

TREATING OPPOSITION TO TRUMP AS A PARTISAN ISSUE GUARANTEES DEFEAT

In the last several days there have been two DC articles that made a lot of lefties pissed off.

An Axios post on Wednesday (revisited yesterday) described five Democrats planning trips to El Salvador (after seven right wingers visited earlier in the week, only a few of whom announced their trip publicly). In the fifth set of Axios bullets, several dickish anonymous comments from the same centrist House member appeared.

Reality check: The sentiment within the party about rallying behind deportees is not universal.

- *The second House Democrat who spoke anonymously, a centrist, called the deportation issue a “soup du jour,” arguing Trump is “setting a trap for the Democrats, and like usual we’re falling for it.”*
- *“Rather than talking about the tariff policy and the economy ... the thing where his numbers are tanking, we’re going to go take the bait for one hairdresser,” they*

said, likely referring to Andry Hernandez Romero.

- Only if Trump tries to deport U.S. citizens, the lawmaker argued, will Democrats need to draw a “line in the sand” and “shut down the House.”

And then today, rather than a piece describing Chris Van Hollen’s successful effort to meet Kimlar Abrego Garcia, NBC instead published a piece that claimed that his effort to help a constituent was creating a rift in the Democratic Party.

Kilmar Abrego Garcia's case exposes Democratic rift over how to take on Trump

While a number of Democrats have been decrying the administration's deportations, some are seeking to sidestep the issue.

Sen. Chris Van Hollen is returning to U.S. after meeting with Abrego Garcia

U.S.-born American citizen under ICE hold in Florida is released



After spending a few paragraphs obscuring the uncontested truth that Trump’s Administration admitted Abrego Garcia had been sent in error, NBC pitched this as a dispute among Democrats, this time invoking Gavin Newsom’s snotty comment.

Other Democrats have avoided weighing in on the issue – or offered muted responses when asked about it.

As California Gov. Gavin Newsom, a Democrat, rolled out a lawsuit Wednesday challenging Trump’s sweeping tariffs, he had little to say about the Abrego Garcia case when asked to weigh in.

“This is the distraction of the day. The art of distraction,” said Newsom, a

potential 2028 presidential contender.
“And here, we zig and zag. This is the debate they want. This is their 80-20 issue, as they’ve described it.”

While noting that the government needs to abide by court orders and the rule of law, Newsom added, “It’s exactly the debate they want, because they don’t want this debate on the tariffs; they don’t want to be accountable to markets today.”

The piece cherry picked some polling claiming to back up Newsom while ignoring other polling that doesn’t, then quoted two anonymous “operatives” and an apparently deleted Xitter post calling Abrego Garcia a bad poster child for ... the rule of law?

Both of these articles are a genre: the wildly popular “Democrats in disarray” genre. They’re designed to make Democrats look feckless. Axios as an outlet generally is designed to treat everything as a both-sides political fight and for whatever reason NBC chose to report the Van Hollen’s successful mission to meet Abrego Garcia as not news in and of itself, but instead only news in the reflection it showed in the Democratic party.

And in spite of the fact that everyone knows this is a manufactured genre, these articles never fail to stoke precisely the disarray they craft out of mostly anonymous quotes, with the result that Democrats spend their time yelling at other Democrats rather than yelling at Trump or – just as importantly – focusing our energy on the good things that people like Chris Van Hollen are doing. The result is not just NBC but Democrats treat the alleged rift as the news, rather than Van Hollen’s effort itself.

That’s bad enough. Every “we don’t have to choose between immigration or the economy” post, while true, is a post distracting from Trump’s abuses and Van Hollen’s laudable effort.

The worst part of these bait articles, in my opinion, is they reinforce a mentality that says *resistance to Trump is partisan*, one that those who take the bait often replicate by criticizing the Democrats as a party.

Nobody in the party is interfering with Van Hollen's efforts to help a constituent. Nobody in the party is disrupting Elizabeth Warren from making the case on tariffs.

More importantly, nothing Democrats can do will silence Judge Wilkerson from ruling, with clarion voice,

The government is asserting a right to stash away residents of this country in foreign prisons without the semblance of due process that is the foundation of our constitutional order. Further, it claims in essence that because it has rid itself of custody that there is nothing that can be done.

This should be shocking not only to judges, but to the intuitive sense of liberty that Americans far removed from courthouses still hold dear.

Nothing Newsom does with his lawsuit challenging Trump's tariffs will change the fact that some small businesses represented by conservative Liberty Justice Center and Ilya Somin got there first, and another small business represented by the Koch and Leonard Leo-funded New Civil Liberties Alliance beat him too.

The opposition to Donald Trump on these two issues is not a partisan. Getting baited by Dems in Disarray punditry distracts from the import of keeping them that way. Getting baited by a fight over the direction of the Democratic party – letting a wannabe Presidential candidate distract from Chris Van Hollen's efforts – is a quick way to ensure that no Democrat can run in a fair race in 2028, because things will be too far gone by then.

And if the work of ordinary people ensures that Gavin Newsom can run in 2028, *then* we can hold him accountable for neglecting his own constituents being rounded up with no due process.

David Brooks – David Brooks!!! – had this to say in an op-ed that could have been written by a Democrat but may read differently by someone who is not one.

What is happening now is not normal politics. We're seeing an assault on the fundamental institutions of our civic life, things we should all swear loyalty to – Democrat, independent or Republican.

It's time for a comprehensive national civic uprising. It's time for Americans in universities, law, business, nonprofits and the scientific community, and civil servants and beyond to form one coordinated mass movement. Trump is about power. The only way he's going to be stopped is if he's confronted by some movement that possesses rival power.

The way to achieve a national civic uprising – the way to achieve an uprising that does more than heighten polarization – is to refuse to get baited by reporting that portrays the momentous events we're living as nothing more than the disputed actions of a political party. That way lies failure.

Shitty DC reporting will continue to treat the challenge before us as just another partisan horse race. So will shitty "operatives" quoting anonymously.

But letting that kind of punditry frame how we understand these developments deprives important action of the nonpartisan appeal of ethical and moral clarity.