

BYRON A. ELLIS  
ON.....

## A 'Balkan' Blacks as a detriment

Throughout history, many have utilized divisive techniques to whip up racial and ethnic hatred as a means of propelling their own narrow interests. This balkanization tendency has been quite prevalent among some Black "leaders" and writers.

They often blame Whites for the problems afflicting the Black community, in an effort to create resentment in the minds of unsuspecting Blacks. However, blaming non-Blacks for the problems in the Black community has not improved the lives of Blacks. Such blame game, moreover, is childish, ludicrous and counterproductive.

The Republican "Contract with America" is now being labeled by some as racist and anti-Black; as if less taxes, smaller government, family values, less welfare, more defense and tough anti-crime measurements are only in the best interest of non-blacks.

The tendency, whether intentional or unintentional, to confuse economic interest with racism has created a negative, and anti-collaborative, spirit in the community that hinders development and growth.

It is, therefore, important to understand and separate economic interest from racism. Economics concentrates primarily on efficient utilization of scarce resources, - minimizing costs and maximizing benefits of a given action. Racism does not take efficiency into consideration. It is purely and

emotional and irrational act. And many formally despised groups such as Irish, Italians, Jews and Asians, quickly came to understand this separability and, the importance of economics over race.

Clearly promoting race does not make the Black community better off. However, promoting economic trade, good work ethics, saving propensities, education, appropriate values and behaviors, and good child rearing techniques will undoubtedly lead to individual and community improvements.

It is, therefore, wrong for Blacks to continue to tag the Republican party as racist and anti-black for attempting to minimize government outlays. Additionally, it is erroneous and contradictory to advocate that conservatism is anti-Black. The term "conservative" implies adherence to tradition: the preference of gradual development to abrupt changes. And, based on this definition, Black are conservatives as well, as reflected in the preservation of Black culture and other innate black behavioral tendencies. Hence, the difference between Black conservatism and, say, Republican conservatism appears to be what is being conserved.

The Republican conservatism is posited on government frugality, less taxes and less government spending, family values, educational choices, protection of the unborn, strong defense and law enforcement. Black

conservatism, on the other hand, is Afro-centric, -posited on "African American" values, behaviors and perceptions.

Acknowledging one, however, does not necessarily exclude the other. Hence, conservatism does not imply racism. In fact, the reverse may be true. Promoting unbound freedoms, irresponsible spending, cost shifting and unproductive behaviors may result in racism; it has certainly lead to backward development of the targeted groups.

"Balkan" Blacks are also critical of what they label "white greed and corruption" as if Blacks are free from greed and corruption. And they further contend, as if obligation existed, that whites are unwilling to pay for Black poverty. It is this unwillingness of present day taxpayers, Black and Whites, to bear the increasing costs of imprudent behaviors and wrong choices that they call racism.

Their line of reasoning, however, is detrimental and divisive. and completely ignores the costs associated with inappropriate behavior and poor choices.

Moreover, such rationalization signals to Blacks, and the larger community, that the only way to achieve (compete) is through taxpayer subsidy. Unfortunately, many (especially Blacks) have come to believe in this erroneous philosophy. As a result, Blacks are constantly awaiting help. Help that may be necessary, in some cases, but that will

never be sufficient to make Blacks better off. Therefore, it would behoove Blacks to become self sufficient; to do for themselves those things that will make them better off.

Additionally, "Balkan" blacks in their writings and speeches, attempt to portray a monolithic Black view. That is, any Black that does not advocate unbounded freedoms is an "Uncle Tom". Such monolithic Black view, however, does not exist. Furthermore, they casually dismiss the fact that, like many white taxpayers, many Black taxpayers also adhere to the fundamental principles espoused in the Republican "Contract with America" and do not view it as racist.

And these "Balkan" Blacks are constantly rummaging through the past, often attributing present day conditions of Blacks to past white misdeeds and proclaiming the need for compensation, cultural isolation, while vehemently ignoring the benefits of cultural assimilation and exchange, and the visible costs of individual and community isolation.

Certainly, White misdeeds and injustices were perpetrated during slavery and beyond. However, misdeeds were also perpetrated by Muslim slave traders and Black African conquering tribes.

Therefore, to blame only whites for such misdeeds is irrational. Rationality would imply that those who captured and made possible the initial slave transaction that propelled

the inhuman journeys across the Atlantic and the Sahara desert should bear the brunt of Black anger, but this has not been the case. Perhaps, because no potential compensation, nor cost transfers, can be extracted from the Africans that began the horrible human tragedy.

Rectifying the ills of the black community is the responsibility of those that live in the community; to advocate anything different is inefficient and unworkable. Additionally, the claim, by some Blacks, that reducing taxpayer's outlays is racist because vital resources go to Black America, such as job programs, housing, education, food stamps and welfare are curtailed, sends the wrong signal.

The implication is that only Blacks are recipients of government transfer payments; when, in fact, this is not the case. In absolute numbers, more whites than blacks are recipients of government transfers. Therefore, cuts in government expenditures will affect all recipients equally, whether they are black or white. This alone is indicative that race is not the motivating factor, rather the motivating factor is cost.

The preoccupation with racial issues must be replaced with economic issues. And, as economic capital increases, racial barriers will diminish.

*Mr. Ellis is a resident of Abingdon, Md.*