

OUR VIEW

Peace Deserves a Fighting Chance

Log onto the website for the World Peace and Prayer Society and you're given an idyllic description of the history and intent of the group's International Day of Peace: "In 1981, the United Nations General Assembly passed resolution 36/67 declaring an International Day of Peace. In 2001, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a new resolution 55/282 declaring 21 September of each year as the International Day of Peace. The intention of the resolution is to have the entire world observe a day of peace and nonviolence. Secretary-General Kofi Annan has asked all United Nations departments and agencies to expand their observance this year, extending a special invitation to civil society as well."

With all the conflict going on—wars, civil unrest, bullying, rapes, gun and gang violence, and on and on—it's clear many folks around the world missed WPPS's memo. One of the most egregious offenders, if not the most, is the United States of America. It seems unconscionable that the richest country in the history of the world, a nation whose birthing document guarantees its citizens inalienable rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, a continent unmatched in human, intellectual and financial capital, scrapes the bottom of the rung when it comes to civilized behavior. You can thank the Bush World Order for exacerbating many of our problems.

Push aside the White House's flawed reasons for going to war with Iraq—remember all the flawed intelligence, which allowed flawed-reasoning, war-hungry neocons to peddle flawed information to an easily duped public? Set that aside and drink in the debacle that has become the Iraqi war. The death toll (of American soldiers, British and Iraqi forces and Iraqi civilians) continues to reach news highs; nary a day goes by without an Iraq headline about people killed by mortars, ambush, sniper fire. The war has become an albatross around the White House's neck, a \$200 billion-and-counting exercise in how not to manage conflict and how to so inflame anti-Americanism abroad that terrorist groups will likely have a pool of willing martyrs to choose from for years to come. The war on terrorism is quickly becoming this century's version of the war on drugs—a failing war that was set up, from the start, to fail.

What Iraq has shown is that America, superpower that it is, bleeds when cut, just like the rest of the world. Forgoing diplomacy and employing the U.S. notorious big-stick policy to foreign relations is working less and less. Countries are no longer cowed by American bullying. The ability to pursue and, in some cases, actually procure atomic and nuclear capabilities has given small nations such as North Korea big-stick power, the same type of negotiating machismo America has waved around for years. Ironically, if North Korea didn't have nuclear capability and was an Iraq-like thorn in the Bush family side, it, too, might be in the throes of war with an American occupier. Bush's scorched-earth policy toward foreign relations has done just that, scorched relations all over the globe. Where there was little need for conflict—Iraq—Bush has darn near mortgaged America's immediate financial future to fight. Where American forces could be deployed with humane aggression—war-torn parts of Africa—he commits mostly words. What money does come is usually not enough to make a difference.

And we haven't even touched on America's inner struggle with violence. The world's mightiest nation is also the most violent. It took Hurricane Katrina to narrate for tens of millions of Americans the story of how despair breeds violence, crime and entropy, how governmental Band-Aiding of abject poverty masks the issue, how politicians and power brokers game the system and turn tragedy into financial gain. How in the world did Haliburton, after its troubles in Iraq, get a contract to help rebuild New Orleans? Maybe Kanye West's note that "George Bush don't care about Black people" should be amended to, "or poor people, or working-class people, or civilians whose lives have been ruined by war or..."



Katrina lays bare real problems

By Dora LaGrande
Sentinel-Voice

Following Hurricane Katrina and the Gulf region floods, I indicated that while the American government had failed the people of Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, the American people had not. There are ways in which the government failed and may have been key in orchestrating the deliberate extermination of the hurricane victims.

Of all the casualties that took place during this tumultuous time in American history, the biggest casualty of all is the truth itself. From federal emergency managers to Democrats to Republicans there has been much finger pointing. But there is more than enough blame to go around.

The world already knows that the devastation and human toll of Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath is beyond words. As the days go by, the aftereffects are worsening. The world already knows that the administration withheld funding, hampered disaster preparation, failed to aid rescue and relief efforts and waited four days to begin to get even barely adequate supplies to victims.

What the world already knows is that the levees that broke weren't among the ones waiting for the Army Corps of Engineer's repairs, as Democrats and others have implied, but, in fact, were the ones that had already been fortified with tons of concrete yet still failed.



ON THE RECORD

By Dora LaGrande

What the world doesn't know is that there were deliberate and intentional actions of many supposed helpers on the ground that caused many of the problems. The same supposed helpers accused young Black men who had guns with looting.

Denise Moore, one of the evacuees, said that the young men had guns, yes, but they organized the crowd in the Ernest Memorial Convention Center, went to Canal Street, looted to find and bring back food and water for the old people and babies because nobody had eaten in days.

When the police rolled down the windows and yelled out "the buses are coming," the young men with guns organized the crowd in the following manner: old people in front, women and children next, then younger men in the back so that when the buses came there would be priorities as to who got on the buses first.

National Guard trucks rolled by completely empty of passengers. Soldiers carrying guns had them cocked and aimed at the evacuees. None of the supposed official helpers was stopping to drop off water or food. Then when the first helicopter came to drop off water after two days of no food or drink for the

evacuees, all of the water exploded on impact.

The world doesn't know that it wasn't true about the roads being impassable. In fact, the same roads the National Guard used in order to drive into the city were passable for relief and rescue workers but they were blocked at official gunpoint from reaching victims.

The world doesn't know that Governor Kathleen Blanco intentionally had the water turned off to force mass evacuation, reportedly.

The military intentionally confiscated all available buses and would not allow people to leave, except, of course, unless they were the highest bidder, allegedly.

The sanctimonious crap about hard-headed people who wouldn't leave is good

reading for a fiction novel, but in real life, the evacuation plan was laissez-faire, didn't even consider the needs of the poor and depended on privately owned vehicles and ready cash to fund an evacuation. The planners were fully aware that the poor who lived in New Orleans, who are overwhelmingly Black, would not have been able to get out — and the political will wasn't available to get them out.

The truth of the matter is that the poor were left behind in Louisiana to drown.

The New Orleans catastrophe did not have to happen. Common sense says that when several states — Michigan, New Mexico and Arizona — were ready to send in National Guard units to assist when the storm hit but didn't get permission and were left waiting for days before they were sent, something wasn't right.

You know that when widespread military activa-
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NEVADA'S ONLY AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER
LAS VEGAS Sentinel Voice
GRIOT COMMUNICATIONS GROUP, INC.
THE SOUTH WALKER BLDG. 2ND FLOOR

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
Email: lvsentinelvoice@earthlink.net

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Member: National Newspaper Publishers Association
and West Coast Black Publishers Association