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"IT SAYS SO MUCH ABOUT YOUR LIFE AND LEGACY IF PEOPLE THINK YOU DIED TOO SOON AT 99."

Violence is never the answer

By LYNDON ZAITZ

A number of recent surveys reveal that up to one third of those polled agreed that it is justified for citizens to take violent action against the government. We saw that in real time on January 6, 2021 at the nation's capitol in Washington. That number should startle everyone.

The United States has a tradition of solving disputes with legislation and court action. There are exceptions to that of course, such as the civil rights and anti-war protests in the 1960s. Violence has become one of the primary forms of protest. Whatever happened to "Vote the rascals out!"?

Over the past year we have witnessed mobs at the U.S. Capitol, busting doors and windows, ransacking offices and making threats against elected officials. We saw the same type of mob in Lansing, Mich., where Gov. Gretchen Whitmer was the target of a violence and an assassination plot. Twenty years into the 21st century has brought us to a place where some feel they have no recourse but to pick up arms to affect the change they seek.

This isn't the America in which most of us grew up. A civil society has heated debates, it doesn't strap a gun to its waist, bent on change via bullets. In the late 1990s people were concerned how they would talk to their kids about



the information of the president's sordid and shameful acts. Today's parents and teachers should be just as concerned about how our children will be affected by scenes of violence against the government.

It is not pacifistic to tell a child that violence is never the answer. "Work it out," a parent may tell their child, yet a bully must be dealt with. The government is not a bully; it does not threaten physical harm.

Any government official, at any level, who does not condemn violence in any situation, should have to answer to the voters.

Our leaders need to take to their collective bully pulpits and call for a lowering of anger. How can we securely and confidently live in a country in which one in three people see no problem using violence to make their voices heard.

People are in pain. Politicians must listen, address that pain and take away the need for mob to descend on government steps.

(Lyndon Zaitz is publisher of the Keizertimes.)

Vaccine shaming is not a cure

By DEBRA J. SAUNDERS

Blaming the unvaccinated is the sharpest tool in President Joe Biden's shed, and that is not healthy for America.

Consider Biden's address to the nation on COVID-19 from the White House State Dining Room Tuesday. Biden started off well enough as he offered that he shared the public's frustration and loss and commended Americans who have been vaccinated.

Then he turned to vaccination shaming.

"You have an obligation to yourselves, to your family and, quite frankly -- I know I'll get criticized for this -- to your country" to get vaccinated, Biden declared.

He added, "I honest to God believe it's your patriotic duty."

Calling the unvaccinated unpatriotic -- that'll win them over. Too bad Biden didn't call them stupid, too.

Biden's remarks were not completely tone-deaf. Aware that red states like Alabama have a much lower rate of vaccination than blue states like California, Biden credited former President Donald Trump for getting vaccinated and a booster shot. "It may be one of the few things he and I agree on," the Democrat quipped.

Biden even credited "the prior administration and our scientific community" for making America one of the earliest countries to develop vaccines.

He could have done more. There are pockets of the vaccine-resistant who don't trust the scientific establishment because they've seen a tendency to shut down unorthodox opinions.

Stanford Medical School epidemiologist Jay Bhattacharya tweeted that the Biden address had positives but took issue with Biden "blaming 'misinformation' for vaccine hesitancy without an acknowledgment that the government & some media have caused great harm to trust in science & the vaccines by their propaganda and silencing of scientific dissidents."

Bhattacharya has a history there.

The American Institute for Economic Research reported that retiring Director of National Institutes of Health Francis Collins asked colleagues to publish "a quick and devastating" takedown of the October 2020 Great Barrington Declaration, which warned of the devastating public-health effects of blanket COVID-19 lockdowns and called for a return to normal.

other VOICES

Collins dismissed the three authors, Bhattacharya, Oxford University epidemiologist Sunetra Gupta and Harvard epidemiologist Martin Kulldorff as "fringe epidemiologists."

But they were right, and the numbers suggest that's exactly what happened. According to The New York Times, 95% of Americans aged 65 and older have had at least one vaccine dose, and 88% are fully vaccinated. So, yaaay.

(Dr. Anthony Fauci, a recipient of the email, was all for marginalizing the three doctors who were right. It really is time for him to go.)

And this Biden statement is just wrong: "Almost everyone who has died from COVID-19 in the past many months has been unvaccinated."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there were 16,700 COVID-19 deaths of vaccinated individuals from April through November. The CDC now estimates that unvaccinated individuals are 20 times more likely to die than vaccinated people.

Amid mushrooming breakthrough cases, Americans are looking for tests and not finding them on pharmacy shelves. Here, the Biden administration has come up short. The administration promised half a billion tests next month -- too little, too late. "The CDC now estimates that unvaccinated individuals are 20 times more likely to die than vaccinated people."

During the 2020 campaign, Biden and other Democrats were merciless in their bashing of Trump for being unprepared and not sufficiently forceful in taking on the virus.

Tell me how Biden's better, because I don't see it. The last year has been a year of drift.

Like Trump, Biden is not responsible for COVID-19, but he is responsible for his response to it.

"Blaming people for getting sick is wrong & bad for public health. It will make many vaccine-hesitant individuals distrust the message & further social division," Bhattacharya warned.

Finger-pointing is not a cure.
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