



Peter Lucas: After 50 years, time to scrap both failed policies

By Peter Lucas

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President Barack Obama had the right words, only the wrong occasion.

The president said, "I don't anticipate overnight changes. But what I know deep in my bones is that if you've done the same thing for 50 years and nothing has changed, you should try something different if you want a different outcome, and this gives us an opportunity for a different outcome."

That is what Obama should have said when he talked about the rioting, pillaging and looting that took place in Baltimore, while the police were held back, after the death in police custody of Freddie Gray.

But, no, Obama did not say that about Baltimore. He said that about Cuba when he announced his decision to normalize U.S. relations with the communist police state.

About Baltimore Obama said, "This is not new. This has been going on for decades."

Who's at fault? Not him. He's only been president for two terms. It's the racist cops. It's the media. It's no jobs. It's the Republicans.

His solution? More of the same. More taxes, more spending. More federal programs to create jobs that the millions of new illegal immigrants he is flooding the country with will take.

The thing is that our cold-shoulder policy toward Cuba, and President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty were launched at about the same time 50 years ago.

What is new is that while Obama can recognize that the old U.S. policy of sanctions against the Cuba was not working, he cannot recognize the War on Poverty was not working either.

Young unemployed, fatherless men are terrorizing cities, shooting and stoning cops, thrashing

police cars, burning down businesses, looting and pillaging.

Why? Well, according to Obama, who in is in his seventh year as president, Baltimore has a lousy school system, despite all the millions and millions of federal dollars poured into it. The city spends \$15,000 per student per year, which is way more than the majority of cities in the country spend, and the kids can barely read, write or even speak understandable English.

The reason the school system is so bad is that it is run by the teachers union, strong supporters of Obama and other Democrats. Baltimore has been run by liberal Democrats for the past 50 years, as long as the War on Poverty has existed, and things have gone from bad to worse, but Obama cannot say that.

Obama can normalize relations with Cuba and reopen the U.S. Embassy in Havana with the stroke of a pen. That's easy. But he cannot, or will not, use his presidential authority to reform a welfare system that is tearing Baltimore and other big cities apart. That's hard.

It is hard because the heart of the problem is the fact that 50 years of liberal, Democrat policies have led to the breakdown of the family unit among poor people, but especially among poor black people.

Men are not needed in families anymore. The federal government has taken their place as the main provider. Under U.S. welfare, a man can father children without having to provide for their care. So many don't, which is why there are so many single-parent households.

And that single mother of two, for instance, can qualify for welfare benefits of up to \$38,000 a year in New York, according to the CATO Institute, or \$35,000 a year in Baltimore. In many cases, this is more money that a starting nurse or teacher will earn.

The welfare payments to single mothers is more than they can make if they went to work. And if they did make more at a job, they would see their benefits cut. That is how perverse the system is.

Michael Tanner, a senior fellow at CATO, said, "There is no evidence that people on welfare are lazy. But they're also not stupid. If you pay them more not to work than they can earn by working, many will choose not to work."

If anyone could have been expected to do something about the increasingly deplorable and hopeless conditions for poor people trapped in the inner cities, it was Barack Obama, the promising candidate of hope and change.

Instead he chose to divide the country racially, economically and religiously. He is investigating the Baltimore cops instead of the Baltimore thugs.

Instead of jumping into his limousine for the short ride to Baltimore, Obama went to yuk it up on Dave Letterman's show for the eighth time, no doubt a record.

He treats Havana better than Baltimore. Havana, si, Baltimore, no.