

POINT OF VIEW

Our View

# GOP pigheaded on Iraq situation

Too busy to talk? At least that's what Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott claimed when he rebuffed a meeting with U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan this week.

Too busy to talk? Or did the Mississippi Republican have little to talk about?

It appears Lott, and other GOPers, were stung the Annan-brokered deal with Iraq which averted what some foreign diplomats said would have escalated into "World War III."

The United States — it's military welled up in the Persian Gulf — teetered on the brink of war, before Annan engineered a deal with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to allow U.N. weapons inspectors unfettered access to previously off-limits presidential palaces and weapons sites. The U.N. and United States believe Hussein broke sanctions resulting from the 1991 Persian Gulf War, which prevented him from rebuilding his military and producing chemical weapons and weapons of mass destruction.

Annan worked feverishly to avoid what many on Capitol Hill called an "inevitable battle." But he averted the inevitable, getting the Iraqi government to agree to allow U.N. to do their work.

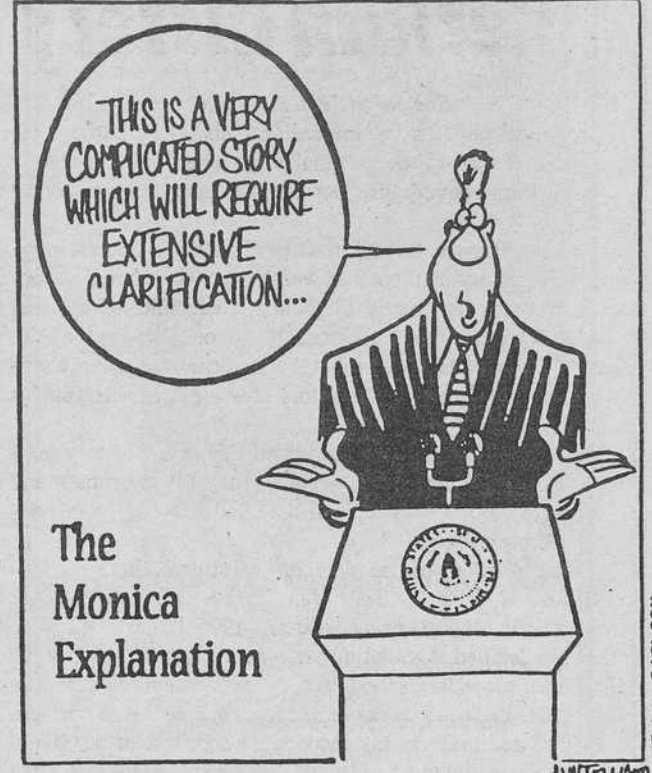
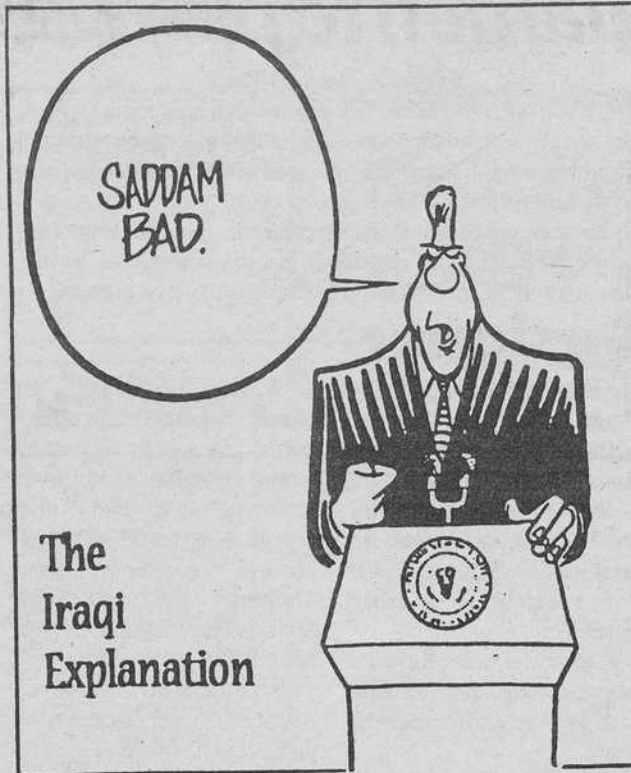
Annan should be hailed as a hero for saving myriad lives. And what did he get for his effort? A snub. There's more where those came from. Republicans have their guns locked, loaded and ready.

Many in the GOP chided Clinton for cowering to foreign pressure to find a diplomatic solution to the crisis, rather than solving it with force once word got out that Hussein ordered the U.N. inspectors to cease snooping around Iraq.

The president stirred their ire more when he signed on to the Annan-backed deal which reopened inspections but denied the United States carte blanche permission to order a military attack should Hussein renege.

