

Will Haiti be victimized by sham elections?

By Bill Fletcher Jr.
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Every time the U.S. wants to legitimize a regime, it arranges an election. These are called "demonstration elections." It does not matter whether the elections are truly free and fair or whether the conditions under which the elections take place are favorable. All that needs to happen is for there to be U.S. media coverage of smiling voters, more than one party in the election and... poof... 'democracy' has arrived.

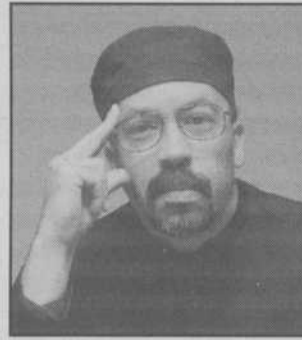
Oh, if it could be so simple.

The recent Iraqi elections are a case in point. A war is going on in Iraq. The war did not end with the occupation; it simply changed form. There are not just two sides in this war — pro vs. anti-occupation — there are splits in the anti-occupation camp. Last month's referendum on the Iraqi constitution

took place in the context of this war and with a draft constitution that the U.S. had more to do with writing than did the Iraqis themselves. The referendum did not even raise the question of ending the U.S. occupation! Yet, this was supposedly evidence of democracy.

Haiti faces a similarly scripted future. As if out of a Hollywood drama, an election is being prepared. Let's first remember the background to this drama.

In February 2004, an armed group, described at the time by then-Secretary of State Colin Powell as "thugs," overthrew a democratically elected government. The Bush administration supported this coup. The coup



BILL FLETCHER JR.

and its aftermath have brought with it torture, bloodshed and general misery, including the repression of the political party and supporters of ousted president Aristide.

The interim puppet regime has taken no steps to stop the slaughter of Aristide supporters, yet reacts in shock when the Fanmi Lavalas (Aristide's party) says that it finds it difficult to participate in elections under these conditions.

A jailed Fanmi Lavalas leader, Father Jean-Juste, held without charge or trial has been denied the right to run for president, yet a Haitian-American from Texas has been permitted to run, in clear violation of the Haitian constitution.

If the stakes were not so high, I would suggest that this situation is more akin to a Hollywood comedy than a drama. Yet the Bush administration wishes to sell us and the rest of the world on the fraud that is being perpetrated on the Haitian people. There is nothing resembling democracy coming to Haiti. Rather, a staged event is being put into place in order to build support for a post-coup regime that most of the world considers a joke.

It is time that we too join in the 'laugh' and repudiate the insult that is underway in Haiti. Haiti needs real democracy; one constructed by and for its own people. It does not need something produced, directed and choreographed from Washington, D.C.

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

Frustrated Scowcroft assails neo-cons, Cheney

By Jim Lobe
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - One week after a top aide to former Secretary of State Colin Powell issued a blistering attack on foreign policy-making in the George W. Bush administration, Brent Scowcroft, who served as national security adviser under Bush's father, assailed neo-conservatives who persuaded the president to go to war in Iraq.

In an interview with *The New Yorker*, Scowcroft, whose relations with the Bush administration have been badly strained since he publicly warned against invading Iraq seven months

before U.S. troops crossed over from Kuwait, argued that the invasion was counter-productive.

"This was said to be part of the war on terror, but Iraq feeds terrorism," Scowcroft told the magazine, adding that the war risked moving public opinion against any new foreign policy commitments for some time, just as the Vietnam War did during the late-1970s and through the 1980s.

"Vietnam was visceral in the American people," said Scowcroft, who also served as national security adviser in the mid-1970s under former President Gerald Ford. "This was a really bitter period, and

it turned us against foreign-policy adventures deeply. This is not that deep, (but) ...we're moving in that direction."

Scowcroft's remarks come at a critical moment. According to recent opinion polls, the government's performance in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, Bush's choice of his personal attorney to serve on the Supreme Court, and the lack of progress achieved in Iraq have combined to put the president's approval ratings at below 40 percent.

Moreover, a grand jury has indicted Vice President Dick Cheney's chief of staff, I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby,

and is still investigating Bush's chief political adviser, Karl Rove.

They are thought to have played a key role in trying to discredit and punish whistleblower Ambassador Joseph Wilson, who had publicly questioned its rationale for going to war in Iraq. The probe has cast a dark cloud over the White House at a moment when it can least afford it.

The administration was also unpleasantly surprised by the cascading media coverage given to a talk at the New America Foundation (NAF) last week by Col. (Ret.) Lawrence Wilkerson, Powell's top aide for some 16

years. He accused Cheney and Pentagon chief Donald Rumsfeld of leading a "cabal" that circumvented the formal policy-making and intelligence processes in order to take the country to war in Iraq.

