

Race woven into global terrorism, atrocities

By Bill Fletcher Jr.
Special to Sentinel-Voice

In hearing about the terrorist attacks in London, I felt that deep sadness, anger and frustration I always feel when I hear about civilians being victims of targeted military operations. Nothing excuses such atrocities, though we must always attempt to understand them.

Yet, in the immediate aftermath of the attacks, I realized that I found it very difficult to compose a statement or write a column about these murders. It was a day or so in the aftermath of the attacks that I started to understand my feelings.

Fifty-two people were murdered in the London attacks, and hundreds were injured. Families, as a result, have been destroyed or, at the least, devastated. In North America and Europe, various countries have flown their flags at half-mast. There have been moments of silence in country after country. National leaders have spoken out, denouncing these criminal acts.

Yet, when I think about it, I cannot remember Europe or North America expressing the same amount of sadness or outrage, when terror was inflicted on the people of East Timor by the Indonesian military, whether in the massacres of 1975 or the massacres of 1999. I could not remember such expressions

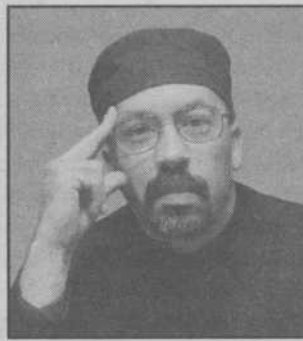
at the regular reports of terror inflicted by the Sudanese government and their janjaweed allies against civilians in Darfur.

I could not remember fury when, following the February 2004 coup, supporters of ousted Haitian President Aristide were tortured and terrorized using methods that could only have emerged from the minds of demons.

It is clear to many of us that race almost always plays some role in this equation. The reality is that the lives of Black, Brown and Yellow peoples are simply not given the same value as Whites in the mainstream North American media and most official circles. The terror that is experienced in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, often at the hands of allies of the U.S., is simply not treated as being, in any way, equivalent to the terror experienced on September 11, 2001, in the U.S., or the July 2005 London bombings.

Race, however, is only one part of the equation, and this is something that we need to consider.

It is not just race, but also familiarity, for lack of a better term, that seems to influence



BILL FLETCHER, JR.

the way that so many people in the U.S. differentiate terror from... terror. For most of us in the U.S., we are familiar with the city of London from pictures we have seen, or films that we have watched.

It is a modern, metropolitan center, with which people from this country can, by and large, identify. One hears about a bombing in London

and one can imagine it not just happening in London, but it could just as easily be the No. 6 train running from the Bronx to Manhattan. It could be the Atlanta MARTA heading downtown from the airport. It could be any bus traveling the streets of Los Angeles. It all seems so familiar, so close.

How many of us, by contrast, have any sense as to what East Timor looks like, the culture of the people, let alone where it is to be found? How many of us have seen a refugee camp, except for a split second on television news or in an ad?

It all seems so alien, almost literally out of this world, and something with which it is hard for so many people in the U.S. to identify... in part, because we have to think outside of the normal parameters of our lives.

Terror, then, becomes something that

could happen to me, not because it happened in East Timor or Darfur, but because it occurred in London — and London looks not that different from home. The fact that tens, if not hundreds of thousands, of East Timorese were murdered by an ally of the U.S. seems so academic to many people, because, after all, it was not an arbitrary bombing in a major metropolitan area, but simply the slaughtering of families by a barbaric army. Is that not what war is about, one might ask?

Insofar as we permit the media and the apologists for oppressive foreign policies to distance regular people from the realities of much of the world, it is we who lose our humanity.

Terror in East Timor, the Congo, Darfur, Palestine, or Guatemala is no less atrocious than the terror unleashed through the killing of 52 innocent civilians in London. Rather, it is something occurring on a scale that most of us find nearly incomprehensible.

Yes, I cry for those murdered in London, but I also cry and scream for those forced to live in a never ending nightmare of media-ignored terror, a terror all too often permitted or encouraged by our own leaders.

Bill Fletcher Jr. is president of TransAfrica Forum, a Washington, D.C.-based non-profit educational and organizing center.

Black conservatives snipe at Toyota over speech

By James Clingman
Special to Sentinel-Voice

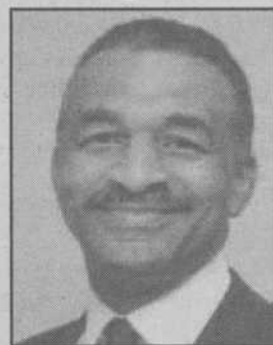
When I read that Project 21, the so-called Black leadership network of Black conservatives, had asked Toyota to apologize for sponsoring a Rainbow/Push Coalition event at which Minister Louis Farrakhan spoke, I just shook my head and wondered when this madness will end. Project 21 has also asked Toyota to sever any financial ties to Farrakhan and Jackson.

The press release stated, "Toyota has made a major mistake in supporting the likes of Farrakhan and Jackson," said Project 21 member Kevin Martin. "Farrakhan has sought to wrongly blame Whites in general and Jews in particular for the plight faced by some Black Americans. Jackson's partisanship and history of corporate shakedowns prove him ill-suited to be the leader of the Black community he portrays himself as. As

a veteran who served in Japan, I am deeply saddened that a Japanese company has disrespected our nation in this way."

