

September 18, 2016 - PRESIDENT DETRITUS

The president has pronounced that Trump is not qualified. That's like Hillary calling someone else deplorable. They both have first person knowledge of unqualified and deplorable. Let's go through a grab bag of items on the failures left in the this president's wake. First is Claudia Rosett posting on China's dis of the poseur.

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President Obama took office in 2009 promising that his brand of engagement would yield global respect for the United States. We've since had more than seven years of leading from behind, standing "shoulder to shoulder" with the "international community," snubbing of allies, appeasing of enemies and cutting America down to size. As Obama makes what will likely be his final official visit to China, how's it going?

Well, China, as host of the current G-20 summit, rolled out the red carpet -- or at least the red-carpeted airplane stairs -- for the arriving leaders of such countries as Britain, Australia, Germany and Russia.

For President Obama, arriving yesterday on Air Force One, there was no such dignified reception. Instead, there was a shoving match with the press and a confrontation with National Security Adviser Susan Rice, in which a Chinese official shouted "This is our country. This is our airport." For lack of any portable stairs rolled to the front door of the presidential plane, Obama was left to jog down the aircraft's own stairs at the back.

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... Which brings us back to the matter of respect, and which leaders get the red-carpet treatment in China these days, and which don't. Xi and his colleagues see an American president who treats his own country's Constitution, voters and national interests with no respect. For Beijing, that amounts to an enfeebled America. That translates into an opportunity, a wide-open invitation from the White House, to drive home to the world a message that China is on the rise - - receiving at its latest summit an American president who arrives with tribute in his pocket. For such an emissary, no red carpet is needed. Of course he can exit from the back of his plane.

Walter Russell Mead posts on obama's foreign policy turkey on the other side of the globe.

.. Erdogan's pivot to Russia is the latest indicator of the ruins of U.S. foreign policy. In President Obama's original strategy of bringing peace to the Middle East and marginalizing terror by reaching out to democratic Islamists, Turkey's Erdogan was supposed to play a major role. Indeed, Obama was widely reported to have spent more time on the phone with him than with any world leader.

Meanwhile, of course there was also the "reset" with Russia—with "more flexibility" for Moscow promised after Obama's re-election.

Yet America's relations with both Turkey and Russia are in shambles. Domestically, Putin and Erdogan have gone in a more authoritarian direction. In geopolitics, Moscow and Ankara

have refused to go along with the White House's plans. This is not all President Obama's fault of course—he doesn't and cannot control other world leaders. But it's hard not to notice that Obama's early maneuvering hasn't had the results he promised. The opportunities first-term Obama saw in Turkey and Russia have either been squandered or were never even there in the first place. Even after Obama has left office, it will be difficult for the U.S. to repair the damage caused by the president's early geopolitical misreadings.

Richard Epstein writes on the failed presidency.

The week after the Fourth of July is a good time to take stock of the presidency of Barack Obama. It is highly unlikely that he will change course in his six remaining months in office, so he will be judged by history on his current record. That record reveals an enormous gap between his grandiose promises and his pitiful performance over the past eight years. ...

... It is sobering to examine how and why his presidential performance stacks up so poorly against his ideals. An important question for any president is what issues fall in the domain of government action, and which should be left to the private sector. Any sensible answer starts with two presumptions that are antithetical to Obama's progressive frame of mind. First, the government should seek to avoid interfering in economic affairs to allow the forces of competition and innovation to increase the size of the social pie from which everyone can benefit. Second, the government should focus its exercise of national power on defending the nation and its allies from aggression. Obama inverts these key relationships—a fundamental mistake. He is all too willing to use coercion in domestic economic affairs against disfavored groups, and all too reluctant to use it against sworn enemies of the United States and its allies.

A mistake of this magnitude cannot be corrected by marginal adjustments in office. The sad truth is that the United States today is weaker economically, more divided socially, and more disrespected across the globe than it was before Obama took office. With few exceptions, he made the wrong choices in all the areas in which he declared the dawn of a new era. Consider:

...

... Foreign affairs, for their part, have been an unmitigated disaster. Everywhere one looks—Russia, China, the Middle East—the situation is more dangerous than it was before President Obama took office. That is the inescapable consequence of a presidential reluctance to trust military affairs to generals, and to rule out of bounds, virtually categorically, the use of American ground troops to stem the violence in the Middle East. The relative stability that George W. Bush bequeathed to Obama in 2009 has been shattered in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria, and by the rising power of Iran. ISIS commits atrocities nearly daily, most recently in Baghdad and Bangladesh. ...

... Nor has Obama done better on an issue close to his heart: race relations. Instead of firm moral leadership, the president has raised tensions. He announced, for example, that "if I had a son, he'd look like Trayvon." And even after his Department of Justice exonerated Darren Wilson in the killing of Michael Brown, it buried that story behind a searing denunciation of Ferguson, Missouri for the alleged racism of its ticketing practices. The "Ferguson effect" has made policing ever more difficult in African-American communities. No wonder crime rates are rising across the country, even in cities like Chicago that have strict, but largely ineffective, gun control laws, which the president relentlessly champions without any explanation of how they are likely to do any good.

Behind all of these social ills lies a president who lacks the skills of a leader. Sadly, his frayed political legacy has left us with a choice between two undesirable candidates, Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, neither of whom has the capacity and temperament to correct the many ills that President Obama has created at home and abroad over the past eight years.

Craig Pirrong, The Streetwise Professor posts on racial divisions fostered by the president.

Obama's greatest opportunity as president was to advance race relations in this country. They have obviously improved almost miraculously since the Civil Rights and Jim Crow eras, but in 2008 they could have definitely improved even further. Sadly, in the past seven plus years, they have regressed rather than progressed. Obama squandered an opportunity that he was uniquely placed to exploit.

Uniquely placed, but sadly not uniquely qualified, as events have made all too clear. For rather than pour oil on troubled waters, Obama has thrown it on the fire. He does it with such regularity that I must conclude that is hardwired, or a conscious choice: which is worse, I can't say. The horrific events of the past days represent the zenith of this behavior—at least I hope so.