Part of the growing tide of GOP opposition is due to partisan leanings and election-year desperation. With mid-term elections in November, Republicans wonder whether their hold on the House and Senate — which they gained control of in 1994, riding a wave of American discontent to victory — will be loosened. With the economy booming, the debt shrinking and crime declining, there isn't enough bad news to harpoon. War provides great material.

What better way than to needle the White House to change official U.S. policy toward Iraq, thereby stroking the U.S. ego that the country can circumvent U.N. authority without fear of reprisal. "That'll show Clinton," they're saying. That'll teach him to listen to somebody else," especially if his name is Kofi Annan.



## Black Radical Congress: Agitate to recreate

Part two of a two part series  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

The announcement of a Black Radical Congress to be held in Chicago on June 19-21 represents a rebirth of black militant activism, as we enter a new millennium.

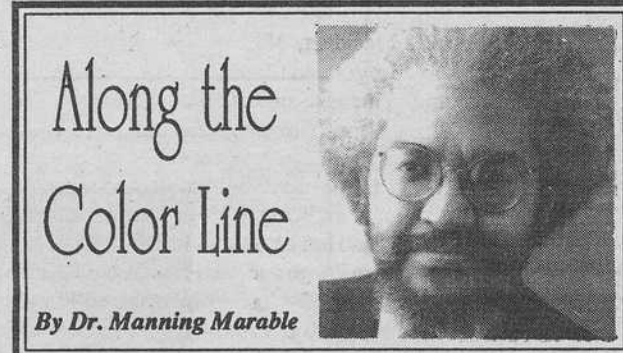
Hundreds of African-American trade unionists, community organizers, youth and students, and others are already participating in the national process of building BRC local organizing committees.

Local committees have already been established in New York City, Philadelphia, Chicago, Washington, D.C., St. Louis, North Carolina, and in other cities and states. We should keep in mind that there is a long heritage of African-American radicalism and resistance to the forces of white racism and corporate domination.

For example, in the 1950s, most mainstream African-American leaders and organizations acquiesced to McCarthyism and the politics of the Cold War.

Black radical leaders such as the great actor/artist Paul Robeson and W.E.B. Du Bois refused to capitulate to right-wing anti-communism. The U.S. government seized their passports and attempted to deny them the right to earn a living. Their books were removed from library shelves. But their voices were never silent. And even today, Robeson and Du Bois represent shining examples of courage and commitment to the cause of black freedom and human liberation for all people.

During the Civil Rights Movement, it was the black

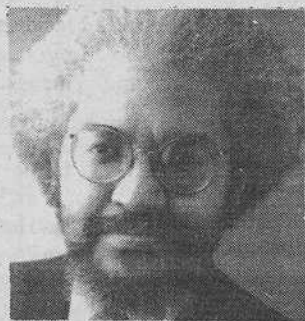


radicals who pushed the boundaries of political possibility relentlessly forward.

Activist Ella Baker helped to establish the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, known as SNCC. Baker admonished young activists to foster "group-centered leaders" rather than "leader-centered groups." SNCC and the Congress of Racial Equality involved thousands of radicals and reformers who were willing to go to jail in order to challenge unjust laws. The Mississippi Freedom summer of 1964 registered thousands of black folk who had been denied the right to vote for decades.

As integration declined and black power rose, black radicalism assumed a central place within African-American politics.

After breaking with the conservatism of the Nation of Islam, Malcolm X established the Organization of Afro-American Unity in Harlem. Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale created the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California in October 1966. Brothers and sisters working in the auto factories around Detroit created the League of Revolutionary Black Workers in the late 1960s.



Malcolm, the Panthers and the League all pointed toward a principled and fundamental critique of the elitist and oppressive nature of American society. They knew that there could be no freedom for African-Americans, as long as a system of white privilege, power and prejudice formed the foundations of this country. Through their agitation, they attempted to make our people more aware of what it would take to achieve full liberation.

In the 1980s, many black radicals were part of the political struggle to elect Harold Washington as Chicago's first black mayor in 1983. Much of the energy of Jessie Jackson's Rainbow Coalition came from black radicals inside the labor

movement, women's organizations and community groups. Black radicals actively participated in the moral and political struggle to topple the evil apartheid regime of South Africa.

In recent years, black radicalism has been expressed in the writings of African-American scholars such as Cornel West, Michael Eric Dyson, Bell Hooks, Angela Y. Davis, June Jordan, Julianne Malveaux, Clarence Lusane, Gerald Horne, Barbara Smith and many others.

At the grassroots level, in thousands of communities and neighborhoods across the county, black radicalism is expressed in hundreds of protests: marches against police brutality; pickets and demonstrations against Workfare; public protests to improve the quality of our children's education; the fight for decent and affordable housing; efforts to establish universal healthcare and improved public health facilities.

The Black Radical Congress in Chicago this (See Radicals, Page 14)

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