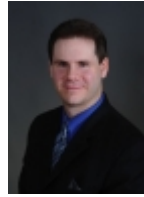




Obama the Polarizer: The Most Divisive President Ever?

President G.W. Bush might very well have been sincere when he proclaimed, “I’m a uniter, not a divider,” but it nevertheless was boilerplate political rhetoric. Barack Obama, too, campaigned on the idea of uniting our nation. It’s an interesting fantasy.



But the reality is quite different. Recent polls show that if we’re to measure a President’s unitive capacity based on how divided opinion on him is, Obama is the most polarizing Commander-in-Chief in history. Writes [The Washington Post](#), “For 2011, Obama’s third year in office, an average of 80 percent of Democrats approved of the job he was doing in Gallup tracking polls, as compared to 12 percent of Republicans who felt the same way. That’s a 68-point partisan gap, the highest for any president’s third year in office — ever.” The President also registered the highest partisan gaps on record for his first and second years in office, 65 and 68 percent, respectively.

Adding perspective, however, the *Post* points out how this simply hews to recent divided-electorate trends, with seven of the 10 years with the largest presidential approval gaps having occurred since 2004. Writes the paper, “Bush had a run between 2004 and 2007 in which the partisan disparity of his job approval was at *70 points or higher*.”

Of course, it should be noted that Bush and Obama weren’t operating on the same playing field. You’re going to seem a lot more divisive when the whole of the mainstream media — from which liberals generally draw their (mis)information — agitates against you 24/7/365, as was Bush’s fate. As for Obama, his definition of unity may be a bit different from everyone else’s. This is the man who said that middle-American voters “cling to guns or religion or antipathy to people who aren’t like them or anti-immigrant sentiment...,” who thumbed his nose at the Senate and made recess appointments when that body wasn’t actually in recess, who used underhanded tactics to buy passage of unconstitutional ObamaCare and who [appointed avowed communists](#) to office. He also essentially said that Latinos should [view other Americans as enemies](#) and imprudently took the side of black college professor Henry Louis Gates against white Cambridge police officers. In the same vein, when he could have stood up and shown that he really was President of all the people and enjoyed a political win-win situation in the process, he instead dropped a voting-rights case against Black Panthers who were brazenly intimidating white Philadelphia voters in 2008.

Having said all this, guess what? The *Post* is largely correct — only, the situation is far worse than the paper knows. Because today we’re not divided.

We’re fractured.

In fact, so much so — and over matters of such fundamental principle — that it makes 1861-’65 seem like a time of consensus and solidarity. Some Americans consider abortion at any developmental stage murder, others would tolerate it only under certain circumstances, while still other Americans — such as Obama — would allow [already-born children to be killed](#) if they survived a botched abortion. A few Americans believe homosexuality itself is a sin, some believe only the behavior is, while others think it should be taught in school as an “alternative lifestyle.” Some people think feminism has done some good, others still believe in traditional sex roles, while some dull cutting-edge types believe that even



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[sexual identity](#) is just a matter of perspective. A small percentage of Americans believe that sex is sacred and should be reserved for marriage, many believe it's for when you're "ready," while others consider it just recreation. Some people think that spanking children is child abuse but sexualizing them in school is education, others disagree; some accept nothing harsher than a time-out as punishment while others believe only in "reasoning" with kids. Some Americans want big government, some small, some medium-size; some want redistribution of income, others want redistribution of federal powers. Some of us still call ourselves American, while many others are a (take your pick of many dozens) _____-American. That is, when "American" still makes an appearance in the descriptive at all. We are replete with isms, from liberalism to conservatism to libertarianism to Presbyterianism to hedonism to socialism to materialism. A few of us even still believe in Truth. Speaking of which, some Americans remain pious; others think religion is good "as long as you don't go overboard" and that one is as valid as any other, as if we're choosing an ice-cream flavor; while militant secularists believe it's a cancer to be excised from society's every nook and cranny.

In light of the above, do you really think any one politician can unite us? Heck, you'd have a better chance of putting Humpty Dumpty back together again.

Yet while differences are always problematic — "diversity" propaganda notwithstanding — all other fractures pale in comparison to that expressed through our common political terminology: The Great Right-Left Divide. The cold, hard fact of the matter is that liberals and conservatives now often hate each other.

Hate.

And is this a surprise? We're not simply disagreeing on whether red or white wine goes better with salmon or whether Tiger Woods will break Jack Nicklaus' records. We're talking fundamental differences here — and they go down to the *very core of a person's being*.

So it's no surprise that Barack Obama's presidential-approval gaps are the greatest in history — our civilization could possibly be the most divided in history. Not since The War between the States have we had anything approximating this war against the statist. In fact, if America were a large family, there would've been a divorce a long time ago. Moreover, worse lies ahead if we keep fracturing. The family may be the scene of a huge melee, and, after multiple contusions and broken bones, each parent and every child may storm (limp?) off, go his separate way and never speak to the others again.

Except it's even worse still.

Not only do wildly disparate notions of virtue and reality divide us Americans, we don't even have many blood ties — just blood feuds.

How did we become the Divided States of America? Well, this brings me to a true First Things divide in our nation: While some of us still believe in Absolute Morality, many others think that what we call morality is relative, that it's merely an invention of man. This, of course, would reduce it to consensus taste. It's another way of saying that morality — the set of rules governing human behavior — doesn't exist. And I'll explain why this really is the crux of the matter.

Every single entity or endeavor must be governed by rules. If you want to have a game, for instance, it cannot work without adherence to a set of them. And using baseball as an example, imagine that the players fell victim to "Baseball Relativism" and concluded that, as far as the rules go, if it feels good, do it. At first some pitchers might decide that two strikes sound better than three, while some batters might prefer four. Some players might want to disallow stealing while others might want to start



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tackling. Of course, the variety of ways to play would only be as limited as man's desires and tastes, and, if things degenerated enough, the players might end up feeling that their bats could better win the day if used on noggins than baseballs.

Of course, while cheaters do exist, the above doesn't happen because those who take exception to baseball's rules can simply avoid playing the game; besides, people don't usually have a strong vested interest in rationalizing away the infield-fly rule. Barring suicide, however, playing the game of life isn't optional, and people who want to justify their behavior have a strong vested interest in rationalizing away moral principles that condemn it. And when a civilization embraces moral relativism — the notion that "The Rules" don't exist — as the ultimate rationalization (i.e., your actions can't be wrong if there is *no* right and wrong), it is the same as in the baseball analogy: The number of ways of playing the game of life will be limited only by human taste and imagination. The result is a fractured society.

In other words, it's fashionable today to criticize the concept of Absolute Truth and exalt shades of gray, but know this: You can have a society governed by Truth, and its attendant unity, or you can have the if-it-feels-good-do-it creed. You cannot have both.

And there is something to note about fractured things: They either have to be held together by the firmest constraints — or they don't hold together very long.



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