The crux of the problem is that Obama is an echo chamber for Black Lives Matter memes, and a defender of and advocate for the organization. BLM is a divisive, confrontational, and frankly racist organization that is exacerbating tensions, rather than doing anything to reduce them, or to correct the underlying problems. BLM marches routinely involve chants advocating the murder of police ("Pigs in a blanket, fry 'em like bacon"). Obama has hosted leaders of this group at the White House, and praised their effectiveness, saying that he was "confident that they are going to take America to new heights." A sobering thought, that. ...

More on this from **David Harsanyi**.

... When Obama calls for unity (you'll recall this was a big part of his first campaign), he's not talking about a nation that maximizes its freedom so that there is space for an array of cultural outlooks and ideas. He means a nation of diverse people who can all agree that progressivism is right for the nation.

This administration has made a habit of using the power of the state to coerce and compel others to accept its cultural attitudes. For him, unity means little dissent. In his last State of the Union, for example, Obama laid out a progressive agenda, then implored us to embrace "American ideals" as if they were the same. (He offered Trumpism as the only other choice. It's not.)

Obviously, the nation is divided because Americans have deep-seated, legitimate, and meaningful disagreements about the future. One man can neither unify us nor break us apart on his own. But it's been a long time since we've had a president as divisive as Barack Obama.

The administration's war on for-profit schools claims another victim. Two years ago they ruined Corinthian Colleges and now it is ITT Technical facing collapse. Minding The Campus has the story. For the Corinthian saga see Pickings July 14, 2014. Yet more ruin in the wake of this knee jerk left wing ideological presidency.

... While the government is indulgent towards wasteful state colleges, it has a very different, hostile attitude towards for-profit colleges. It will sometimes financially destroy them even without any proof of wrongdoing. The Washington Post editorial board gives the latest example of the Obama administration doing this, its destruction of ITT Technical Institutes:

Never mind that the higher education plans of tens of thousands of students will be disrupted. Or that 8,000 people will lose their jobs. Or that American taxpayers could be on the hook for hundreds of millions of dollars in forgiven student loans. What is apparently of most importance to the Obama administration is its ideological opposition to for-profit colleges and universities. That's a harsh conclusion, but it is otherwise hard to explain why the Education Department has unabashedly used administrative muscle to destroy another company in the beleaguered industry.

ITT Technical Institutes, one of the nation's largest for-profit educational chains, on Tuesday abruptly announced that after 50 years in business it was shutting down more than 100 campuses in 38 states. The announcement, displacing an estimated 40,000 students, follows last month's decision by the Education Department barring the school from enrolling new students using federal student aid and upping its surety requirements. The department said it was acting to protect students and taxpayers, noting the school had been threatened with a loss of accreditation and that it was facing a number of ongoing investigations by both state and federal authorities.

What is so troubling about the department's aggressive move — which experts presciently called a death sentence — is that not a single allegation of wrongdoing has been proven against the school. Maybe the government is right about ITT's weaknesses, but its unilateral action without any semblance of due process is simply wrong. "Inappropriate and unconstitutional," said ITT officials.

Such unfairness sadly is a hallmark of the Obama administration policy toward higher education's for-profit sector. ...



U.S. President Barack Obama arrives on Air Force One at the Hangzhou Airport, Saturday, Sept. 3, 2016,

President Obama took office in 2009 promising that his brand of engagement would yield global respect for the United States. We've since had more than seven years of leading from behind, standing "shoulder to shoulder" with the "international community," snubbing of allies, appeasing of enemies and cutting America down to size. As Obama makes what will likely be his final official visit to China, how's it going?

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Maybe that makes sense in the bubble-world of the Ben-Rhodes-foreign-policy narrative, where the tide of war is forever receding, the arc of history bends toward justice, the oceans rise and fall at the command of Obama's pen and phone, and the echo chamber, on cue, applauds.

But China's reception was an insult, pure and simple. No one need study the tea leaves to understand that this was a gesture of gross disrespect, seen around the world, putting the

American president in his place -- especially as compared with the warm reception for Russia's President Vladimir Putin.

While the missing red-carpeted staircase is mainly symbolic, the realities behind it are increasingly dangerous. Among them are China's territorial grabs at sea, provocations toward the U.S. Navy, cyber attacks, military exercises with Russia and evident tolerance -- despite United Nations sanctions -- of illicit traffic that enables North Korea's continuing nuclear missile program.

For Obama, however, the evident priority in China was to sign on to the Paris climate accord, shoulder-to-shoulder with China's President Xi Jinping. Bundling together the rising threats to the U.S. under the oddly collegial phrase "for all the challenges we face," Obama in remarks from China went on to celebrate his submission to United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, jointly with Xi, of the documents required to formally enter into the Paris Agreement.

According to Obama, this climate deal could be a "turning point for our planet," a grand legacy of a presidency in which he made it his mission "to make sure that America does its part to protect this planet for future generations."

Really? The ironies here are off the charts. As PJ Media's Rick Moran points out, China dealt with the Paris Agreement as a treaty -- which it clearly is -- and at least went through the motions of getting approval from a rubber-stamp legislature. Obama, faced with a genuinely elected legislature in which the Senate would almost certainly have rejected the Paris Agreement, decided to handle this erstwhile planetary "turning point" as a mere embellishment on a previous treaty, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which entered into force in 1994.

So the "ratification" document Obama brought with him to China was the product of one of his pen-and-phone executive actions, offering to the UN secretary-general a commitment Obama was not entitled to make, and which American voters had never agreed to.

Following such stunts as the Iran nuclear deal (which Obama hustled to the UN for approval, but never submitted to the Senate as a treaty), this is becoming a new norm that is, in itself, profoundly dangerous to the foundations of the American republic. Obama's job, summed up in the oath he swore when taking office (twice), is to "preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States." The Constitution requires that a president make treaties only with the "Advice and Consent of the Senate," where a two-thirds majority is required for ratification.

