

OUR VIEW

Good News

Even for African-American media types, the news coming from the press—both mainstream and ethnic—about the state of Black America can be disconcerting. To read local newspapers other than the *Sentinel-Voice* is to believe that African-Americans aren't doing much of anything positive. You hear more about violence among Black gangs, although local authorities will tell you that they're more worried about the growing threat of Hispanic gangs, both on the streets and in correctional institutions. You hear more about the struggles of Black students on standardized tests, when other ethnicities and subsets of students (including the developmentally disabled) also have a hard time passing the tests. Across the media spectrum, there are generally more bad stories about the Black community than good, more negative stories than positive. Where's the balance?

Media entities have a responsibility to report all the news—the sobering stuff about the fragile Black middle class; the upsetting stuff about the Black-White wealth gap; the pernicious stuff like redlining, police brutality, disenfranchisement, as well as the positive stuff. And there are a lot of positive things to report. To wit:

- The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education reported in a self-conducted study that the number of Black freshman enrolled at the nation's top-ranked liberal arts colleges and universities has increased 10 percent from 1994.

- A Brookings Institute study noted that Blacks have narrowed the IQ gap by one third over the last 30 years.

- According to the Department of Education, Blacks obtained professional degrees at a rapid clip in the '90s.

- African-Americans are increasingly pursuing doctoral studies at Historically Black Colleges and Universities; between 1992-93 and 1997-98, the number of doctoral students at HBCUs increased 15.2 percent.

- In April, the Census Bureau reported 1.2 million African-American businesses, a 45-percent jump since 1997; revenues from those businesses increased 25 percent over that period, to \$89 billion.

- In the last 20 years, according to the National Center for Black Philanthropy, Blacks have increased their charitable contributions and become a growing part of the American philanthropic community.

The list goes on and on and on. Bringing it closer to home, the African-American community in Clark County has just as much to be worried about—juvenile crime, access to capital, lack of investment in struggling socio-economic areas, no real centrifugal cultural rallying point—as it has to be proud about. To wit:

- Blacks comprise nearly 30 percent (two of seven) of the Clark County Commission, arguably the most powerful municipal entity in Nevada.

- Black politicians have proven that skin color shouldn't be a deterrent to seeking office: in 2005, seven Blacks served in the 63-seat state legislature, more than the number of African-Americans in the California legislature (California has more than 200 legislative seats.)

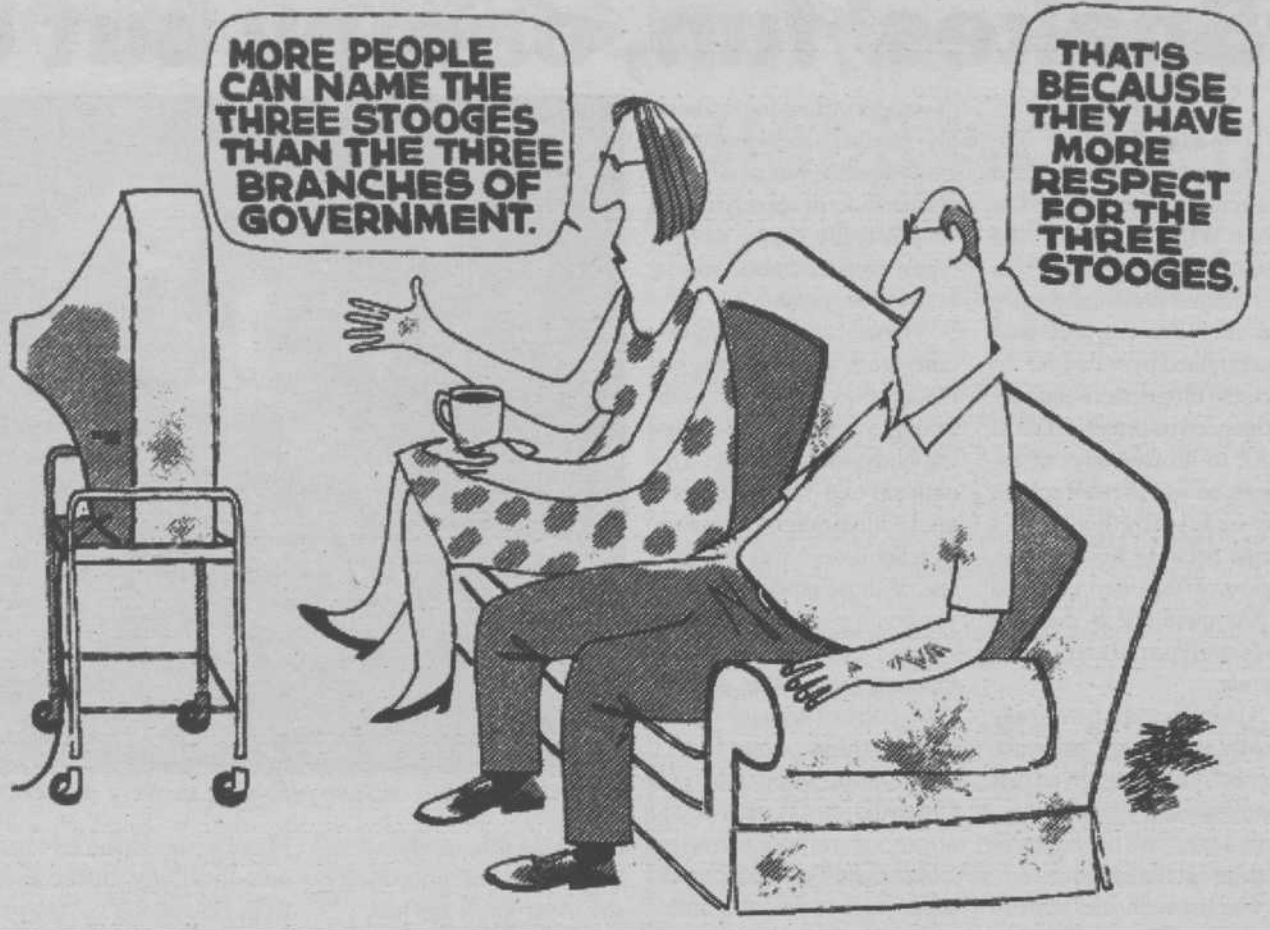
- There are a preponderance of civic and activist organizations. No longer do the NAACP, Nation of Islam or WAAK-UP have to carry the load. The existence of local chapters of notable national organizations: Rainbow/Push Coalition, National Urban League, ACORN (Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now), National Bar Association. The Caucus of African American Nevadans political action group. The Urban Chamber's economic activism. Etcetera, etcetera.

