

Bush's isolation of Cuba imperialistic

By Bill Fletcher Jr.
Special to Sentinel-Voice

It never ceases to amaze me that logic and rationality are completely absent from President Bush's foreign policy. Despite no evidence of either a terrorist threat or threat of weapons of mass destruction from Cuba, the Bush administration continues its senseless and rabid efforts to overthrow the internationally recognized government of Cuba.

The most recent effort is one that is getting very little attention in the U.S. media. The Bush group is allegedly pressuring the European Union to reverse course away from diplomatic engagement with Cuba and move in the direction of isolating Cuba, including the possibility of economic sanctions.

Such a reversal would be largely unprecedented given the long history of relations between European nations and Cuba, including European governments that have been quite conservative. (The right-wing dictatorship of the late Spanish leader Francisco Franco even had diplomatic relations with Cuba!)

Nevertheless, in these days of open international bullying by the U.S., all bets are off.

This bullying is really going over the top, I should add, and is not limited to the Bush attitude toward Cuba. U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, John Bolton, was so upset at a criticism leveled by a top U.N. official regarding the attitude of the USA toward the United Nations that Bolton, in essence, threatened the United Nations demanding that U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan repudiate these comments... or else???

Reading the statements attributed to Bolton, one finds it nearly impossible to believe that they are not the ravings of a 15-year-old whose high school colors were challenged.

Yet, the combination of the new round of coercion directed at Cuba, along with the threatening posture toward the United Nations, is integrally linked. From the standpoint



BILL FLETCHER JR.

of the Bush administration, there is only one foreign policy that any nation can follow and that is the one that is determined by the Bush administration.

As much as the Bush administration attempts to carry out spin control and improve its image with the world's peoples, public relations efforts, such as those by Undersecretary Karen Hughes, are doomed to failure. Fundamentally, there is nothing there. It is difficult to assure the world that the USA is committed to acting as a responsible global partner when each of its actions demonstrates the opposite.

Thus, one returns to the question of Cuba, a lightning rod for Bush foreign policy. Irrespective of any overtures by the Cuban government toward improving relations with the USA, e.g. its offer to assist Katrina survivors in the aftermath of the disaster, the Bush administration displays contempt; and

worse, implies or threatens the use of outside intervention-and quite possibly the use of military force — if the Cubans fail to cave.

One cannot take for granted that the Bush administration will leave Cuba alone or that the administration is simply engaged in rhetorical, saber rattling for political purposes. The exhilaration and self-righteousness of the administration when it comes to threatening Cuba (and other perceived antagonists) reminds me of someone who has been using PCP. God help us that they are not the ones with their fingers on the button.

Should it surprise us then that most of the world is more worried about the Bush administration than they are Al Qaeda?

What a damning conclusion; a conclusion too many of us are prepared to dismiss because it does not correspond with the manner in which we would rather see ourselves, or see the presidency of the United States of America.

Bill Fletcher Jr. is a labor activist and immediate past president of TransAfrica Forum.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Church can solve issues

A few Sundays ago I had occasion to visit a church here in Las Vegas that I hadn't been to. In trying to locate the church I intended to visit, I was amazed to see such a close gathering of other churches of various denominations.

It almost seemed like the layout of the Strip. You could go out one church and into another next door or across the street. Now some years ago, instead of liquor stores on almost every corner, they have been replaced by churches.

The churches also seem to be embracing our young people to give them Christian support. Bravo for them! However, why do you suppose that gangs are still very active, and domestic violence so

prevalent?

So, just wondering, do you suppose that some day there will be non-denominational meditation rooms for anybody that is extremely distraught and on the verge of destroying his or her life and perhaps those of others?

When we get sick, we go to medical clinics. When we get distraught or extremely angry, what alternatives do we have? The one thing that is needed to be done first is to think! So, if there was somewhere to think and hear good advice before any action is taken, life could be a lot better for everyone.