China's Xi and his advisers are surely aware of this strange inversion, in which the American president is willing to roll right over the U.S. Constitution in order to grandstand from China about saving the planet. It's a good bet that to the rulers of China -- and Russia, and a great many others -- Obama's "ratification" of the Paris climate deal looks not like leadership, but like a kowtow.

All the more so because in practice, this deal amounts to Americans paying tribute. Let's set aside for the moment the valid question -- in a debate not remotely "settled" -- of whether the climate of the planet can actually be fine-tuned, as the Paris accord proposes, to within two degrees celsius over coming decades by central planning to control carbon emissions. Whatever the science, the economic aspect of this deal amounts to an expanding web of regulations and wealth transfers, coordinated by a mix of international and federal bureaucrats.

For Americans, as Obama races during his final months in office to entrench this Paris deal (with pen-and-phone) in the domestic system, the result will be to increase the regulatory strictures already strangling an economy now growing at a dismal 1%. You, the American consumer, taxpayer, shunted-aside voter, will pay.

For China, the cost is far less clear. As the state-controlled China Daily summarizes the arrangements, China has pledged to "peak" carbon emissions by 2030. Obama, by contrast, has promised that America will cut emissions by 28% by 2025, as compared to the year 2005.

In other words, small wonder China is happy to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Obama on this deal. Basically, especially with Obama in the cockpit, America starts paying now. China has 14 years to play around before the deal starts to bite. Plus, under China's despotic system, coupled with a treaty in which governments are effectively held accountable only by their own citizens, the rulers in Beijing have plenty of room to toss their international commitments right out the window.

On the maritime front, that is what Beijing has just done in rejecting the July 12 decision by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in the Hague, which ruled against China's grab for the disputed Scarborough Shoal, near the Philippines. In China's increasingly aggressive push for control off its shores, Obama's "engagement" has, if anything, emboldened Beijing.

Which brings us back to the matter of respect, and which leaders get the red-carpet treatment in China these days, and which don't. Xi and his colleagues see an American president who treats his own country's Constitution, voters and national interests with no respect. For Beijing, that amounts to an enfeebled America. That translates into an opportunity, a wide-open invitation from the White House, to drive home to the world a message that China is on the rise -- receiving at its latest summit an American president who arrives with tribute in his pocket. For such an emissary, no red carpet is needed. Of course he can exit from the back of his plane.



Obama's Humiliating Exit – Air Force One's Back Door

American Interest

Turkey and the Ruins of U.S. Foreign Policy

by Walter Russell Mead

Fresh off arresting over 13,000 people, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is planning a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin. *TRT reports*:

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan will meet his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in St. Petersburg on August 9, Deputy Prime Minister Mehmet Simsek said on Tuesday.

The meeting will be the first since Russia and Turkey began normalising relations following the downing of a Russian jet in November last year.

Speaking ahead of a meeting with Russian Deputy Prime Minister Arkadiy Dvorkovich in Moscow, Simsek said the two countries wanted to normalise relations "as quickly as possible".

"Russia is not only our valuable neighbour, but also our important and strategic partner," Simsek said adding that, "We are here to improve our relations and bring them to an even higher level than before November 24."

The Turkish deputy prime minister also said that he had thanked Russia for its support towards Turkey during the July 15 coup attempt.

Reuters also noted that a deal may be in the offing for restarting the mothballed TurkStream pipeline.

Erdogan's pivot to Russia is the latest indicator of the ruins of U.S. foreign policy. In President Obama's original strategy of bringing peace to the Middle East and marginalizing terror by reaching out to democratic Islamists, Turkey's Erdogan was supposed to play a major role. Indeed, Obama was widely reported to have spent more time on the phone with him than with any world leader.

Meanwhile, of course there was also the "reset" with Russia—with "more flexibility" for Moscow promised after Obama's re-election.

Yet America's relations with both Turkey and Russia are in shambles. Domestically, Putin and Erdogan have gone in a more authoritarian direction. In geopolitics, Moscow and Ankara have refused to go along with the White House's plans. This is not all President Obama's fault of course—he doesn't and cannot control other world leaders. But it's hard not to notice that Obama's early maneuvering hasn't had the results he promised. The opportunities first-term Obama saw in Turkey and Russia have either been squandered or were never even there in the first place. Even after Obama has left office, it will be difficult for the U.S. to repair the damage caused by the president's early geopolitical misreadings.

Hoover Institution

Barack Obama's Failed Presidency

by Richard A. Epstein

The week after the Fourth of July is a good time to take stock of the presidency of Barack Obama. It is highly unlikely that he will change course in his six remaining months in office, so he will be judged by history on his current record. That record reveals an enormous gap between his grandiose promises and his pitiful performance over the past eight years.

Ironically, one of Obama's finest moments came before he was elected President. When he secured his nomination in June 2008, a younger Obama [waxed eloquent](#) about his future role as a world historical figure:

I am absolutely certain that generations from now, we will be able to look back and tell our children that this was the moment when we began to provide care for the sick and good jobs to the jobless; this was the moment when the rise of the oceans began to slow and our planet began to heal; this was the moment when we ended a war and secured our nation and restored our image as the last, best hope on Earth.

Obama constantly used the word “we” in that speech, but all too often that first person plural sounded more like the first person singular, as if his nomination heralded a sharp demarcation between the past and future. He spoke as if no one had ever addressed these issues before he “began” a transformation that was “absolutely certain” to reach full flower in his future administration. Obama here is a visionary captured by the nobility of his ends. But vision and skills are not always doled out in equal measure, and his lack of the latter made him unfit to choose the proper means for meeting the challenges he set out for himself.

