Dr. Susan Rice: No Racism!

Edward Earl Bell
Dr. Susan Rice and her role in Black America

Dr. Ed Bell

While the news channels and others bewail the impending possibility of Dr. Susan Rice becoming the next Secretary of State, black Americans and concerned citizens are poised in a *wait-and-see* posture to see if President Obama sends her name forward for confirmation. The recent clamor regarding the “fitness” of Dr. Rice for Secretary of State is laden with questionable hints of racism and hypocrisy. Senators McCain and Graham have relentlessly characterized Dr. Rice as not so “bright.” Interesting, Dr. Condoleezza Rice’s role as Secretary of State was supported by Senator McCain; both Dr. Condoleezza Rice and Dr. Susan Rice are black women. However, race may not be the compelling issue with Dr. Rice’s confirmation; it may be one of protectiveness or fear.

Admittedly, the Republican Party has asserted inclusion and diversity within its party with high-ranking African Americans—namely General Colin Powell, Justice Clarence Thomas, and Dr. Condoleezza Rice. Regardless of their politics, these three African Americans are notables in the party. During the 2012 RNC, Dr. Rice was the notable African American female delivering an arguably compassionate speech of overcoming the odds. Conversely, the Democratic Party has not thrust African American females, or males for that matter, in similar spotlights; there is a void. There was no comparative African American black female at the DNC; was this racism?

Here comes Dr. Susan Rice! Senators McCain and Graham labeled Dr. Rice as not so “bright.” Given the fact that she graduated from Stanford and was a Rhodes Scholar—and a doctorate in philosophy—does not make academic sense to question her apparent brightness! Her academic and political successes cannot be disputed; therefore, her brightness should not be questioned. Should her race be in question? Lest we forget, Dr. Condoleezza Rice is a black woman! Can the Senators be racist against Dr. Susan Rice and not against Dr. Condoleezza Rice; is there such a term as *situational racism*?

Racism is commonplace and must be addressed and called out when seen, felt, or implied. I am not convinced that racism is the only variable in regards to Dr. Susan Rice’s confirmation. What is so subtle and perhaps worth of consideration is that Dr. Susan Rice has the potential to usurp fame from Dr. Rice Condoleezza on the national stage as the centerpiece of inclusion and diversity within the Republican Party; at which time, the Republican Party cannot claim to have all the notable African American female politicians in their camp.

On the face of it, we offered up the race card regarding Dr. Susan Rice becoming the next Secretary of State. While race may be a factor, we cannot dismiss the plausibility that race alone may not be the compelling concern. If confirmed to the Secretary of State’s position, the Republicans cannot claim to be the “the party” for notable African Americans in the national spotlight. I hate to admit this: Rush Limbaugh said it so: “We gave y’all Colin Powell and Justice Thomas!” He is right; General Colin Powell, Dr. Condoleezza Rice, and Justice Clarence Thomas are Republicans. On the democratic side, who do we claim as prominent African American female political figures on the national stage? The Democrats need Dr. Susan Rice and the Republican Party does not want it; doing so, reduces the strength of racial diversity for the Republicans—Just a thought worthy of your consideration.

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