

POINT OF VIEW

Our View

The more things change, the.....

Trek throughout Las Vegas and you're bound to run into one of them: a sign asking God to bless America or one noting that in the wake of the Sept. 11.

East Coast terrorist attacks that all Americans stand united. Ditto for any patriotic city in this country. Ever the opportunist, corporate America has seized the chance to turn our collective pain into profit, pasting the American flag on everything imaginable, scrambling to produce biometric technological security equipment to be used by the masses and urging Americans to shop away their terrorist blues-framing shopping as a great way to show Osama Bin Laden and the Taliban that the American spirit hasn't been broken, meantime they're laughing all the way to the bank.

If only you could believe the signs. In the wake to the attacks, an ugly, racist reality emerged, as Middle Easterners, American Muslims and South Asians coast to coast were harassed, beaten, and in the case of Sikh in Arizona, killed. Clearly, the United States isn't all that united. Further evidence of this came on Oct. 25 and Oct. 27, when two predominantly white fraternities at Auburn University put on blackface, donned the garb of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, a historically black fraternity founded in 1911 and wore Ku Klux Klan uniforms with the letters FUBU painted on in an attempt to lampoon For Us By Us, a clothing line started by African-Americans. Members of the white fraternities also jewelry, toted liquor bottles and flashed gang signs. Photos of their shenanigans at two Halloween parties leaked out and sparked a nationwide controversy. Clearly, the United States isn't all that united.

Lloyd Jordan, Grand Basileus of Omega Psi Phi, called Auburn University and demanded immediate action.

"Omega demands a public apology and questions the university's enforcement of the racial harassment and discrimination laws," said Jordan, noting that

"Omega has always been in the forefront fighting for civil rights and justice. We are appalled that today, in the year 2001, that such behavior still exists in America, particularly at an institution of higher learning."

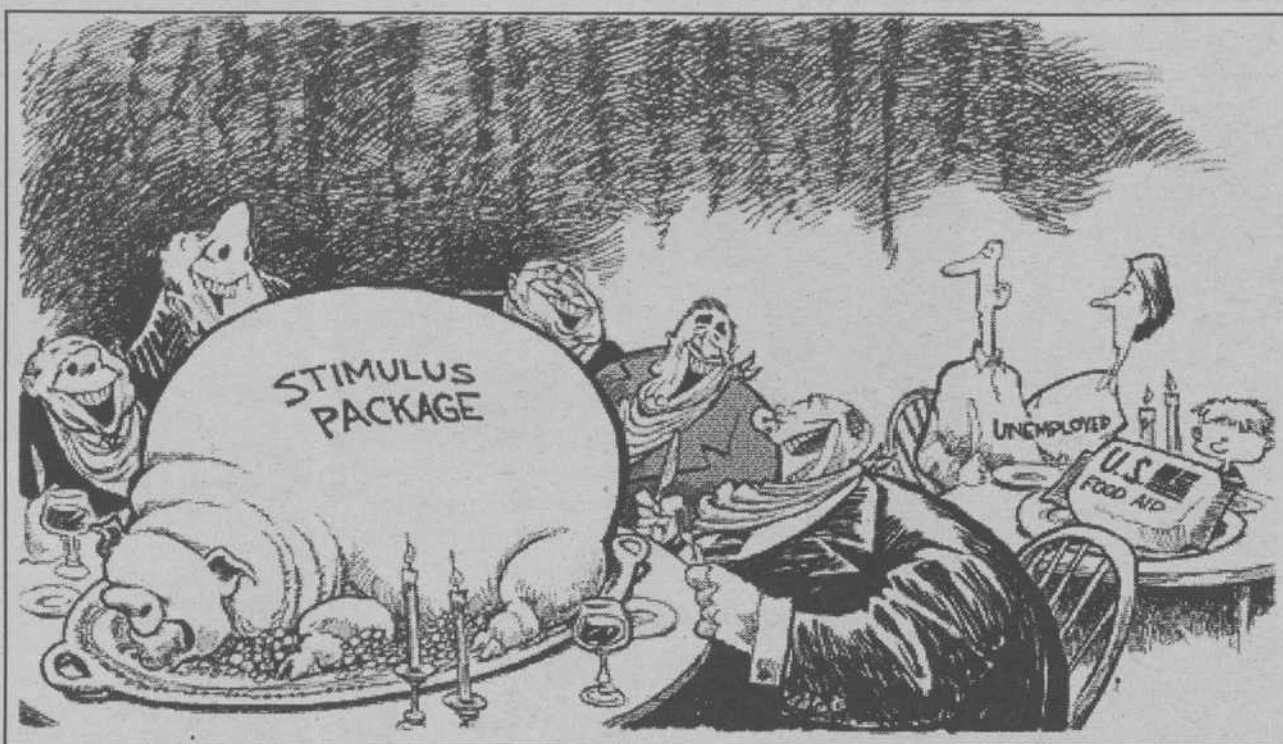
While Jordan's righteous indignation is justified, the events of Sept. 11 should have been an indicator of the nation's racial climate. After all, just because foreign suicide hijackers leveled buildings, taking with them the United States' sense of invulnerability, the attacks merely gave patriotic, red-blooded Americans another group to subjugate.