It is sobering to examine how and why his presidential performance stacks up so poorly against his ideals. An important question for any president is what issues fall in the domain of government action, and which should be left to the private sector. Any sensible answer starts with two presumptions that are antithetical to Obama's progressive frame of mind. First, the government should seek to avoid interfering in economic affairs to allow the forces of competition and innovation to increase the size of the social pie from which everyone can benefit. Second, the government should focus its exercise of national power on defending the nation and its allies from aggression. Obama inverts these key relationships—a fundamental mistake. He is all too willing to use coercion in domestic economic affairs against disfavored groups, and all too reluctant to use it against sworn enemies of the United States and its allies.

A mistake of this magnitude cannot be corrected by marginal adjustments in office. The sad truth is that the United States today is weaker economically, more divided socially, and more disrespected across the globe than it was before Obama took office. With few exceptions, he made the wrong choices in all the areas in which he declared the dawn of a new era. Consider:

Just how has Obama provided care for the sick? On this, as in so many other economic and social issues, he faced [this critical choice](#): Either he could seek to remove barriers to entry in markets, or he could impose a regime of regulation, taxation, and exclusion. The former increases growth and reduces administrative and regulatory overhang. The latter blocks potential gains from trade while increasing administrative and compliance costs.

His vaunted health-care exchanges violated every sound principle of economic theory. The benefit packages that were mandated were far more exhaustive than those supplied under any

private plan. The more exacting standards for existing private plans forced many of them to close down or curtail their operations. The insistence that administrative expenses be capped at a predetermined fraction of total expenditures micromanaged businesses by outsiders who were totally ignorant of the trade-offs among various firm functions. Large numbers of insured people were forced out of sensible private plans into a restricted diet of public plans, typically heavily subsidized. The standard insurance problem of adverse selection was overlooked, as the president and his supporters acted as if young and healthy people were anxious to stay in health-care plans that forced them to provide extensive subsidies to older recipients. Instead, these healthy people simply delayed joining any plan until they had an immediate need of expensive medical services. Longer waiting periods for coverage of pre-existing conditions or required minimum periods of membership were brushed aside in a fit of ideological purity. The exchanges have had a rocky reception at best, and they have an uncertain future.

The situation is no better when we talk about “good jobs” for the “jobless.” The president’s policies have wreaked havoc on labor markets. A correct analysis starts with the simple insight that any regulation or tax on employers necessarily limits what employees can receive. In competitive labor markets, therefore, the government should enforce contracts as written, rather than rewrite them from above. Our unfortunate New Deal legacy contains many laws disrupting labor markets that no president can repeal at will. But the president can use his enormous administrative discretion to ease their burden.

Not this president. Just recently, the Department of Labor announced [new overtime regulations](#) under the 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act that now cover workers who earn less than \$47,476 annually, double the previous figure of \$23,660. The FLSA was an unwarranted interference at the time of passage, but the distortions it creates are greater in today’s fluid economy. At a minimum, the new regulations impose heavy compliance costs on both private and public employers, forcing them to rethink virtually every job classification. It makes the “hour” the official unit of compensation even where it is entirely inappropriate in practice. Here are three examples. First, tech start-ups provide much compensation in stock and stock options, whose accounting value for regulatory purposes the FLSA caps at 10 percent of wages, forcing cash-poor firms to redo their entire business plans. Second, university graduate students and post-docs work long hours to secure an education and job. Yet no one knows where to find the extra cash once they become hourly workers subject to overtime protection. Finally, the entire “gig” economy works on a piecemeal basis because neither Uber nor Task Rabbit can monitor workers’ hours at a distance.

Elsewhere, the Obama administration has sought to prop up union membership by ordering quickie elections, limiting employer speech, and [treating franchisors](#) like McDonald’s as though they were the employers of their franchisees. These clumsy forms of labor market intervention have led his administration to take [protectionist positions](#) on free trade in order to safeguard faltering labor monopolies. President Obama has given some support to [the Transpacific Partnership](#), but often under a mercantilist “fair trade” banner. It is all self-defeating. To be sure, unemployment rates have gone down, but so too have labor market participation and median family income.

The president’s policies also falter when it comes to the hugely complex issues of global warming and the environment. Most people think, all else being equal, that an increase in carbon dioxide will increase overall global temperatures. But how? Are the relatively flat temperature readings of the past 15 years a blip or a trend? Even though the president puts global warming at the top of his agenda, he ignores these questions, only to preside over an Environmental Protection Agency that refuses to rework its permitting rules to allow low-carbon emission plants to displace the antiquated coal facilities still in operation. Obama also

champions massive overregulation under the Clean Water Act and the Clean Air Act. And his international protocols could easily create domestic dislocation without securing any tangible environmental benefits.

Foreign affairs, for their part, have been an unmitigated disaster. Everywhere one looks—Russia, China, the Middle East—the situation is more dangerous than it was before President Obama took office. That is the inescapable consequence of a presidential reluctance to trust military affairs to generals, and to rule out of bounds, virtually categorically, the use of American ground troops to stem the violence in the Middle East. The relative stability that George W. Bush bequeathed to Obama in 2009 has been shattered in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria, and by the rising power of Iran. ISIS commits atrocities nearly daily, most recently in Baghdad and Bangladesh. And the turmoil has created a migration crisis in Europe and throughout the Middle East. Red lines in Syria count for nothing, and ISIS has set up multiple permanent bases throughout the Middle East, which serve as springboards for terrorist activities that have reached the United States, most recently in Orlando. The breakdown has only heightened global intrigue, transient alliances and political instability. Yet Obama's only firm commitments are to cut down our military capability and not to use ground forces in the Middle East, leaving a huge power void that the Russians are all too eager to fill. [Pax Americana](#) is indeed dead.

Nor has Obama done better on an issue close to his heart: race relations. Instead of firm moral leadership, the president has raised tensions. He [announced](#), for example, that "if I had a son, he'd look like Trayvon." And even after his Department of Justice [exonerated](#) Darren Wilson in the killing of Michael Brown, it buried that story behind a searing denunciation of Ferguson, Missouri for the alleged racism of its ticketing practices. The "[Ferguson effect](#)" has made policing ever more difficult in African-American communities. No wonder crime rates are rising across the country, even in cities like Chicago that have strict, but largely ineffective, gun control laws, which the president relentlessly champions without any explanation of how they are likely to do any good.

