean-spirited Caucasians who are insensitive to the suffering of African Americans.

Today, more Whites are willing to challenge injustice, but when they do, they face a barrage of criticism from conservative politicians and talk show crazies who'd like for us to think that Whites, especially White males, are the most oppressed people in America.

The clearest example of this was the attack on former president Jimmy Carter after he attacked the motives of some critics of Barack Obama. In an interview with NBC News, Carter said, "I think an overwhelming portion of the intensely demonstrated animosity toward President Barack Obama is based on the fact that he is a Black man."

Carter's comment came a day after Rep. Joe Wilson, a Republican from South Carolina, breached Congressional decorum and good manners by yelling, "You lie!" at President Obama as he delivered an address to a joint session of Congress.

Conservatives, including Republican National Committee Chairman Michael Steele, expressed outrage. "President Carter is flat-out wrong," Steele said in a statement. "This isn't about race. It's about policy."

The White House, recognizing it was in a no-win situation, quickly distanced itself from Carter's comments.

Press Secretary Robert Gibbs said Obama "does not believe that the criticism comes based on the color of his skin." He added, "We understand that people have disagreements with some of the decisions that we've made and some of the extraordinary actions that had to be undertaken by this administration." But Jimmy Carter did not back down.

In a speech at Emory University in Atlanta, he said: "When a radical element of demonstrators and others begin to attack the president of the United States as an animal or as a reincarnation of Adolf Hitler or when they wave signs in the air that said we should have buried Obama with Kennedy, those kinds of things are beyond the bounds."

Carter added, "I think people who are guilty of that kind of personal attack against Obama have been influenced to a major degree by a belief that he should not be president because he happens to be African American. It's a racist attitude, and my hope is and my expectation is that in the future both Democratic and Republican leaders will take the initiative in condemning that kind of unprecedented attack on the president of the United States."

He wasn't the only White

person to reach that same conclusion.

New York Times columnist Maureen Dowd wrote, "I've been loath to admit that the shrieking lunacy of the summer - the frantic effort to paint our first black president as the Other, a foreigner, socialist, fascist, Marxist, racist, Commie, Nazi; a cad who would snuff old people; a snake who would indoctrinate kids - had much to do with race."

She continued, "But Wilson's shocking disrespect for the office of the president - no Democrat ever shouted 'liar' at W. when he was hawking a fake case for war in Iraq - convinced me: Some people just can't believe a black man is president and will never accept it."

Neither Carter nor Dowd said everyone who opposes Obama is a racist. Far from it. They pointed out that an element of the opposition includes racism and they are correct. Racists are not as straight-forward as former governors Gov. George C. Wallace of Alabama and Gov. Ross Barnett of Mississippi. They don't stand in school-house doors or use the n-word. Instead, they cloak their racism in code words such as "family values," depict the opposition as being socialists or communists and want the public to believe that people of color are the racists.

That's why Glenn Beck could accuse President Obama of being a racist. He said Obama, who is biracial, has "a deep-seated hatred for White people." Rush Limbaugh said the president "is the greatest living example of a reverse racist." Both called Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor a "reverse racist."

