

Obama's Colin Cleansing

Obama today defended NFL player Colin Kaepernick's refusal to stand for the National Anthem. He said, "In terms of Mr. Kaepernick, you know, I gotta [sic] confess that I haven't been thinkin' about football, uh, while I've been over here [in China], uh, and, I haven't been following this closely but I, uh, my understanding at least is that, uh, he's exercising his constitutional right ta [sic; to] make a statement. I think there's a long history of sports figures doing so, um, I think there are a lot of ways you can do it, uh, as, as, as a general matter, uh, when it comes ta [sic; to] the flag, and the national anthem, and, uh, the meaning that that holds for our men and women in uniform, and, and, and those who fought for us, uh, you know, that is, uh, a tough thing for them ta [sic; to] get past, to then hear, uh, what his deeper concerns are."

"But I don't doubt his sincerity, based on what I've heard. I think he cares about, uh, some real, legitimate issues, that have to be talked about. Um, and, uh, if nothing else, what he's done is he's generated, uh, uh, more conversation around some topics that need to be talked about. You've heard me talk about in the past, the need for us to have an active citizenry, um, sometimes that's messy and controversial and it gets people angry and frustrated, but, uh, I'd rather have young people who are engaged in the argument and tryin' to think through, uh, how they can be part of our democratic process than people who are just sittin' on the sidelines and not, uh, not payin' attention at all."

Obama claimed, "I haven't been following this closely" but nevertheless said, "I don't doubt his [Kaepernick's] sincerity." Obama, of course, would never doubt the sincerity of anyone criticizing the United States and suggesting it is a racist Hell-hole. Obama said it is his "understanding" that Kaepernick has a "constitutional right" to make a statement—as though he might have had doubts about that right and was just told by White House counsel that Americans are indeed entitled to freedom of speech.

Obama thinks the meaning of the national anthem is "a tough thing to get past" for members of the military. Patriotism and love for one's country are apparently things Obama believes people need to "get past." Obama also seems to believe that everyone in the military, and the rest of America, must hear what Kaepernick's "deeper concerns are." Frankly, most Americans do not give a damn about his "deeper concerns." They watch football to be entertained, not to be lectured. They also watch television and movies, and don't particularly care to hear what Janeane Garofalo thinks about politics or that Lena Dunham is upset that Odell Beckham, Jr. does not worship her pasty white thighs.

Obama thinks Kaepernick has "generated, uh, uh, more conversation around some topics that need to be talked about"—as if Americans are not sick to death of talking about race and would rather treat people as individuals than members of

special interest groups. Americans have been lectured to about race by Obama since the day he entered our Oval Office, and if they never again hear another word from him on the subject most people will be happy. They are also quite capable of discussing important issues in appropriate forums without getting “messy and confrontational.”

Further, whether Kaepernick’s main issue (that America is a horribly racist nation and blacks are being indiscriminately exterminated by white police officers) is legitimate is subject to dispute. The reality is that whites and Hispanics are more likely to get shot by the police than African-Americans. Kaepernick—like millions of Americans—believed the “Hands up, don’t shoot!” lie. While there are no doubt some rogue police officers who are quick to abuse their power, the same is true of politicians—and politicians have negatively impacted far more lives than police officers ever have.

That most Americans are not raising fusses over various issues does not mean they are “sittin’ on the sidelines” and “not payin’ attention at all.” They merely have priorities. When a plumber arrives to fix a leak, the homeowner wants the leak repaired—not a stern refusal to replace the pipe as a means of “generating a conversation” about an issue that has been bugging the guy holding the wrench. On his day off the plumber can raise all the ruckus he wants about any topic he chooses, but while he’s under the kitchen sink he should focus on the leak.

Kaepernick should focus on throwing footballs that are caught more often than they are blocked or intercepted, and Obama should focus on upholding the U.S. Constitution and enforcing federal laws. On their days off they can whine all they want about how difficult their lives have been and the terrible burdens they’ve had to endure, and when their careers are over (soon for both of them) they can blame all their failures on racism. But I’ll blame their poor performances.

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