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Streetwise Professor

[Which Side is Obama on? Now We Know: Feeding the Flames of Racial Discord](#)

by Craig Pirrong

Obama's greatest opportunity as president was to advance race relations in this country. They have obviously improved almost miraculously since the Civil Rights and Jim Crow eras, but in 2008 they could have definitely improved even further. Sadly, in the past seven plus years, they have regressed rather than progressed. Obama squandered an opportunity that he was uniquely placed to exploit.

Uniquely placed, but sadly not uniquely *qualified*, as events have made all too clear. For rather than pour oil on troubled waters, Obama has thrown it on the fire. He does it with such regularity that I must conclude that is hardwired, or a conscious choice: which is worse, I can't say. The horrific events of the past days represent the zenith of this behavior—at least I hope so.

The crux of the problem is that Obama is an echo chamber for Black Lives Matter memes, and a defender of and advocate for the organization. BLM is a divisive, confrontational, and frankly racist organization that is exacerbating tensions, rather than doing anything to reduce them, or to correct the underlying problems. BLM marches routinely involve chants advocating the murder of police (“Pigs in a blanket, fry ’em like bacon”). Obama has hosted leaders of this group at the White House, and praised their effectiveness, saying that he was “confident that they are going to take America to new heights.” A sobering thought, that.

The less incendiary part of BLM rhetoric is still fundamentally dishonest, and it is this part that Obama repeats on every occasion in which these issues are even tangentially relevant—or sometimes when they are appallingly inappropriate, as at the memorial service in Dallas yesterday. In particular, the BLM/Obama rhetoric cites racial disparities in deaths in confrontations with police; arrest and incarceration rates; and capital sentencing rates as evidence of deep-seated “institutional racism.”

These statistics—and those citing them—are fundamentally dishonest because these numbers are clearly not the whole truth, and fractional truths (I will not dignify them by calling them “half-truths”) can be as manipulative and misleading as an outright lie. These certainly are.

Telling the whole truth would require confronting an ugly reality: there are substantial racial disparities in criminality (and in rates of victimization—a fact BLM is outrageously silent about with the exception of police killings).

Take, for instance, the oft-repeated statistic that African Americans represent a proportion of those killed by police that is double their proportion of the population. But they commit murder in a proportion four times that of their share of the population: and they also are victimized by murder in a similarly disproportionate ratio (which should be your major concern if you truly believe black lives matter). In every statistic related to violent crime, African Americans are disproportionately represented as both perpetrators and victims—and in ratios that typically exceed the 2-1 police killing statistic. This is true in the case of murders of police officers, where African Americans are the killer 43 percent of the time, in contrast to their 12 percent share of the population: they make up about 26 percent of those killed by police.

These hard facts have hard implications that speak directly to how to interpret statistics not just on arrest and incarceration rates, but on deaths at the hands of law enforcement. Namely, because of their greater involvement in crime, African Americans are disproportionately likely to have hostile interactions with law enforcement. Further, police will rationally infer, based on the limited information that they inevitably have to act on, that all else equal African Americans pose a greater threat to them than do non-African Americans. This makes a bad outcome more likely when a police officer confronts an African American than when confronting someone of a different race.

Most of the law enforcement shootings are ruled justified. But citing statistics embracing all shootings, and failing to put those into the sad context of life in many minority neighborhoods in the United States, BLM—and Obama and the left generally—insinuate that they are *prima facie* evidence of racial injustice.

This is a pattern for Obama. Further, he routinely expresses tendentious opinions about controversial cases, some of which (Trayvon Martin) are hard cases, and some of which (the shooting of Michael Brown) prove not to be, once the facts are known (often only after a Herculean effort to rescue those facts from mendacious misinformation). After Ferguson, Obama told the UN—the UN!—the following:

I realize that America's critics will be quick to point out that at times we too have failed to live up to our ideals; that America has plenty of problems within its own borders. This is true. In a summer marked by instability in the Middle East and Eastern Europe, I know the world also took notice of the small American city of Ferguson, Missouri — where a young man was killed, and a community was divided.

A low, dishonest characterization, that. One that slyly embraces the utterly false narrative about the death of Michael Brown. For although Obama describes the death in the passive voice (“a young man was killed”) and does not identify the killer, this is of little moment when (a) everyone knows that the “young man” was black and he was killed by a white policeman, and (b) this episode was raised in a paragraph beginning with an admission that American has “failed to live up to our own ideals.” The judgment that Obama renders about Brown's death in that paragraph is blindingly obvious, regardless of the Delphic phrasing. Indeed, by comparison the rhetoric of BLM is refreshingly honest and preferable in that respect.

This tendency was on display again in the aftermath of two police shootings in the last week, one in Baton Rouge the other in a Minneapolis suburb. Speaking about the second episode, the death of Philando Castile, Obama repeated the as yet uncorroborated statements of Castile's girlfriend, who was in the car with him when he was shot. The live stream she put on Facebook was indeed disturbing, but it starts after Castile was shot, and as yet we know not what chain of events culminated in the shooting: we have just heard her version. But without knowing the facts, Obama validated the narrative that the shooting was unjustified, and then used the tragedy as another opportunity to deliver a soliloquy on racial disparities in the American criminal justice and law enforcement systems.

This rush to judgment contrasted jarringly with Obama's reticence to pass judgment on the motives of the mass killer of five Dallas policemen despite the fact that the (black) police chief of Dallas had said that the murderer—Micah Xavier Johnson—had expressed his solidarity with BLM, his hatred of whites, and his intention to kill white police officers. Obama's reticence to interpret Johnson's avowed motives also clashed with his easy assertion that Charleston church shooter Dylann Roof was driven by racial hatred.

