

Reflecting on Hamas' win in Palestine

By Bill Fletcher Jr.
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Let's start with the fact that I am not a supporter of Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic resistance movement. I don't agree with their tactics or their vision of the type of society that they wish to build.

That said, I was not surprised, and neither should you have been, with the overwhelming victory they scored in the recent Palestinian elections.

We have now had a few weeks to consider the results. During this time, the Israeli government has been attempting to get the world to isolate and boycott the Palestinian Authority as a means of undermining Hamas. The hypocrisy of this is amazing.

Hamas, with a long history of military action, was asked to play fair and participate in democratic elections. Hamas did this and won. Sometimes, in elections people get elected who a person may not like. We have a lot of experience with that in the USA.

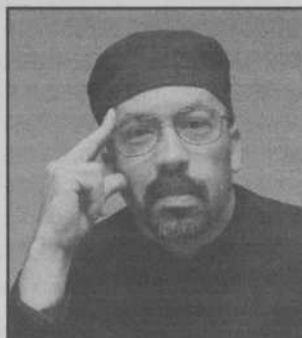
The deeper issue to understand is the frustra-

tion of the Palestinian people and the levels of desperation they have reached. They were driven from their lands in 1948 and denied the internationally-recognized right to return to their homes.

In the aftermath of the "6-Day War" in 1967, they waited for the Israeli government to withdraw from the Occupied Territories in accordance with United Nations resolutions to that effect. The Israelis have refused to budge.

The Palestinians watched with optimism the Oslo Peace Accords of 1993 that were supposed to lead to Palestinian sovereignty and mutual recognition of theirs and Israel's right to exist.

They waited and waited... Instead of serious talks, Israel — backed by the U.S. — has obstructed efforts to achieve a lasting peace, always placing the blame on the Palestinians for delays and problems.



BILL FLETCHER, JR.

When frustration turned to violence in 2000 with the outbreak of the second Intifada (uprising), the U.S. press echoed the Israeli official line in pinning the responsibility for the uprising on the Palestinians.

While some of the Palestinian groups, including Hamas, engaged in heinous attacks on civilians, almost no attention was focused on the

killings — targeted and otherwise — of the Palestinians by the Israelis, or any attention on the disproportionate loss of life by the Palestinians.

In this context, and with the added insult of corruption among many top Palestinian officials in the Palestinian National Authority, not only should it have not been a surprise but it should have seemed completely logical that thousands of Palestinian voters would essentially say ...enough is enough...

If there is to be peace in the Middle East, then serious discussions must take place. Israel's 'apartheid wall,' cutting the Palestinian territory into pieces, must be dismantled. The Palestinians must have the right to a full territory where they have the ability to build a sustainable nation-state, not parcels of land that look like chicken pox on the face of a child.

In this situation, the U.S. must step away from its uncritical stance of supporting every action by the Israelis. It is time for the U.S. to insist that both sides must talk, but with talks aimed at not only security, but as well justice. There will be no peace in the Middle East, and I dare say on this planet, until justice is visited upon the Palestinians.

There is no civilized alternative. If one is worried about Hamas, then just think of what will happen if events continue to unfold as they have been occurring.

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

History Channel to show history of Black tankers

Special to Sentinel-Voice

New York, NY - The History Channel will premiere "First to Fight: The Black Tankers of WWII" on Sunday at 7 p.m. ET/PT.

General George Patton once said, "Colored soldiers aren't smart enough to handle the implements of modern warfare." But taking on the plight of African-American soldiers, the NAACP, the Black Press, and Eleanor Roosevelt led the fight to convince President Roosevelt to experiment with using Black soldiers in both

tanks and airplanes.

"First to Fight: The Black Tankers of WWII" examines the story of the 761st Tank Battalion — the first all-Black tank unit ever to see combat.

When Patton's 3rd Army was stuck in France and in need of tanks, the military finally called the 761st to the front. Within days, they proved themselves in battle, leading the all-White 26th Infantry through several key towns. Over 183 days during World War II, the 761st helped liberate more than 30

French towns under Nazi control. They fought with such bravery, they were called to fight in the Battle of the Bulge. For their service in WWII, this group was collectively awarded 11 silver stars, 70 bronze stars, 250 purple hearts, and a Medal of Honor. More than 30 years after coming home, the 761st was finally recognized with the prestigious Presidential Unit Citation.

Information can be found in the Black History links at www.historychannel.com/classroom.

Lee: Mississippi should dump controversial flag

OXFORD, Miss. (AP) - Director Spike Lee, known for his stylish and controversial films, said Mississippi should get rid of the state flag during a speech at the University of Mississippi's Black History Month celebration.

Lee said Mississippians cling too tightly to what he considers symbols of oppression. "You've gotta do something about that flag," he said. "I know people say its representative of history. Well, so's the swastika."

Lee is working on a documentary entitled "When the Levees Broke," which deals with the African-American experience in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

He did not go into details of the film's focus. But he did say the movie was more difficult to film than "Four Little Girls," in

which he interviewed the families of the four children who were killed in a church attack in Birmingham, Ala., in 1963.

"When I saw the devastation on TV and in the news... it (didn't) prepare me for what I saw there," Lee said of New Orleans. "You hear these people's stories, and it's heartbreaking."

"Levees" will premiere on HBO on Aug. 29, exactly one year after Hurricane Katrina made landfall.

Lee also targeted certain aspects of modern Black culture during his speech.

Lee said that rap culture has perpetuated a cult of violence, drug use, disrespect to women and ignorance among a staggering portion of young Blacks.

"This 'gangsta' obsession is madness," Lee said. "Thinking like that is genocide."

Walters

(Continued from Page 11)

Berkeley, Robert Burch and William Gale and Peter Orszag, both of The Brookings Institution. They find tax cuts to be the major source of declining government revenue since Bush has been in office. Moreover, in this budget Bush raises spending for defense by 6.9 percent and 9.8 percent in Homeland Security, both big ticket items.

Do you begin to get this picture?

Big increases for defense, Homeland Security and the war in Iraq; however, since federal revenue is decreasing, in order to cut the deficit, Bush must hold the line on increases in health care spending and offer modest spending for Katrina relief, while cutting the heck out of "discretionary spending" for social programs (the 141 list). This is the formula.

It is amazing that in 2001, when Bush came into office, the federal budget was projected to have a surplus to 2011, estimated to be \$5.6 trillion. Now, there is an estimated deficit for the same period of \$2.7 trillion.

In actuality, the Bush budget scenario probably may not turn out as scripted, because the focus on cutting middle-class entitlements is likely to slip down to the poor substantially. This is a likely recipe in an election year because the middle class has political clout and poor people don't vote or protest as much.

Nevertheless, driving down the deficit now means driving down spending for the social and economic needs of citizens in this country. This is the budget position Republicans have wanted to create all along, and the so-called "war against terror" has helped them achieve it. This must become an increasing part of Black economic thinking and a cause for political action.

Ron Walters is the director of the African-American Leadership Institute.

Law Firm of Timothy C. Williams

ATTORNEY AT LAW



TIMOTHY C. WILLIAMS

Timothy Williams is a member of the Nevada & Illinois State Bar, practicing primarily in personal injury cases.

EMPHASIS ON PERSONAL INJURY CASES

- Automobile Accidents
- Motorcycle Accidents
- Wrongful Death
- Dog Bites
- Pedestrian & Other Bodily Injuries

892-0000

844 E. Sahara Avenue
Las Vegas, Nevada

Neither the State Bar of Nevada nor any agency of the State Bar has certified any lawyer identified here as a specialist or expert. Anyone considering a lawyer should independently investigate the lawyer's credentials and ability.