

# Racism exists, but freedom is America's systemic foundation

On the recent 76th D-Day Anniversary, I was moved to address the current war for the future of our nation centered on the proposition that the United States of America is systemically racist.

I believe that all reasonable citizens agree that the death of George Floyd was a totally unjustifiable murder. And it is our constitutional right to assemble and protest. It is not our right to riot and destroy private and public property thereby hijacking the purpose of the peaceful protests.

My issue is with the ever-growing notion promoted by our media and educational institutions that systemic racism and oppression is inherent in American society. Unquestionably, segments of our society encounter discrimination daily. Unfortunately, society is made up of sinful humans, both in and under authority and we are simultaneously involved in spiritual warfare with the forces of evil.

I would submit that racism is not "systemic" in our nation because the opposite is true from the very inception of our republic. Rather, the systemic nature of our society is freedom founded in God-given inalienable rights.

I am the son and husband of nonwhite immigrants who came to America precisely because of its promise of opportunity. I have lived for 75 years, and I can witness to opportunity and racial societal improvements during my lifetime.

I grew up in the inner city of Chicago. Neither of my parents had a college education, and we had a small family retail store business. We always lived

in an apartment building. Because of my faith and family, I never felt poor. Every Sunday we would dress up and walk as a family to church. My father emphasized responsibility of being a grateful, loyal American citizen because of our privileges of freedom, education and opportunity. He said to be proud of our ethnic heritage, but to be prouder of being an American citizen.

Because of that moral foundation, I have been blessed to be the first in my family to graduate from college and had rewarding military, civilian and community-serving careers.

Further reflecting on race relations, when I was a kid, the odds of me becoming a two-star general in the Army were virtually nil. I have seen an African-American elected president and reelected. Interracial marriages today are accepted societal norms.

My Army career demonstrated how a society functions with equal opportunity. The color of your skin (and gender) was irrelevant. We were all Army green. Promotion was based on ability, work ethic and results. We received equal pay for equal work.

I have seen an Asian-American appointed as the Army Chief of Staff and an African-American appointed as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

And America has not had a blind eye to our past, taking numerous actions to improve opportunities for deprived



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*Guest view*

communities. These have included early childhood education, school nutritional programs, scholarships and passing legislation addressing redlining and job-hiring discrimination. And the United States is the only nation in the world that has had a civil war that cost over one-half million military casualties to abolish slavery.

And the church has acted. The abolitionist movement was led by people of faith. The civil rights movement of the '60s was supported by clergy throughout. Martin Luther King was a pastor.

I have experienced prejudice in my life, many times life changing, but throughout I received strength from my trust in God. I have also experienced people in my life who provided help, hope and encouragement and the vast majority were not people of color, but white.

These experiences are, in fact, the systemic nature of our American society.

The false mantra of systemic racism as the core nature of our nation should be rejected. If one is constantly told you are a victim, you naturally feel anger, hopelessness and resentment. However, if you understand that America offers true opportunity, you will be grateful and hopeful.

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