Speaking yesterday at a memorial service for the officers, Obama did acknowledge Johnson's racism: he really had little choice after the blowback from his initial claim that Johnson's intent was inscrutable (and his previous refusal to acknowledge the avowed motives of Muslim murderers in Orlando and San Bernardino). But the speech was nonetheless another exercise in his obfuscation of realities in order to insinuate pervasive institutional racism. He mentioned Philandro Castile and Baton Rouge shooting victim Alton Sterling in the same sentence as the five dead officers, thereby drawing a sort of equivalence where none exists, other than the fact that people are dead. But it got worse:

But America, we know that bias remains. We know it, whether you are black, or white, or Hispanic, or Asian, or native American, or of Middle Eastern descent, we have all seen this bigotry in our own lives at some point. We've heard it at times in our own homes. If we're honest, perhaps we've heard prejudice in our own heads and felt it in our own hearts. We know that. And while some suffer far more under racism's burden, some feel to a far greater extent discrimination's stain. Although most of us do our best to guard against it and teach our children better, none of us is entirely innocent. No institution is entirely immune, and that includes our police departments. We know this.

And so when African-Americans from all walks of life, from different communities across the country, voice a growing despair over what they perceive to be unequal treatment, when study

after study shows that whites and people of color experience the criminal justice system differently. So that if you're black, you're more likely to be pulled over or searched or arrested; more likely to get longer sentences; more likely to get the death penalty for the same crime. When mothers and fathers raised their kids right, and have the talk about how to respond if stopped by a police officer — yes, sir; no, sir — but still fear that something terrible may happen when their child walks out the door; still fear that kids being stupid and not quite doing things right might end in tragedy.

When all this takes place, more than 50 years after the passage of the Civil Rights Act, we cannot simply turn away and dismiss those in peaceful protest as troublemakers or paranoid.

Again, the recitation of incomplete and decontextualized statistics in the most inflammatory—and inappropriate—circumstances. Suggesting that law enforcement is racist at the funerals of five policemen (killed by an admitted racist, no less) is to insinuate that as part of that system these officers were racist too.

One particularly outrageous line is another BLM theme: “When mothers and fathers raised their kids right, and have the talk about how to respond if stopped by a police officer — yes, sir; no, sir — but still fear that something terrible may happen when their child walks out the door.” Tragically, something terrible may indeed happen to those children with shocking likelihood, but it is orders of magnitude more likely that the perpetrator of the terrible thing will not be a policeman, but another African American. And what about all those children whose mother and father did not raise them right, and all too often don't raise them at all? Obama's framing is yet another denial of some very unpleasant realities.

In the aftermath of the Trayvon Martin death, Obama said that the son he never had could have looked like Trayvon. He has not said the same about the dozens of young men shot down within blocks of his former Kenwood home.

Another particularly outrageous slur is the statement that “peaceful protest[ers]” are “dismissed” as troublemakers or paranoid. Check out the BLM-led protests in Ferguson, Atlanta, or Minnesota, which have been anything but peaceful. As for the rhetoric of BLM leaders, it is more than fair to characterize it as paranoid and intended to stir up trouble and strife—or worse. But since he insinuates that all protesters are peaceful, even when some are not, and that their complaints are valid, even when almost all are not, he absolves the violent and the provocateurs, and encourages the distortion of the truth.

Perhaps the worst line in the speech—again completely inappropriate in this setting—was this: “We flood communities with so many guns that it is easier for a teenager to buy a Glock than get his hands on a computer or even a book.”

Unpacking the mendacity of that statement would take many posts. A few things. First, just who is this “we”? I haven't flooded guns anywhere: have you? This invocation of collective guilt (excluding himself, of course) is a common leftist trope. Second, it is patently absurd to say that it is easier for a teenager to get a Glock (starting price around \$500) than a computer or a book. This is not an issue of availability or cost: it is an issue of choice. Third, and perhaps worst of all, is the denial of individual responsibility and moral agency to the “teenager” who *chooses* a gun over a book. But recognizing that would raise thorny and uncomfortable questions, when Obama's purpose is to push easy nostrums (namely, gun control) and to condemn Americans and American institutions.

This is not a matter of mere rhetoric. There is a short distance between words, especially a president's words, and especially a black president's words on a racially charged matter, and actions. An extremely dangerous dynamic is at play, and incredible care is needed to avoid accelerating it.

Micah Johnson targeted police because of his belief that they target black men. In the day after the Dallas atrocity, police officers in Missouri, Tennessee, and Georgia were targeted. When police are targeted (and this has been a concern of police since Ferguson, and events in Baltimore) they are more likely to perceive a threat and shoot in response, which creates another *cause célèbre* which inflames the likes of Micah Johnson. And on and on it goes.

By repeating and embracing crucial elements of the fundamentally dishonest BLM narrative, Obama validates the aggrieved, and aggravates the dynamic. When a Sister Souljah moment is needed, Obama instead enables latter day Sister Souljahs—and worse.

So what is to be done? Honesty, and the avoidance of inflammatory fractional truths, would be a start.

So would be a full-throated condemnation of BLM and a concerted effort to marginalize it and to empower more responsible voices.

But I hold out little hope that Obama will do these things. He has already made plain his allegiances.

Indeed, he made them even more abundantly clear today: rather than condemning BLM, he is embracing it. [The day after the memorial service in Dallas, he hosted BLM organizer Deray McKesson at the White House for a private meeting for three hours.](#) (How many people does Obama meet with privately for three hours? In his own cabinet, even?) (McKesson called the meeting a “convening.” What the hell is a convening? It's not a noun!)

To meet with McKesson any time would be bad, but to do so the day after speaking at a memorial service for five police officers murdered by a man who had told Dallas police negotiators that he was “upset by Black Lives Matter,” is beyond appalling. Step back for a minute and think about this. The day after turning a speech intended to honor slain policemen into another of his dreary lectures on America's inveterate racism, he confers with the leader of an organization dedicated to the proposition that law enforcement routinely oppresses and assassinates African Americans.

Back in the '60s, the refrain was “which side are you on?” We know exactly which side Obama is on.

