

U.S. must not launch an Iran attack

By Bill Fletcher Jr.

Special to Sentinel-Voice

I was a child during the October 1962 Cuban missile crisis, but I remember the fear. I remember the fear and anxiety in the faces of my parents. At the time, I did not understand what was occurring or what was at stake, but I knew that my parents were worried about something very big.

Now, it's my turn to worry about something very big. As any reader of this column knows, I adamantly opposed Bush's illegal invasion and occupation of Iraq. In fact, I have opposed most of Bush's foreign policy adventures. My feeling about the situation with Iran, and potentially North Korea, is even stronger. One has to conclude, as retired NBA star Charles Barkley recently did, that the Republicans have lost their minds — and that's from a person who flirted with the idea of running for governor of Alabama as a Republican.

There is a serious discussion underway about attacking Iran. Connected to this discussion is the idea that the use of nuclear weapons by the U.S. is not off the table. It is often framed in terms of 'tactical' weapons, bunker busters, etc., anything that will mislead the average person into believing that

we are talking about something slightly more serious than a cherry bomb.

Ladies and gentleman, this is a bit more than a cherry bomb.

Nuclear weapons have been used on this planet in war only twice, both times at the close of World War II and both times by the same country — the USA. Despite the fact that many countries have nuclear weapons and the fact that the world has come very close to experiencing nuclear exchanges, including full-blown nuclear wars, we have dodged the bullet, so to speak. Part of this, at least during the Cold War, was the idea that if the U.S. used nuclear weapons, the Soviet Union would as well, and the whole planet would become an ember floating in space.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the cabal in the White House believe that the U.S. has the right to use whatever weapons it chooses to in order to advance its ends. Nuclear weapons, despite various treaties signed over the last 40 years, are back as an option.

If nuclear weapons are used in Iran, re-



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ardless how small, the world forever changes in that instant. At that very moment, the first-use of nuclear weapons becomes justified doctrine, which means, for example, that India can hit Pakistan, or Pakistan can hit India. But it also means that someone can decide that there are no longer any non-combatants in the United States, and that the U.S.

can and should be hit as well.

The Bush administration is fueling a very complicated situation with Iran through the use of the same sort of demagoguery utilized in advance of the Iraq invasion. Half-truths, speculation, Islamophobia and defamation are all being brought together to justify aggression. Rather than pursuing diplomacy and engaging in the discussions that the Iranians have requested, the Bush team would rather have a nuclear weapon.

We have watched this administration use fear of terrorism to usher in domestic and foreign policies that have made us less safe rather than safer. We are now looking at a situation that might result in some portion of

the world, including but not limited to Iran, glowing in the dark. Is this not "terror?"

So, we can sit back and get scared. We can also sit back and hope that if the lunatics let slip the dogs of war, that we will, somehow, be saved. We can instead choose to make our voices heard in the halls of Congress, in the media, and, indeed, in the streets of the U.S., to the effect that we are not interested in aggression, nuclear or otherwise, against Iran, Syria, North Korea or any other alleged axis. We are, however, interested in bringing to a close an administration that has exhibited a callous disregard for the well-being of this planet and that, in the name of its God, is prepared to dance to the song of Armageddon.

I came across a story the other day that bears on this. Albert Einstein, one of the greatest minds of the 20th century and the central player in the splitting of the atom, was once asked what kind of weapons would be used in World War III. He replied that he did not know but he was sure that all wars that followed World War II would be fought with stone axes. As Arsenio Hall used to say: "...hummm..."

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Recycling dollars key to financial freedom

By James Clingman

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This familiar line should be the mantra of Black people when it comes to recycling our dollars among ourselves. Why? Well, we always talk about recycling our dollars and spending our money in our neighborhoods, with our own business — to the extent they are available — and considering the fact that the eagle does, indeed, fly on Friday, we should employ a related economic strategy. Maybe we should use the theme Brother Ashiki Taylor, of Atlanta, Ga., uses: "Freedom Friday."

Ironically, the term, "the eagle flies on Friday," comes from a familiar song, "Stormy Monday," which goes on to say, "...and Saturday I go out to play... Sunday I go to church, and I kneel down on my knees and pray, 'Lord, have mercy, have mercy on me.'" I say it's ironic because this is exactly what many Black people do on the weekend.

We get paid, and the eagle starts to fly;

sadly, it flies away rather than around. Our money leaves us so fast that even a real eagle couldn't keep up with it. Then on Saturday, we go out to play; it seems that's the top priority for us these days — playing or watching someone else play. If it's not games, it's parties all night long. Nothing wrong with a little entertainment every now and then, but let's not be lulled to sleep by it.

