Obama: ‘Most Americans’ think nation is racist

By Joseph Curl - - Sunday, September 28, 2014

ANALYSIS/OPINION:

For President Obama, the color of a man's skin is far more important than the content of his character.

On the night when a police officer was shot in a Missouri town torn by racial strife, the president donned a shiny tuxedo to attend a ritzy black awards dinner, where he said police nationwide are to blame for community mistrust, even claiming that "most Americans" think the country is racist.

Remember, when Ferguson exploded in racial rage in August, Mr. Obama chose not to curtail his 15-day vacation, spending day after day on the golf course in the white-skinned, white-wined, millionaire playground of Martha's Vineyard. But on Saturday, the Divider in Chief decided to stoke the dying embers in the small St. Louis suburb, just in case he could cash in on a late campaign issue.

"Too many young men of color feel targeted by law enforcement — guilty of walking while black or driving while black, judged by stereotypes that fuel fear and resentment and hopelessness," the president told the mostly black crowd at the Congressional Black Caucus dinner.

Mr. Obama, America's first half-white, half-black president, pointed out in the crowd the parents of Michael Brown, the black teenager killed by a white police officer in Ferguson, Missouri, after, according to police, he robbed a liquor store.

"Now, I won’t comment on the investigation. I know that Michael's family is here tonight," he said to loud applause. "I know that nothing any of us can say can ease the grief of losing a child so soon. But the anger and the emotion that followed his death awakened our nation once again to the reality that people in this room have long understood, which
is, in too many communities around the country, a gulf of mistrust exists between local residents and law enforcement."

Instead of using the event to talk optimistically about race in America — with a slew of prominent black lawmakers, lawyers and entrepreneurs — Mr. Obama said "most Americans" believe America is racist, citing everything "from enforcing drug policy to applying the death penalty to pulling people over."

"There are significant racial disparities. That's just the statistics. One recent poll showed that the majority of Americans think the criminal justice system doesn't treat people of all races equally. Think about that. That's not just blacks, not just Latinos or Asians or Native Americans saying things may not be unfair. That's most Americans."

So, with the majority of Americans suffering from institutional racism, Mr. Obama said that "makes folks who are victimized by crime and need strong policing reluctant to go to the police because they may not trust them."

"And the worst part of it is it scars the hearts of our children," Mr. Obama said, adding, as The Associated Press put it, "that it leads some youngsters to unnecessarily fear people who do not look like them and others to constantly feel under suspicion no matter what they do."

But the half-white president gave a shout out to white people, saying they suffer, too. Racism "scars the hearts of the white kids who grow unnecessarily fearful of somebody who doesn't look like them. It stains the heart of black children who feel as if no matter what he does, he will always be under suspicion. That is not the society we want. It's not the society that our children deserve. Whether you're black or white, you don't want that for America."

The president, who has two daughters, said girls suffer as well (and women, but only black ones this time).

"African American girls are more likely than their white peers also to be suspended, incarcerated, physically harassed. Black women struggle every day with biases that perpetuate oppressive standards for how they're supposed to look and how they're supposed to act. Too often, they're either left under the hard light of scrutiny, or cloaked in a kind of invisibility."

Mr. Obama's comments came the same night a police officer was shot in Ferguson. The officer was shot in the arm Saturday after encountering two men at a community center
who ran from him and then opened fire during a foot chase, AP reported.

Rather than talk about all that unites the races, for Mr. Obama, America just keeps getting worse and worse. And that's just as he wants it to be. For only by dividing Americans by race, sex and class can his pessimistic worldview take hold.

Then again, voters will go to the polls in little more than a month. From all the polls the president didn't cite on Saturday night, the consensus is those Americans will vote against just the kind of divisiveness Mr. Obama preaches every day.

• **Joseph Curl covered the White House and politics for a decade for The Washington Times. He can be reached at josephcurl@gmail.com and on Twitter @josephcurl.**