It is deliberate, and it is a signal. And what it signals is that rather than using the power of his office to push back against an inflammatory movement that is in the midst of ramping up confrontations (with demonstrations planned in 37 cities on Friday), he is putting his power and authority behind that movement. Again, rather than pouring oil on troubled waters, throwing fuel on the fire. It is beyond disturbing.

What can others do? Perhaps the most practical and feasible step would be to enhance the credibility of investigations of law enforcement officers who employ deadly force, and to punish officers who employ it unjustifiably. This does not mean whitewashing police conduct—the exact opposite. Officers acting reasonably will prevail even searching investigations. But at the same time, it does mean that concerted efforts must be taken to de-politicize these investigations and

cases. When major political figures (not just Obama, but Minnesota governor Dayton or the mayor of Baltimore) express their opinions on these police shootings, especially when the gun smoke still hangs in the air and the facts are not known, justice cannot prevail, and the credibility of the process is undermined. Demagogues like BLM exploit such doubts about process to fuel conflict.

The only margin I can see on which it is practically possible to reduce the frequency of confrontational interactions between police and African Americans in particular is the drug laws. This is obviously a complex and fraught subject, but criminalization of drugs clearly is a major reason for hostile interactions between police and people of all races, but African Americans in particular. It also contributes to violent criminality in minority communities most notably. The War on Drugs is problematic to say the least, and one of its most problematic aspects is how it exacerbates tensions between minorities and law enforcement. This is a good reason to rethink how it is fought, and whether it is worth fighting at all.

But that isn't going to happen overnight, and maybe not ever. In the meantime, perhaps the best that can be achieved is "first, do no harm." Unfortunately, a president in the best position to do good cannot muster even that.

The Federalist

How Obama Divides America

One man can neither unify us nor break us apart on his own. But it's been a long time since we've had a president as divisive as this one.

by David Harsanyi

At the funeral service for five slain Dallas cops, Barack Obama [delivered](#) another one of his needlessly politicized lectures. As is customary these days, those who were critical of his rhetoric were branded racists and [unthinking haters](#).

That's one theory.

Another one is that people might be put off by Obama's grating habit of turning every tragedy into a sermon about our supposed collective failings. I doubt the president is substantively more partisan than the average politician, but like most people on the Left these days, he no longer bothers to make a distinction between a policy position and a moral struggle.

The issue of gun control, for example, isn't a good-faith disagreement between people of different persuasions, but — like civil rights or suffrage — a struggle waged by the righteous against the evil (and sometimes those poor souls tricked by the NRA).

Seemingly every political battle waged by the modern Democratic Party — gay rights, immigration, climate change, inequality — is imbued with a kind spiritual certitude that justifies circumventing debate. If a person who opposes the administration's transgender bathroom policy [is just like a Klansman](#), why even discuss the matter? In this context, [the histrionics](#) of Democrats in Congress over guns or the media's melodramas make all the sense in the world.

In this context, why *wouldn't* the president lecture us about gun control in his speech? Why wouldn't Obama offer completely unsubstantiated claims about guns? "It's easier for a teenager to get his hands on a Glock than a computer ... or even a book," [was a contention Obama made](#) that no rational person could ever possibly believe. It's meant to convey the idea that half the nation cares more about the NRA than about children.

So maybe some conservatives are put off by Obama's awe-inspiring propensity to create strawmen and offer false choices at every opportunity — all under the guise of thoughtful discourse. Maybe it's that he never offers a fair or reasonable assessment of his opposition's positions before pretending to debunk them. Or maybe it's that, no matter what actually happens, he clings to a predetermined message before blaming the half of America that didn't vote for him.

Last week, [the Dallas chief of police told us](#) that the murderer of five cops, Micah Xavier Johnson, was "upset about the recent police shootings" and "wanted to kill white people, especially white officers." In the same way, the Orlando shooter, Omar Mateen, was a Muslim motivated by ISIS to murder as many gay Americans as he could. Because neither of these storylines comport with [the president's worldview](#), in each instance he laid down collective responsibility and implored us to be more liberal and thus avoid more incidents like them. *We* are better than this.

[As John Podhoretz recently put it:](#)

As usual, Obama made strange use of the word 'we,' because when he says 'we,' he means 'you,' and when he means 'you,' he means people who aren't as enlightened and thoughtful as he and his ideological compatriots are.

When speaking about the Dallas shooter, Obama [claimed that](#) "None of us are entirely innocent" when it comes to racial discrimination ... "and this includes our police departments." Actually most cops and most people are entirely innocent when it comes to discrimination. Yes, there are racists and bigots in all our institutions and communities, but most Americans don't need to "open our hearts" on the subject simply because liberals accuse them of harboring ugly thoughts. We need to fix police departments. We need to fix our inner-city schools. And we need to fix the economic prospects of minority populations. People have different ideas about how to go about it. Every day, though, the vast majority of citizens peacefully interact in families, in friendships, and in commerce.

If you continually claim that every problem in America is driven by hate, people might start believing you. [According to a new Pew Research Poll](#), Americans' perception of race relations is more negative today than it has been in 20 years. Around 48 percent of those polled claim that "race relations are generally bad." And 36 percent of adults say that "too much attention" is paid to race and racial issues today. Are things really worse today than they were 30 years ago? Fifty years?

When Obama calls for unity (you'll recall this was a big part of his first campaign), he's not talking about a nation that maximizes its freedom so that there is space for an array of cultural outlooks and ideas. He means a nation of diverse people who can all agree that progressivism is right for the nation.

This administration has made a habit of using the power of the state to coerce and compel others to accept its cultural attitudes. For him, unity means little dissent. In his last State of the Union, for example, Obama laid out a progressive agenda, [then implored us to embrace](#)

“American ideals” as if they were the same. (He offered Trumpism as the only other choice. It’s not.)

Obviously, the nation is divided because Americans have deep-seated, legitimate, and meaningful disagreements about the future. One man can neither unify us nor break us apart on his own. But it’s been a long time since we’ve had a president as divisive as Barack Obama.