After the party is over, yes, we have to get our "praise on," as some call it. We "go" to church (forgetting of course that we are the church) and start praying and asking God to have mercy on us. We spent all our money and must face a stormy Monday all over again, trying to regain the money we threw away over the weekend. And we want God to have mercy? He's probably saying, "Give me a break!"

I can imagine all the groups with which



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we spend our money saying, "Thank you, Lord, for Black consumers." Their eagle will fly around their communities many times before leaving, if it ever leaves at all, and they look forward to Mondays because they are far from stormy.

Have you ever considered that our Mondays are stormy because our eagle flies on Friday? If we approach our spend-

ing with that in mind, our Sundays would be filled with more "thank you's" rather than "have mercies." I pray we will get this through our heads some day soon and stop this economic death spiral we continue to follow by allowing our eagles to fly away rather than around, making stops at several of our own businesses instead of everyone else's.

So, what will it be, Black folks? How about a Freedom Friday? Do you think we could designate every Friday, just one day per week, as the day we make a conscious effort to buy something from a brother or sister? At the same time, do you think we could cut back on spending our dollars at the businesses owned by others? I know it will be hard, but you only have to do it on Fridays.

Freedom Fridays could prove to be the genesis of an economic revolution for Black people in this country. C'mon, y'all. A little self-discipline is all it takes; it would certainly be well worth it. We cannot have anything of substance without sacrifice. Start your personal Freedom Friday Campaign this week, and let others know what you are doing. Let them know that you are raising your consciousness by taking more control of your dollars and making sure that you spend more with your people.

If we fail to implement economic strategies of some kind, both personal and collective, we are literally doomed in this country, and, as the song goes: "Tuesdays will be just as bad. Wednesdays will be worse, and Thursdays will be oh so sad."

I suggest Freedom Fridays, but you can call it whatever you want; it's the action that counts. We can come up with all sorts of cute sayings and slogans, but if we don't put the appropriate action behind them, we will have accomplished nothing.

We can turn that song into a joyous refrain if our eagles start flying around our neighborhoods, in and out of Black-owned businesses, into the pockets of Black employees who work for those businesses, and even making a few stops at Black investment funds.

I travel across this country speaking at conferences, doing workshops, and lecturing to students and church members. I have been writing this column for more than 12 years now; I am on radio talk shows all over this country; and I have come in contact with thousands of brothers and sisters who say they want to do something about our economic situation.

They call talk shows decrying our economic position and the lack of ownership and control of resources where they live and the fact that someone else owns all the stores, the gas stations, the restaurants, the grocery stores, and other vital retail outlets in their neighborhoods.

After all I have said, written and, more importantly, demonstrated by personal action and commitment to the principle of economic empowerment for Black people, I truly wonder if it is a lost cause. I wonder if we really want to be free, if we are serious about our consciousness — the same kind of consciousness and nationalistic thinking employed by the very groups about which we complain.

Despite my deep frustration, I will continue to write, speak, initiate and participate in economic strategies that will move our people forward because it is part of my purpose, my mission, my work. I am very concerned about our eagles flying, but I am more concerned about our eagles dying.

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congressional races in Florida has gone to Black-owned media.

"If they want to have a conversation with Black Florida, the place to do it is in the Black-owned media," said Charles W. Cherry II, a member of the Florida Black-Owned Media Coalition, told the *Miami Herald*. "We are the ones who consistently reach the majority of likely voters — whether they are Republicans, Democrats or Independents."

In New York City, advertising agencies are slowly signing settlement agreements with the New York City Human Rights Commission.

Appearing on the CBC panel, Patricia Gatling, chair of the Commission, said her agency's investigation of the industry found that in 16 New York advertising agencies, Black employees represented only 2 percent of the workforce. Among the 22 percent earn-

ing more than \$100,000 a year, only 2.5 percent were Black.

This summer, NAACP President and CEO Bruce Gordon disclosed that Target department store officials were so arrogant that they refused to complete an NAACP questionnaire about their Black employees and the use of Black vendors.

Blacks need to confront these economic terrorists. For my money, I would start with Target. If enough of us returned their credit cards, stayed out of their stores and told them why, it wouldn't be long before they would be begging for another chance to advertise with the Black media and complete the NAACP survey. I am not stepping foot into another Target store until they change their tune. Are you willing to join me?

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