

Racists Don't Like Being called Racists

I have always suspected that racists didn't like being called out for their racism. Now I have proof.

When I told MSNBC's Thomas Roberts on May 14 that the Tea Party was "the Taliban wing of American politics," a firestorm erupted. Arguing the IRS was correct to target them for extra scrutiny, I also said "Here are a group of people who are admittedly racist, who are overtly political" and therefore worthy of IRS concern.

I was not prepared for the slew of angry emails, including two from self-identified Black people (your worst nightmare, one said) I received. Many of them suggested I leave the country, reminiscent of the "Go back to Africa" chants racist crowds of Whites shouted at Black protestors in my youth.

One said my advanced age – I am 73 – meant I would not be around to make such mischief much longer, and I should prepare for that quick eventuality.

A few suggested my employer fire me, not knowing that I retired from that job a year ago. Several of the messages were badly written with misspelled words, including one from a relative by marriage – you can't choose your in-laws – reading "Your calling



CHAIRMAN OF NAACP

Julian Bond

folks Talabans borders on Traitorism."

This same correspondent noted I had been "head of the most classic Racist group in our country," referring to the NAACP, whose board I chaired for 11 years. Others characterized the NAACP, the nation's oldest civil rights group, interracial in membership and dedicated to racial integration since 1909, in the same way.

After an exchange of messages with some of them, trying to convince them that while I opposed it, I didn't condemn every member of the Tea Party, the interactions became more civil and less hostile. Some even wished me well.

But to a person they rejected the labels "racism" and "racist," even as I thought I had proved that the Tea Party has had racist, anti-Semitic and nativist elements from its beginning until today.

One source is a study conducted

for the NAACP by the Institute for Research and Education for Human Rights. Their study, called Tea Party Nationalism, found "Tea Party ranks to be permeated with concerns about race and national identity and other so-called social issues. In these ranks, an abiding obsession with Barack Obama's birth certificate is often a stand-in for the belief that the first black president of the United States is not a "real American."

It says Tea Party organizations have given platforms to anti-Sem-

Committee and present day Congressman Pete Sessions likened the GOP House minority to the Taliban, saying, "Insurgency, we understand perhaps a bit more because of the Taliban."

Just as my arguments failed to convince my correspondents, so apparently does the actual evidence.

Not the ugly racist signs and placards displayed at Tea Party rallies, not the shouts of the "n" word aimed at members of the Congressional Black Caucus, not

members whose racism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia should be an embarrassment – not all or any of this could get them to acknowledge the label "racist."

My Black correspondents even claimed that their race prohibited them from being racists, as if skin color was a proscription against ignorance. And many of my presumably non-Black correspondents accused me of being a racist, so my race apparently offered me no protection from this evil.

What is the lesson here?

That the label "racist" has become so toxic almost everyone rejects it? That the toxicity makes the label unacceptable but its actual practice is still tolerable for many?

Or that it is a defense against itself? As the relative-I-try-not-to-claim wrote, "I don't know any white people who hate blacks like you advocate blacks should hate whites."

Or only that while the United States has made much progress in race relations, we still have a long, long way to go?

Julian Bond is Chairman Emeritus of the NAACP and a Professor at American University in Washington.

What is the lesson here? ... that while the United States has made much progress in race relations, we still have a long, long way to go?

ites, racists and bigots and "hard-core white nationalists have been attracted" to Tea Party protests.

The link between the Tea Party and the Taliban was made by a prominent Republican office holder.

In 2008, the Washington Post reported that former chairman of the Republican Congressional

the spittle hurled at civil rights icon and Congressman John Lewis, not the racists expelled from the Tea Party for their venom, not the association of many members with the Council of Conservative Citizens, a lineal descendant of the White Citizen Council, not the anti-gay slurs aimed at former Congressman Barney Frank (d-Mass.), not the

A Few Myths About Drones and Guantanamo

On Thursday, President Barack Obama is scheduled to deliver a major speech in Washington about his administration's counterterrorism policies, focusing on the rationale and legal framework for the controversial CIA drone program and his plans to wind down the prison camp at Guantanamo Bay.

So we thought it might be useful to examine some common myths about the drone program and the prison population at Guantanamo.