Minding the Campus

obama backs the worst colleges while destroying for-profit schools

by Hans Bader

The federal government happily subsidizes inferior state colleges that graduate few if any of their students. That includes Chicago State University, which has a 12.8 percent six-year graduation rate.

The Obama administration has rewritten federal student loan rules in a way that encourages colleges to raise tuition and effectively subsidizes the worst colleges the most. The Federal Reserve Bank of New York found that each additional dollar in government financial aid results in a tuition hike of about 65 cents.

The federal government also subsidizes expensive, low-quality third-tier law schools whose graduates are often unemployed. It does so even though many of their graduates will never pay back their student loans because of their low graduating salaries, and the huge amount of money law students are allowed to borrow from the government.

While the government is indulgent towards wasteful state colleges, it has a very different, hostile attitude towards for-profit colleges. It will sometimes financially destroy them even without any proof of wrongdoing. The Washington Post editorial board gives the latest example of the Obama administration doing this, its destruction of ITT Technical Institutes:

Never mind that the higher education plans of tens of thousands of students will be disrupted. Or that 8,000 people will lose their jobs. Or that American taxpayers could be on the hook for hundreds of millions of dollars in forgiven student loans. What is apparently of most importance to the Obama administration is its ideological opposition to for-profit colleges and universities. That’s a harsh conclusion, but it is otherwise hard to explain why the Education Department has unabashedly used administrative muscle to destroy another company in the beleaguered industry.

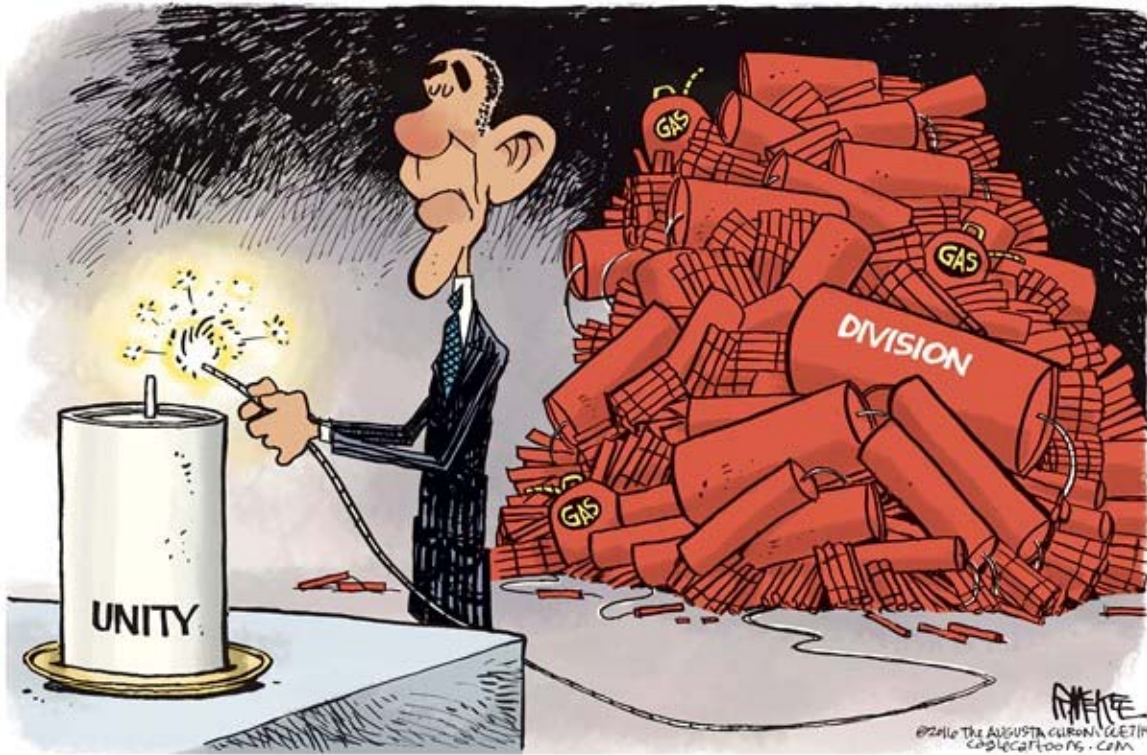
ITT Technical Institutes, one of the nation’s largest for-profit educational chains, on Tuesday abruptly announced that after 50 years in business it was shutting down more than 100 campuses in 38 states. The announcement, displacing an estimated 40,000 students, follows last month’s decision by the Education Department barring the school from enrolling new students using federal student aid and upping its surety requirements. The department said it was acting to protect students and taxpayers, noting the school had been threatened with a loss of accreditation and that it was facing a number of ongoing investigations by both state and federal authorities.

What is so troubling about the department's aggressive move — which experts presciently called a death sentence — is that not a single allegation of wrongdoing has been proven against the school. Maybe the government is right about ITT's weaknesses, but its unilateral action without any semblance of due process is simply wrong. "Inappropriate and unconstitutional," said ITT officials.

Such unfairness sadly is a hallmark of the Obama administration policy toward higher education's for-profit sector. It has singled out the industry for stringent employment and student loan rules and stepped up enforcement with stiff sanctions that, as The Post's Danielle Douglas-Gabriel reported, have some companies on the brink of ruin.

As the Cato Institute's Neal McCluskey notes, ITT Tech produced better graduating salaries for its students than nearby public alternatives. But no one is suggesting that those lousy public colleges be shut down.









Poverty Rank	City	Democrat Since
1	Detroit, MI	1961
2	Buffalo, NY	1954
3	Cincinnati, OH	1984
4	Cleveland, OH	1989
5	Miami, FL	forever
6	St. Louis, MO	1949
7	El Paso, TX	forever
8	Milwaukee, WI	1908
9	Philadelphia, PA	1952
10	Newark, NJ	1907

Isn't it time to try economic policies that actually work?

John
McGly
and
aLick



Well,
so much
for **OUR**
"safe space."