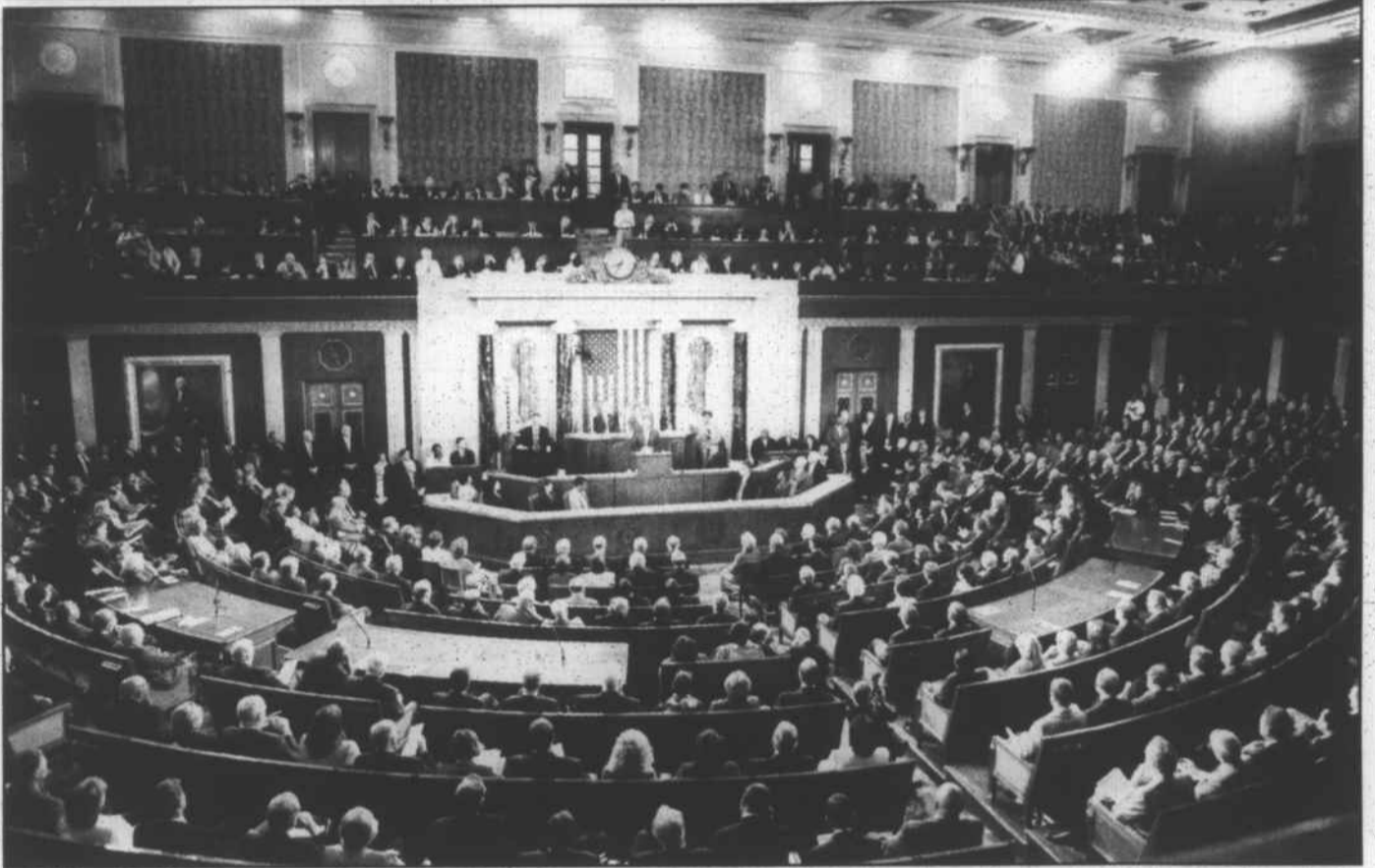
As a Southerner who grew up during the Jim Crow era, I was quite familiar with racists. However, I never knowingly met a "reverse racist." There's no such thing. A person is a racist or isn't one.

This whole attempt to deflect racism by accusing the victims of racism of being racists is part of a larger movement to hijack the language and tactics of the Civil Rights Movement and turn them against people of color. Anti-Obama Tea Party protesters who arrived in D.C. by bus called themselves "Freedom Riders."

In court, anti-affirmative action zealots have turned the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment on its head. Initially passed immediately after the Civil War to provide protection for newly-freed slaves, the clause requires states to provide equal protection for all people within their jurisdictions. Conservatives have gone to court to assert that even voluntary affirmative action programs deny them equal protection guaranteed by the 14th Amendment.

Let's dispense with the smokescreens. Some of the opposition to Obama is based on pure racism.

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President Obama addresses Congress on Sept. 9.

Why Obama is Right on Health Care



Marc Morial
 Guest Columnist

On Sept. 9, before a joint session of Congress, President Obama made his most detailed and impassioned case to date in support of legislation to fix our broken health care system and at long last make health insurance affordable and accessible to every American.

In summary, the President's plan will provide more security and stability to those who have health insurance. It will provide insurance to those who don't. And it will lower the cost of health care for families, businesses and our government.