- Nevada's selection as an early primary state for the 2008 presidential elections will give Blacks a greater voice in the nation's most important election.

- Black organizations annually award more than \$100,000 in scholarships to Black students here.

- There's a village-raising-the-children concept in various schools with high Black populations, with businesses, parents and groups taking a keen interest in education.

By no means is this an extensive list. We could go on. However, the point is that we need to do more to recognize the good in our community. For too long we've bemoaned the negative—and yes, we have to eliminate our problems—but we must keep accentuating the positive.



Israel duplicates U.S. failure

By Ron Walters

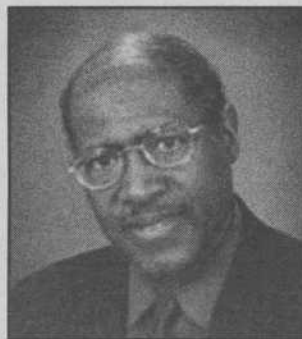
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The myth is that the U.S. is the most powerful nation in the world and that Israelis are some of the smartest people in the world. Well, why are they both bogged down in the Middle East, utilizing military approaches to problems that, in the end, will not yield to successful solutions?

Surely, Israel must have watched the U.S. slide slowly into the morass of Iraq, being sucked into a guerilla war that they appeared too arrogant to acknowledge as a dangerous form of confrontation. They must have seen the most powerful military machine in the world expose itself as prime targets for guerilla fighters, disappearing into the backdrop of society in both open daylight and by night.

Most of all, they must have seen that there is an even deeper quagmire, with Iranian-sponsored elements stoking a civil war that threatens any hope of a stable government in Iraq. In that context, why boil the pot higher, hotter?

Israel needs security in the region. Yet, it is caught up in the same illusion that military might will provide them with the protection that they need to secure the lives of the Israeli people. They apparently believe that a policy of genuine rapprochement based on stronger political, economic regional integration is a sign of weakness and



RON WALTERS

that a reasonable and balanced expression of military power cannot be tolerated.

In other words, they appear to want the legitimacy of their existence to be based on the fear of their neighbors. In that case, the strategy is to resort to displays of power, even for minor threats, that do not result in the intended solution, but in the intensification of the hatred that fomented actions against them in the first place.

Hezbollah has won this encounter by fighting a superior military force without being driven into submission. There was this picture of a young Hezbollah fighter crawling out of a building that been severely bombed by Israeli planes, saying, "We are still here."

He was expressing the obvious: that just as Israelis were united by the Nazi oppression to fight harder for their own self-determination, their devastating attack on Lebanon, while damaging to the physical infrastructure of the country, raised the spirit of the resistance in the mere survival of their opponents. Now, Hezbollah stands as a

heroic force to the Lebanese people, entrenching their power not only in the country, but also in they eyes of Iran and Syria.

The captured Israeli soldiers were not taken from Hezbollah, and it is unlikely that the security zone that stretches from Israel's border to the Litani River will provide the strategic security they sought for the northern cities.

So, what was it all for?

What we know is that the mood is palpably different in war-torn Lebanon, as people stream back to destruction, but claim victory and wave Hezbollah flags, while in Israel, there is confusion, bitterness and soul-searching. The not so subtle criticism of the government in Israel by its own people has caused Prime Minister Ehud Olmert to accept full responsibility for the military campaign and its consequences, potentially destabilizing his regime.

In the midst of it all, George Bush announces that

Israel won the military encounter, as if to provide positive support to salve an uncertain question hanging in the atmosphere. It was not the first time he declared a victory when none was in sight.

Not only was there no question that Israel would win the military encounter, this fact poses the question of what else did it hope to win in the process. In his actions, Bush also illustrates his lack of diplomatic sagacity—his bold, one-sided stance continues to tarnish the prospect of the United States being an honest broker in the region.

How, then, is it possible for Arab countries to return to the so-called Road Map with any assurance that the U.S. could be fair, in the poisonous atmosphere where all of them denounced the Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

Moreover, the future of the peace path in the Middle East and the position of the U.S. are further complicated

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