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QUOTE FOR THE DAY:

“If your only tool is a hammer, then every problem looks like a nail.” Dr. Abraham Maslow, American psychologist.

MEET MS. MARIAME KABA:

Ms. Kaba is the director of NIA, a grass-roots group that works to end youth incarceration. Here is the headline from her recently published opinion article. “Yes, we mean literally abolish the police.” That’s her one song, her hammer. She goes on to say, “I’ve been advocating the abolition of the police for years. Regardless of your view on police power- whether you want to get rid of the police or simply to make them less violent- here’s a demand we can all make: cut the number of police in half and cut their budget in half. Fewer police officers equals fewer

opportunities for them to brutalize and kill people..."

And, further on she states, "But don't get me wrong. We're not abandoning communities to violence. We don't want to just close police departments. We want to make them obsolete. We should redirect the billions of dollars that now go to police departments toward providing health care, housing, education and good jobs. If we did this, there would be less need for the police in the first place."

Well excuse me Ms. Kaba, you would be abandoning communities to violence. I regret that I didn't get his name, but a major black figure on the national stage stated last week that a defunding of the police would be incomprehensible, resulting in the most vulnerable becoming even more so.

Go to instagram to see the Chief of Milwaukee police speak last week. In the entire city, 80% of the shootings are by blacks, 80% of aggravated assaults are by blacks and 80% of those shot are blacks.

And, in Chicago, over Memorial Day weekend, 85 people were shot and 24 died. It would seem that Ms. Kaba believes you won't need police anymore when the inner cities have better health care, housing and education. everyone will be in a state of non violent bliss. What are you going to do, have forty neighborhood militias to keep control? Citizen patrols- sounds good doesn't it?

Ah!, but her advocacy of total abolition gets modified somewhat as she concedes that maybe one half of the police could be retained, the hope being that somehow that tiny percentage of overly aggressive officers would be in the one half that would be fired.

Further, in my view, it's just a false analogy to say you're going to have a better life by deploying the savings from a gutted police department into housing, health care and education.

The reader may recall from two earlier issues that I have been advocating a Marshall plan for all the inner cities. Cutting police department

budgets is chump change compared to the trillions that would be required to do the job. A nagging problem is that, while new hospitals, apartment complexes, boy's and girl's clubs and new schools can be built in just a few years, it's going to take close to a full generation to bring the educational attainment levels of the inner city schools to the point where the students actually are qualified to get better jobs. Double the pay of teachers and you will attract better and brighter ones. Resulting in better educated students.

These are such sad times and a strong police presence is needed in the more turbulent neighborhoods, but these have to be feet on the ground policemen who know the shop keepers and the residents and they, in turn know the officers - a critical ingredient to building a trust that is currently non existent.

No side of the political aisle has a monopoly on astute observations, but I was particularly impressed by two yesterday. Of the life of many in the black community, Charles Blow says' "It is an everyday struggle to neither fall into despair nor explode in anger." Governor

Gavin Newsom states, “You’ve got to change hearts, minds. You’ve got to change culture, not just laws.”

PANDEMIC, GOOD NEWS, BAD NEWS:

This just in; It has been announced that an existing very inexpensive steroid, Dexamethasone, has been very effective with seriously ill covid- 19 (CV) patients. For those patients on respirators the decrease in the death rate is 35%. For those on oxygen the decreased death rate is 20%. For those with less serious cases there is no benefit. This was based on a study with 2,100 patients in the experimental group and 4,300 in the control group. All, very encouraging, with the proviso that the study has yet to be peer reviewed. We would hate to see these results walked back as has been the case with hydroxocloroquine.

On the less positive side, no fewer than 21 states are showing marked upticks in new cases after phased reopenings. A part of this is due to better testing, a part due to the protests and a lot due to crazy undisciplined behavior –

just pent up demand, and a lot of people just throwing caution to the wind,

On May fourth when Governor De Santis in Florida first started reopenings, the state was experiencing about 650 new cases a day. A couple of days ago, it was up to 1650 cases a day.

In some ways this was bound to happen. The economy just had to be jump- started. Younger people had to get back to supporting their families. Most of them are willing and able to take the risks, while the best that can be said for a significant number of our readers is, best to go back to shelter in place and/or only go to those locations where you have a high degree of confidence.

Governor Cuomo of NY is justifiably furious, threatening to role back openings as photos appear in the press, like Hell's Kitchen in NYC, where huge throngs were gathered with no social distancing and spotty facemask coverage. Actions to pull back from existing reopenings or delaying promised ones is fraught with political danger for state

governors, and it's unlikely that many will have the courage to reverse course, even as new cases accelerate in number.

Then comes the sad assessment for college students, many of them, our grandchildren. Laurence Steinberg is a psychology professor at Temple University. He has studied risk behavior for many years. His conclusion, "College kids can't resist risk." – the title of his article. Dr. Steinberg concludes that, given the title of his article, it would be folly for colleges to have students back on campus. He points out that college students are especially drawn to short term rewards saying, "Most types of risky behavior- reckless driving, criminal activity, fighting, unsafe sex and binge drinking, to name a few – peak during people's late teens and early twenties. Efforts to reduce risk taking in this age group, such as attempts to squelch binge drinking have an underwhelming track record. Dr. Steinberg believes that any college administration efforts to have students stay in pods, wear masks and adhere to social distancing would be a short lived pipe dream.

READER'S COMMENT:

You may recall from issue 38, I discussed the fact that ten of our first 12 presidents owned slaves and that Grant only had one.

My childhood friend and reader, Williamson "Wick" Murray, writes to clarify that issue. "When Grant was attempting to make a go of farming before the war, his father-in-law gave him a single male slave. When Grant went bankrupt and had to sell off all his belongings, he could have sold the slave and paid off most of his debts. Instead, he gave him his freedom."

A good reason why Wick would know that esoteric fact is because he is Professor Emeritus in American History at Ohio State. Wick is, arguably, one of the preeminent military historians in the United States. He has written numerous books and I'd like to give a plug for his recent release, "The Gods of War". If you're a history and/or military buff – a great read.

Your faithful scribe, PB

