

U.S. foreign policy has to focus on home

By Bill Fletcher Jr.
Special to Sentinel-Voice

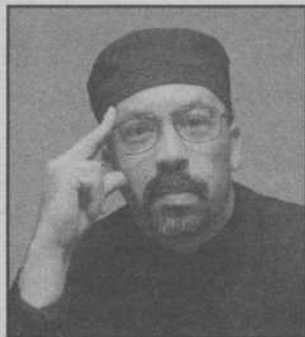
It's getting scary out there. Reading the news about the international situation can give one the creeps. The U.S. invades Iraq illegally, and Iraq moves to near civil war. The U.S. supports the overthrow of President Aristide in Haiti, and Haiti devolves into a living hell, at least until the recent elections. The U.S. accuses Iran of planning to make nuclear weapons, and then starts issuing ultimatums that begin to sound like the lead up to the Iraq invasion. The HIV/AIDS pandemic spreads in Africa; and while the U.S. promises support, it always seems qualified by various restrictions, such as no use of condoms and one has to preach abstinence — and thousands continue to die.

There is sometimes a tendency to just want to put one's hands over one's ears, close one's eyes and just hope that things will either work out on their own or somehow improve, perhaps by magic. Unfortunately, it does not work that way.

While African-Americans since the mid-

19th century have had concerns about international affairs and U.S. foreign policy, our activity around U.S. foreign policy increases and decreases over time. By and large, we remain unorganized when it comes to influencing foreign policy. While it is true that there have been organizations such as the Council on African Affairs (the 1940s) and the African Liberation Support Committee (the 1970s) and various other groups that have raised issues at particular moments, what has been missing is the integration of foreign policy matters into the agendas and programs of established African-American organizations, as well as the consistent presence of foreign policy-focused organizations (including my own, TransAfrica Forum).

There are certain lessons that we need to learn from both our own experiences as African-Americans, as well as those of other groups when it comes to influencing U.S. for-



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eign policy.

If you moan, you will be pitied; if you scream, you will be heard: This is critical. When concerns are expressed about any international situation or any foreign policy activity by the U.S., the ability to influence is directly related to the volume of our collective voices. If outrage is expressed only from within the Washington, D.C., Beltway, it will be treated one way by the administration. If outrage, however, is expressed from Kansas City and Portland, Ore., it is interpreted far more seriously.

Screaming is essential, but organization is fundamental: People get tired of screaming, and sometimes our opponents, or those in positions of power, just wait for us to stop screaming. Our outrage, for instance, in connection with the Iraq war or the failure of the U.S. to organize international support for the African Union's work in Darfur, needs to be

visible through organization.

When NAACP chapters are protesting the Iraq war, this means something to the administration. When there is a Black coalition focused upon the failure of the U.S. government and the pharmaceutical companies to provide low cost anti-retrovirals to combat HIV/AIDS, such actions influence policy makers.

International issues regularly work their way into domestic issues: Anyone reading the stories about cuts in the Federal budget will notice something very interesting. Cuts in domestic programs are taking place as if with a machete. Yet, increases in expenditures are going for the military in general, and the never-needed-to-happen war in Iraq. For the administration, there is a direct connection between what it does overseas and it does not do here in the U.S.A. So, while wars proceed overseas, we are left to dry on the vine at home.

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

GOP to blame for Franken-Bush monster

By James Clingman
Special to Sentinel-Voice

They conceived him, they created him, they sustained him, they supported him, and now he has turned on them. Just like the old Frankenstein monster movies we watched, we can, once again, break out our popcorn and Mary Jane candy, and watch the latest version of Frankenstein — known as Frankenbush — as the dreaded monster turns on his creators. That's right; those metal things that protrude from Frankenbush's neck have been charged by hundreds of lightning strikes; and now, because he has so much power, he doesn't have to obey his masters any more.

The Frankenbush monster thumbed his nose at his conservative creators by threatening to cast his first veto ever on the shipping ports deal. Dr. Frankenstein himself, Bill Frist, is leading his clones — House Speaker Hastert and the others — in an attempt to stop Frankenbush, but the monster is defiant and refuses to capitulate to their commands. Yes, the puppet is turning on the puppet masters; Chuckie is on the attack. Can anyone stop him before it's too late?

As I have said many times, it's always about the money, and you would think, listening to the moaning and wailing of "the people," that we just discovered this stark reality. Treasury Secretary John Snow and the rest of those corporate crooks, who have been stealing every dollar they can get their hands on, have pulled off another monetary coup with this port deal. Everywhere you look,

there is a connection from Frankenbush to his corporate cronies. And you thought he was accountable to the Congress. Silly you.

It was the Congress, at least the majority of Congress that created Frankenbush, giving him all the nourishment he required to get stronger and stronger. Now, he has turned on them and is exposing them as the weaklings they are. All they can do, now that the monster has been unleashed, is try to destroy him. If they don't come up with the silver bullet, Frankenbush will destroy them in November 2006. Can't you hear Vincent Price's spooky laugh in the background as you slide down in your seat, afraid to watch the scary climax of this B-movie?