Time for thanks

As Thanksgiving officially ushers in the holiday season, the fortunate among us should do something, however small, to help improve the lot of those who, for whatever reason, aren't in the holiday spirit.

One thing we can all do is ignore the Christmas season's traditional focus on the material, instead putting our retail dollars into something more personal, like a turkey or gift basket to a needy family, clothes or shoes for an underprivileged child, cards and trinkets for lonely seniors. And given the events of Sept. 11, local charitable and relief groups throughout the nation are in need. (An unfortunate consequence of the East Coast terrorist attacks has been a steady dwindling of philanthropy at the local level as right-hearted Americans poured millions into relief funds aimed at aiding families of the thousands of victims who died when suicide hijackers crashed planes into the World Trade Center Towers and the Pentagon and crashed a plane in western Pennsylvania).

Besides, each of us could do without one less gift. By giving of ourselves, we also set an example for youth



Remember error of our old ways

Special to Sentinel-Voice

The attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington immediately plunged the United States into a crisis on two fronts.

The first front was abroad, in Afghanistan, as our military forces sought to strike back at Osama bin Laden, his Al Qaeda force and the despicable Taliban government which harbored them.

The second front has been the effort to reverse the economic recession, which, sharply aggravated by the September 11th attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center, has produced both the highest overall and the highest black unemployment rates since the mid-1990s.

Who would have thought that the Bush Administration itself would have provoked the third crisis the country now faces?

The crisis is whether America will continue to be a nation whose government adheres to the Constitution of the United States in the conduct of all its affairs.

This is a question which cannot be affirmatively answered by the "pledges" of government officials to act in our best interests, no matter how sincere they may be. This is a question which can only be affirmatively answered by the American peoples' continued access to democratic oversight of the government's conduct. That oversight has been put in jeopardy by the zeal with which at least some in the Bush Administration are attempting to bring to justice those who

To Be Equal

By **Hugh B. Price**  
President  
National Urban League

would harm America.

Make no mistake. I'm all for punishing-as swiftly and as clearly as possible-both those who were in any way responsible for the dastardly September 11th attacks and those who are planning future attacks against our or any other nation. And I understand that during this present crisis, we must accept some limitations on the openness and the freedoms we've enjoyed.

But Americans should never accept such limitations without question, and several actions and proposals of the Bush Administration raise serious questions.

The most serious question is the presidential order Mr. Bush has signed establishing military tribunals to try foreigners charged with terrorism.

This means that foreign nationals accused by the government of such crimes would not be tried in American criminal courts-as those who bombed the World Trade Center in 1993 were. Instead, they would be tried by military officers under rules significantly different from those governing civilian criminal trials.

For example, the accused might not be able to choose

their own lawyers hearsay could be admitted as credible evidence, and a defendant could be found guilty even if a third of the military panelists disagree about the verdict.

Finally, the trials themselves could be held outside of the U.S. and shrouded in secrecy, conducted without public airing of the government's or the defendant's assertions.

Vice President Cheney declared that the terrorists don't deserve the safeguards of traditional American jurisprudence. "They don't deserve to be treated as a prisoner of war," he said. "They don't deserve the same guarantees and safeguards that would be used for an American citizen going through the normal judicial

process."

The new policy comes even as the government continues to detain with great secrecy an unspecified number of men of Middle Eastern descent and has said that it wants to "question" 5,000 men of Middle Eastern descent who've arrived in America within the last two years to determine if they have any information useful to the government's pursuits of terrorists.

The Vice President's statement and the government's action in these instances raise questions of the utmost seriousness:

It is true that under the Constitution, foreign nationals do not have the same rights as American Citizens. But establishing military tribunals to prosecute them under a veil of secrecy is profoundly worrisome.

Doesn't the President's policy not only deprive those to be accused of terrorism of American "guarantees and safeguards," but also assert implicitly that the conduct of the U.S. Government itself does not have to be bound by the Constitution of the United States? (See Error, Page 14)

NEVADA'S ONLY AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

LAS VEGAS Sentinel Voice

GRIOT COMMUNICATIONS GROUP, INC.  
10010 W. WILSON BLVD., SUITE 100

Nevada's only African-American community newspaper.  
Published every Thursday by Griot Communications Group, Inc.  
900 East Charleston Boulevard • Las Vegas, Nevada 89104  
Telephone (702) 380-8100 • Fax (702) 380-8102

<p><b>Contributing Writers:</b> Tammy McMahan Nyla Pickett Dianna Saffold John T. Stephens III</p> <p><b>Photographers:</b> John Broussard Jonathan Olsen</p>	<p><b>Ramon Savoy, Publisher, Editor-in-Chief</b></p> <p><b>Al Triche, Copy Editor</b></p> <p><b>Don Snook, Graphics</b></p> <p><b>Ed &amp; Betty Brown, Founders</b></p> <p style="font-size: 0.6em;">Member: National Newspaper Publishers Association and West Coast Black Publishers Association</p>
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