1. Drone strikes largely target the leaders of terrorist groups that threaten the United States.

In fact, of the thousands who have been killed in CIA drone strikes in Pakistan, only 37 were leaders of al Qaeda or affiliated organizations, according to a tally by the New America Foundation. And even if we add to that list the leaders of the Taliban who have been killed in drone strikes, only 2 percent of the victims of the CIA strikes in Pakistan have been militant leaders.

The drone program, which began more than a decade ago as a tool to kill leaders of terrorist groups, has evolved today into a counterinsurgency air force whose principal victims in Pakistan are lower-level members of the Taliban.

2. Drone strikes target specific terrorists who pose some kind of imminent threat to the U.S.

Obama's top counterterrorism adviser and now CIA Director John Brennan said in a speech last year that "in order to prevent terrorist attacks on the United States and to save American lives — the United States government conducts targeted strikes against specific al Qaeda terrorists."

That's only partly true, because

NATIONAL SECURITY

Peter Bergen

the CIA has also has occasionally conducted "signature strikes" against groups of men who display a particular behavioral "signature" that indicates they may be militants. In these cases, the targeter does not know the identity of the persons in the drone cross hairs.

3. Drone strikes kill a lot of civilians.

That was certainly once the case. Under President George W. Bush, the proportion of those killed by drones in Pakistan who were identified in reliable news reports as civilians or "unknowns" — people who were not identified definitively as either civilians or militants — was around 40 percent, according to data assembled by the New America Foundation.

But the civilian and "unknown" casualty rate from drone strikes has fallen steadily over the life of the program. Under Obama that number has fallen to 16 percent. And in 2012 it was around 11 percent.

In 2012, 2 percent of the drones' victims were characterized as civilians in news reports and 9 percent were described in a manner that made it ambiguous whether they were militants or civilians.

And in 2013, civilian casualties are at their lowest ever. That is partly the result of a sharply reduced number of drone strikes in Pakistan — 12 so far in 2013, compared with a record 122 in 2010 — and also more precise targeting. According to data collected by the New America Foundation, three to five

"unknown" individuals have been killed so far in drone strikes in 2013. Two other organizations that track the CIA drone program in Pakistan, the London-based Bureau of Investigative Journalism and the Long War Journal, report zero to four civilian deaths and 11 civilian deaths respectively.

4. The United States has no reason to worry about the legal framework governing drone strikes because it is so dominant in drone technology.

Only three countries currently are confirmed to possess armed drones — Israel, the United Kingdom and the U.S. But some 80 countries have drones, according to a count by the New America Foundation, and a number of them may already be able to arm them.

In February, a Chinese state-run newspaper reported that the Chinese government had contemplated deploying an armed drone in a remote, mountainous area to kill a drug lord, but decided instead to capture him.

Iran unveiled what it claimed was its first armed drone in 2010.

During a speech last week at the New America Foundation, the U.N. special rapporteur for counterterrorism and human rights, Ben Emmerson, estimated that "within a matter of certainly a year or two, other states will be deploying the technology, and within five years or so we will see a number of states and possibly nonstate actors deploying similar types of combat technology."

Emmerson also pointed out that the rapid proliferation of drone technology means whatever legal framework the United States puts together to justify its targeted killing campaign "has to be a

framework that we can live with if it is being used by Iran when it is deploying drones against Iranian dissidents hiding inside the territory of Syria or Turkey or Iraq." A

sobering and instructive thought.

Read the rest online at www.theskanner.com



Week on the Web

Ivanice Harris of Portland goes missing in Hawaii and is then found dead. Benefit Sunday to bring her home...in Northwest News

Kam Williams interviews legendary actor/director Mel Brooks ...in Movie Reviews

Former Homeland Security Chief

Michael Chertoff Warns Privacy is Under Threat...in Opinion

Report Says Prosecutor Behind 'Fast and Furious' Leak...in USA

Holder: Drone Strikes have Killed Four Americans Since 2009...in Latest News

For The Skanner News on your smart phone go to www.theskannermobile.com or scan this QR code with your app.



www.the SKANNER.com

The Skanner.com has the latest news from Portland and beyond, on your mobile or your desktop, it's your go-to place for the news you won't see in mainstream publications. It's your community. It's The Skanner.