Wilkerson, whose longstanding personal and professional closeness to Powell has been widely noted, also accused Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, a Scowcroft protégée from Bush I, of condoning the cabal's machinations and failing to ensure an open policy-making process in which all reasonable voices and options were heard when she served as Bush's national

security advisor during his first term.

Scowcroft, a former Air Force general who has long been seen as George H.W. Bush's closest friend, if not alter ego, was not nearly as scathing as Wilkerson, although some of his opinions echoed those of Powell's former chief of staff. While Wilkerson's words reflected deep anger and frustration, Scowcroft comes across in the interview as regretful but resigned.

Of Cheney, who worked closely with Scowcroft as secretary of defense under Bush I and White House chief of staff under Ford, Scowcroft (See Scowcroft, Page 13)

Clingman

(Continued from Page 11)

are "selected" and put in charge of the minority programs and the minority inclusion initiatives. As I said in my first book on economic empowerment, "We deserve what we accept."

Here we are in 2005 accepting some silly classification called "minority" and now are paying dearly for it in New Orleans as we subscribe to what the newspapers are printing about minorities not getting their fair share of construction contracts in New Orleans. If they mean Blacks are not getting their fair share, why don't they just say that? Is it because "minority" is less acerbic, less pointed, less threatening?

Do you see how messed up we are? We don't know whether we are pitching or catching sometimes. Although we are mostly catching, (and you know what we are catching), we can begin throwing a few strikes of our own if we would simply name what we are and claim it.

Talk about self-determination, this would be an excellent place to start. In cities where we dominate in population, please don't fall for the trick of being labeled minorities. And don't fall for it anywhere else. It's a losing game for Black people.

Here are a few "Minority Rules":

- 1) Stop allowing yourself to be called minority.
- 2) Stop using the term to refer to Black

people.

3) Stop accepting so-called Black leaders who use the term to describe Black people.

4) Stop participating in minority programs; start Black programs — just like other groups start and support their own programs throughout this country.

5) Stop accepting the crumbs, and work to bake your own loaf, which you cannot do by succumbing to the minority label.

6) Stop allowing gate-keeping Blacks to slide in the back door and cut deals in the name of minorities.

7) Stop accepting the usual chosen Black suspects who always get the contracts, who always get the board seats, and who always get plaudits from the White establishment. Examine each one of them, and jettison every one of them if they are not working on behalf of the Black collective rather than for minorities.

Put an end, once and for all, to the games being played on us and sometimes by us, by greedy, conniving, slick-talking, self-serving, condescending, politicians, profiteers and preachers. As we can plainly see in cities like New Orleans, Detroit, Washington, D.C., Atlanta, and others, unless Black people write our own "minority rules," the real minority will always rule us.

James E. Clingman is an adjunct professor at the University of Cincinnati's African-American Studies Department.

Curry

(Continued from Page 11)

torically Black work college. Students can attend college for \$5,600 per academic year. Of that amount, students pay a total of \$2,800, with the other \$2,800 subsidized by grants and income from businesses that participate in the work program.

When students graduate, they begin their careers virtually debt-free. (For more information on the work program, go to www.knoxvillecollege.edu.)

At the time it lost accreditation, we had an acting president. To find a new president, the board hired a search firm for the first time in its history. For the first five years or so, the new president performed admirably. Without going into details, suffice it to say that her leadership style became one of several contentious issues.

So, three months ago, after an 8-year run, the board of trustees decided Knoxville College would be better served by selecting a new person to guide the institution. I am chairing a board committee that is in the process of hiring a search firm and a new president is expected to be in place by next September.

The change in leadership has transformed the atmosphere on campus. Students and faculty praised the decision, inactive alumni have stepped up their contributions, and we are now able to attract people to the board who were unwilling to serve before. Recent

board additions include Gregory L. Turner, chief financial officer of Oak Ridge Laboratory; Darrell Akins, former chief executive officer of the Greater Knoxville Chamber of Commerce and vice chairman of the Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association; Rev. James Foster Reese, a nationally-known pastor and the first director of the Presbyterian Church's (USA) Racial and Ethnic Ministry Unit, and Nancy Cochran, a local business leader. Under the leadership of Ronald Damper, a Chicago businessman, the board is now stronger and more diverse than ever.

We're not yet out of the woods. The national alumni association has launched a \$1 million campaign for the next year (it has raised almost \$300,000 of that goal in three months), the Tom Joyner Foundation continues to come to our aid, student recruitment is being expanded and a team is in place to focus on regaining accreditation.

Even without accreditation, its students have been able to enroll in Ivy League graduate schools and get hired by Fortune 500 companies.

If we've been able to stay alive eight years without accreditation, just imagine what Knoxville College will be like after we regain it.

George E. Curry is editor-in-chief of the NNPA News Service and BlackPress USA.com.