If you have health insurance, the President's plan will prevent insurance companies

from denying you coverage due to a pre-existing condition. It will also put a cap on out of pocket expenses so people don't go broke when they get sick. It will ensure that all Americans have access to free preventive services like mammograms, flu shots and diabetes tests to improve health and save money. And it protects Medicare and closes the so-called prescription drug "donut hole" which has resulted in an average of \$4,080 in out of pocket costs for beneficiaries who reach a coverage limit and who lack another source of insurance.

If you are one of the tens of millions of Americans who don't have health insurance, half of whom are people of color, the President's plan creates a new insurance marketplace - the Exchange - that allows people without health insurance and small businesses to compare plans and buy insurance at competitive prices. It provides new

tax credits to help individuals buy insurance and to help small businesses cover their employees. It offers new low-cost coverage through a national "high-risk" pool to protect people with pre-existing conditions from financial ruin until the new Exchange is created. And it offers a public health insurance option to provide the uninsured who can't afford coverage with a real choice.

The President also sought to dispel a number of myths, lies and distortions that have fueled so much misinformation and confusion about his plan. The National Urban League shares his outrage at the deliberate attempts to defeat reform through the spreading of outright falsehoods.

That is why on the morning of the President's speech, I joined members of the Congressional Black Caucus and NAACP president, Ben Jealous in a Capitol Hill press conference to help set the

record straight. We made it clear, as the President did later in the evening, that the plan would not create so-called "death panels" with the power to kill off senior citizens; coverage will not be extended to illegal immigrants; and no federal dollars will be used to fund abortions.

Finally the public option, which we strongly support, is not a "government takeover" as some have irresponsibly claimed. It would be an essential option to hold down costs. It simply increases competition. That is the very essence of capitalism.

America stands alone among industrialized nations in not affording its citizens comprehensive health insurance. We have been fighting this battle for over a century. Now is the time to get the job done.

Marc Morial heads the National Urban League.

Wake Up, Smell the Greens!



Peter Bailey
 Guest Columnist

It is time for Black people to wake up and smell the collard greens. It has become increasingly and ominously clear that significant numbers of Whites in this country consider the presence of Barack and Michelle Obama in the White House as an abomination, an unnatural state of affairs, a betrayal of all they have been taught about the proper place for Black people to occupy in the scheme of things.

The malcontents include many, if not most, of Rush Limbaugh's Limb-Addicts, Sean Hannity's Haters, Ann Coulter's Coulterats, Glen Beck's Beckaholics, Bill O'Reilly's Factoroids and Laura Ingraham's Ingramsians. Absolutely nothing Obama does will satisfy such people. Most of them wouldn't want to even

see a Black conservative such as Clarence Thomas or Star Parker or Thomas Sowell or Michael Steele, etc. in The White House as president.

A commentator in the *Washington Post* recently wrote: "... If Clarence Thomas were president, the crowd probably would have stayed home watching Fox News' laudatory coverage of the Thomas administration..."

I don't think so. That position, they believe, should always be held by a White man or maybe a White woman but never by a Black man or Black woman no matter how accommodating or subservient.

Of course, none of this surprises those of us whose national and international perspectives, especially on the subject of race relations, are greatly influenced by the great visionary and master teacher, Malcolm X. It also shouldn't surprise those who have read Martin Luther King Jr.'s last book, "Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?" We were



Ann Coulter

aware from the very beginning that all the campaign rhetoric about a "post-racial" America was at best, naïve and at worst, a deliberate hoax. We also never forget what too many Blacks, in their euphoria about Obama's elections, tend to ignore - which is that nearly 60 percent of Whites voted against Obama in 2008.

Black folks must now wake up and smell the collard greens. For personal political reasons, President Obama may insist that race is not a factor in the ongoing attacks, but those of us who

have to function in the real world know better. As a first step, Black organizations and civic associations on every level must begin to identify the organizations, groups and their leaders who now feel free to openly denigrate us so as not to be caught by surprise. Black newspapers should regularly run brief bio sketches on such organizations and their leaders so they will be imbedded in their readers' consciousness. Businesses, local and national, who support the purveyors of hate and lies should also be identified and denied our patronage if they continue to do so.

Acquiring such information and knowledge is critical if we are to be in a position to promote and defend our economic and political interests in a menacing environment.

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