The minor plots abound. The bride of Frankenbush, "Condi," as he calls her, is threatening folks all over the world. After all, she has the monster on her side. Again, I think about Gil Scott-Heron, our spoken-word, musical-artist prophet, when he called Henry Kissinger the "International Godfather of Peace." Just like Richard Nixon and his boys, Kissinger wanted "a piece of Laos, a piece of Angola, a piece of Viet Nam, a piece of Cuba." Condi also says she and Frankenbush want "peace": a piece of Iraq, a piece of Iran, a piece of Syria, a piece of Afghanistan. Apparently, the Frankenbush peace process calls for Condi to threaten leaders of these coun-



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tries, as well as the duly elected leader of Venezuela, Caesar Chavez.

Can anyone stop this monster? Frankenbush, fresh from a recharge in 2004, hacked, skewed, discombobulated and confused, is on the loose, running rampant and destroying everything in his path. He and his bride are bent on taking over the earth. It's Boris

Karloff and Elsa Lanchester reincarnated. Keep your children in the house.

I have to believe that any person with an ounce of gray matter knows Frankenbush is an abject failure, at least as it relates to governing this country. But, as for filling his pockets and those of his cronies, he has been a rousing success. He has done what he was told; they trotted him out on the stage after wiring him with an earpiece, and he stood there and delivered exactly what they told him to say. Of course, there are always exceptions, the times when Frankenbush makes his feeble attempts to speak without assistance. His inarticulate ramblings and mechanical movements and gestures are striking indications that Frankenbush is unsure of his balance, insecure and unstable; at least, that's the way it used to be. Now, the monster is walking on his own; still not making very much sense when he speaks, but he doesn't need to, considering the raw power he possesses.

Soon, we will see how powerful Frankenbush is as he has thrown down the gauntlet before his creators. Now, they must find a way to destroy him before he destroys them — and the rest of us. Can they do it?

Surely, there is much awry in this, the latest Republican laboratory experiment. The monster is running wild, not obeying the orders from those who thought they were his masters; they didn't know he had other masters; they thought they had him under control, but the corporate hidden hands are giving Frankenbush his orders. We are in deep trouble if he is not neutralized soon.

Doesn't all of this make sense now? Frankenbush said he didn't know the levees would break; he didn't know Osama had plans to fly planes into buildings; he didn't know about the Dubai deal, and he didn't know Hamas would be elected. Isn't it obvious that he doesn't know about a lot of things? After all, he is the most ignorant, uninformed and disconnected president in the history of this country. That's because he was created in a laboratory by devious, greedy, mad scientists like Rove, Cheney, Wolfowitz, Abramhoff, Ken Lay and the rest of their diabolical surgical team.

Yes, they created a monster. And now, after turning on "the people," the monster has turned on Congress — a collective body that assumed it had control of the monster. Wow! I can't wait to see the end of this horror movie.

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sold off, it is strange that so few of us are choosing to marry and have babies in a sanctioned institute. Instead, we are either getting pregnant out of wedlock or aborting our babies. We seem not to have an appetite for alternative solutions. Today, we are placing upon ourselves a distressing moratorium on having babies.

Throughout history, the quality of some humans' lives has been improved at the expense of the weak and the oppressed; therefore, the tragedy of this reality leads one to the conclusion that the quality of life has never been a universally applied concept in

the U.S. This has never been truer than it is today with human abortion. Except for the privilege of aborting herself, the Black woman and her family must fight for every other social and economic privilege. Why do you think that is?

Do you believe that when Senator George McGovern wanted to achieve "zero population growth" and called for "abortion on demand" in 1976 that he was targeting White families? No, they had already achieved that; he was targeting Black families.

The tragedy in all of this is that, as a community, our consciousness has been seared, and we have become callous and insensitive

to moral truth.

We need the pastors to speak out regarding this genocide. Omission is as detrimental as commission, and when pastors and other leaders in the community refuse to deal with absolute truths, they are as guilty as those who are performing the abortions.

I am at my wit's end trying to figure out how we — pastors, leaders, mothers and fathers — have come so far that we refuse to be faithful.

And how have we gone so far left that we don't know what right is?

If we don't want to talk about abortion, at least offer alternatives to young women.

Here's one resource that I can offer: Women's Resource Medical Centers of Southern Nevada. It provides support in a myriad of ways, including supporting a young woman until the child is two years old, if need be. The organization, formed in 1985, is fully community funded. Its mission is to increase community awareness and provide material, emotional and spiritual needs for women. The center's annual banquet is March 31 at the Rio Pavilion Convention Center and their scheduled guest speaker will be Alan Keyes. For more information contact (702) 318-3552.

Their website is www.lvwomensctr.org.