Can you believe that? Here is another quote from the release by one of the most "dependable" Black conservatives. "Toyota's sponsorship of a speech by Louis Farrakhan is tantamount to sponsoring racism and bigotry," said Project 21 member Reverend Jesse Lee Peterson. "I am shocked to learn that not only is Toyota still bankrolling Jesse Jackson, but that they would endorse a racist like Louis Farrakhan."

Here we have the battle of the Jesse's and the warring reverends. You couldn't write the script for this, folks. It's just too good. Martin saying Toyota is in trouble for giving their



JAMES CLINGMAN

money to the event, and noting he is "saddened because a Japanese company has disrespected our nation," and Ol' Jesse Lee calling Farrakhan a "racist" are too juicy for just one column, but we will see what we can do.

First of all, I wonder what the indignant Kevin Martin said about the fact that "Darky" iconography is still popular in Japan today. Remember the Japanese toy maker Sanrio Corporation and its "Darky" dolls? Hey, let's just call for a blanket apology from Japan, Mr. Martin, for insulting Black people with their consumer items. Oh yeah, you said they disrespected our "nation," not Black folks. My bad, Bro.

Hey, Jesse Lee, your calling Farrakhan a "racist" is hilarious, but so are many of the things you say. What we need is a universal definition of "racist" and "racism," a concept based on group power, and established by White folks, by the way. The way the terms are used, especially by Black folks like Peterson, one could make the case that Peterson is a racist because he constantly defends White folks against Blacks. Has anyone ever heard him call a White person a "racist"? Maybe Peterson is a "reverse racist."

For this group and these two characters to come out against Toyota for giving Rainbow/Push money for an event, for consorting with Jesse Jackson, the man Toyota called a "controversial figure," and for failing to condemn Farrakhan begs too many questions to be listed.

Is Jackson a "controversial figure" because he threatened a boycott against Toyota, and suddenly Toyota found a few million dollars to put toward an advisory panel and commit to doing more for Black folks? Did they pay Jesse Jackson, despite his controversial profile? What about George Bush, Karl Rove, Dick Cheney, all of whom Jesse

Lee Peterson supports? Aren't they controversial? Hey Toyota, you had better denounce the current administration while you're at it.

Is Peterson's Los Angeles-based BOND, the Brotherhood Organization of a New Destiny, getting money from Toyota? Is some of Peterson's bling-bling being paid for with Toyota funds? How about the Project 21 administration? How are they livin'? Are they ridin' on the Toyota money train as well, or maybe just driving a Lexus? Who knows? Did Kevin Martin or Jesse Lee Peterson condemn Enron for blatantly stealing money from Californians and others and laughing about ripping off grandmothers during taped telephone conversations? Did they call Ken Lay on the carpet for giving some of that tainted money to the Bush campaign?

Did Project 21 speak out about the Halliburton no-bid contracts and the excessive fuel charges and all of the other graft and corruption surrounding this company? How about the lies Halliburton told potential employees? Company officials promised several thousands of dollars per month to persons if they would go to Iraq to work, only to renege on their promise and pay much less. Did Peterson and company come down on Armstrong Williams and the Department of Education for their deceitful debacle?

So many questions, so little space. So much hypocrisy, so little sincerity.

Hey guys, cool out. Toyota has enough money to take care of all of you and still have a bunch leftover. Moreover, it's a free market, remember?

So enough of the tired "Farrakhan is a racist" and "Jesse Jackson is controversial" remarks; that's played out, and Toyota obviously does not care. They are just following the American way and using their billions to grease the political skids.

As for you, Jesse Lee, why don't you call a Million Man March or something? Do you think you could get a million Black folks to

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the largest white collar group among African-Americans numbering 14,100, followed by the clergy at 12,159, and by 1910 teachers numbered 29,485 and clergy numbered 17,495.

During the 20th century, teachers continued as a prominent white-collar group among African-Americans throughout the 20th century, but the Black clergy was outdistanced by white collar African-Americans in business by 1940, by Black social workers in 1960, by Black government white collar employees in 1970 and by Black engineers in 1970.

By the middle 1930s, African-American society claimed 22,172 personal service businesses and 28,827 retail businesses.

When compared to today's standards, these numbers seem miniscule; but when you consider the era and the nation's attitude towards Blacks during that time, it was quite a significant expansion of the overall capacity

of the elite sector of African-American society.

If we're ever going to attain self sufficiency and economic empowerment as a people, and not just as individuals, we're going to have to revert back to the self-help mindset that the "Talented Tenth" had: the elite or mobile sector, which now represents 60 percent, must mobilize and assist the static sector, which is now 40 percent.

In performing this function, we will be doing what we were created to do. The word of God tells us that, "Those who will be greatest in the kingdom of heaven are those who serve."

Blacks as a whole have a habit of blaming someone else for their problems — the White man, the system, you name it. Have we become that which we hate? As a people, historically, excellence has been our mantra. Not anymore. We have slumped to what I call pitiful mediocrity. We have met the enemy and he is us.