Shall we pray for it?
F.L. Miller

Clingman

(Continued from Page 11)

David Walker said, "How strange it is to see men of sound sense, and of tolerably good judgment, act so diametrically in opposition to their [own] interest." To paraphrase Earl Trent, author of "A Challenge to the Black Church," Blacks are taught to "love everybody, especially Whites and other groups," but we are not taught to "love one another," especially ourselves.

Illegal immigration has leaped to the forefront of the public discourse as though it just arrived; it has been going on for decades, but Black people, and the issues that keep us at the bottom of the economic heap, have been around for centuries.

I say, "first things first." Black people had better help themselves, with or without the alliances and those who acknowledge that our struggle has helped them, even though they paid no price for it.

The 13th 14th and 15th Amendments were written for Black people, not minorities, and until we stop playing in the minority game, Black people will continue and will forever lose. And the constant refrain of "Muestrame el Dinero" will ring throughout the land for everyone else except us.

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

Agenda

(Continued from Page 1)

will not be exempt because of their race.

In his letter to Richard Parsons, the African-American who serves as CEO of Time-Warner, Jackson complained about "the patterns of exclusion in front of the camera and behind the scenes — from booking and talent producers, executive producers, anchors and hosts, commentators and guests" as well as issues discussed on-air.

"At our convention this week in Chicago, a broad coalition of African-American and Latino organizations — including the NAACP, LULAC, National Action Network and many others — addressed the cultural lock-out by the media. Many feel humiliated and offended by the images projected across television screens around the world. If we continue to be tuned out and locked out, we are prepared to engage in a view out."

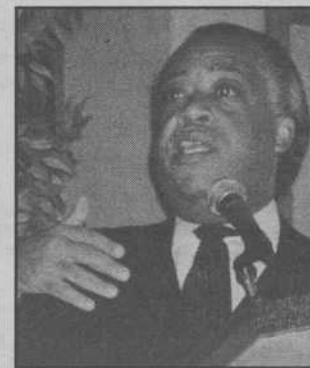
On the panel, Sharpton said that when leaders have organized successful campaigns in the past, the White-owned media has rarely given them credit.

"A lot of our people think that civil rights organizations are of the past or don't score victories," Sharpton said. "That's because when we score, the announcers never announce the score."

"This year alone, we were able to make boot camps in Florida illegal — a clear civil rights victory," Sharpton said. "We were able to turn around New Orleans, in terms of voter rights and voter participation — a clear victory. None of which was covered by the (White) media."

"A lot of our people think that civil rights organizations are of the past or don't score victories."

— Rev. Al Sharpton



Sharpton said Black leaders are often portrayed as ambulance chasers, moving from event to event.

"In our community, we're not the ambulance-chasers, we're the ambulance," he said, drawing laughter.

Rep. Mel Watt (D-N.C.), chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, said the issues outlined by Gordon have been longtime staples of the CBC. "The only thing I argue with is your notion that you can take those six or seven items and compact them into one or two things," he said. "You can't do that. They're so interrelated."

In each category, Watt said, African-Americans need to focus on racial disparities. He said Blacks are overrepresented in every health category except one.

"We still commit suicide less than White people and we're closing in on that from the wrong direction," he said.

Barbara R. Arnwine, executive director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, urged everyone to pay more attention to political empowerment for concentrating on election reform. She strongly urged the groups to push for election day voter registration.

"Nine states already have

it," she stated. "Guess what? They have the highest voter turnout in the country." While most states struggle to reach the 50 percent mark, Arnwine said voting jumps to 65 to 70 percent in states that allow same-day registration.

Theodore Shaw, director-counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, said he was concerned by a series of race-related cases the U.S. Supreme Court has decided to accept.

"The question before the court now — it may be framed differently — is whether it will be legal or constitutional in this country to take any action voluntarily or consciously to do anything about racial inequality. That's what at stake now."

He said he and Arnwine's group, among others, would wage a legal battle in the courts and that others should focus on action outside of the courts.

"We cannot win legal battles these days unless we change the political context that we find ourselves a part of," Shaw said. "Law without political struggle is like a ship without water — it's not going anywhere. What we need more than anything else is a movement — give it to us."