

OUR VIEW

Similarities

It's a showdown that could not only determine the course of the Bush presidency and the direction of U.S.-Middle East relations, but has wider reverberations that will impact America's future as well. The showdown, of course, is between Bush and Democrats over funding for the Iraq War and setting an August, 2008, timetable for pulling American troops out of the region.

The Democrats, backed by a groundswell of American sentiment, want U.S. soldiers home and out of harm's way. They say the price paid already—more than 3,200 American soldiers have been killed and some 24,300 wounded; hundreds of billions have been spent—is too high. By continuing to fund what's turning out to be a losing and expensive war, the Democrats say we're not only throwing good money after bad money but throwing more good soldiers into a bad situation.

That Democrats have put Bush on front street—tying a \$120 billion funding bill to a conditional pullout—is a bold move, politically risky and a change of pace from years of weak-willed opposition and overt kowtowing.

Despite the daunting numbers and deteriorating situation, there are those who say we must stay the course. They cite their own sets of numbers. Retired U.S. Army Gen. Barry McCaffrey, in a *LA Times* editorial on Tuesday, said that 3,000 Iraqis are being killed or kidnapped a month. Further, he writes, "More than 100,000 armed militia members and insurgents confront central authorities. A handful of foreign fighters (about 500) and a couple of thousand Al-Qaeda-in-Iraq extremists provoke sectarian violence through murderous attacks on the innocent civilian Shiite population and their mosques. This provokes a response of brutality and ethnic cleansing against the vulnerable Sunni civilian population. U.S. forces have arrested more than 120,000 suspects and hold more than 27,000 as detainees. We have killed about 20,000 of these armed fighters. However, the armed struggle shows few signs of disruption."

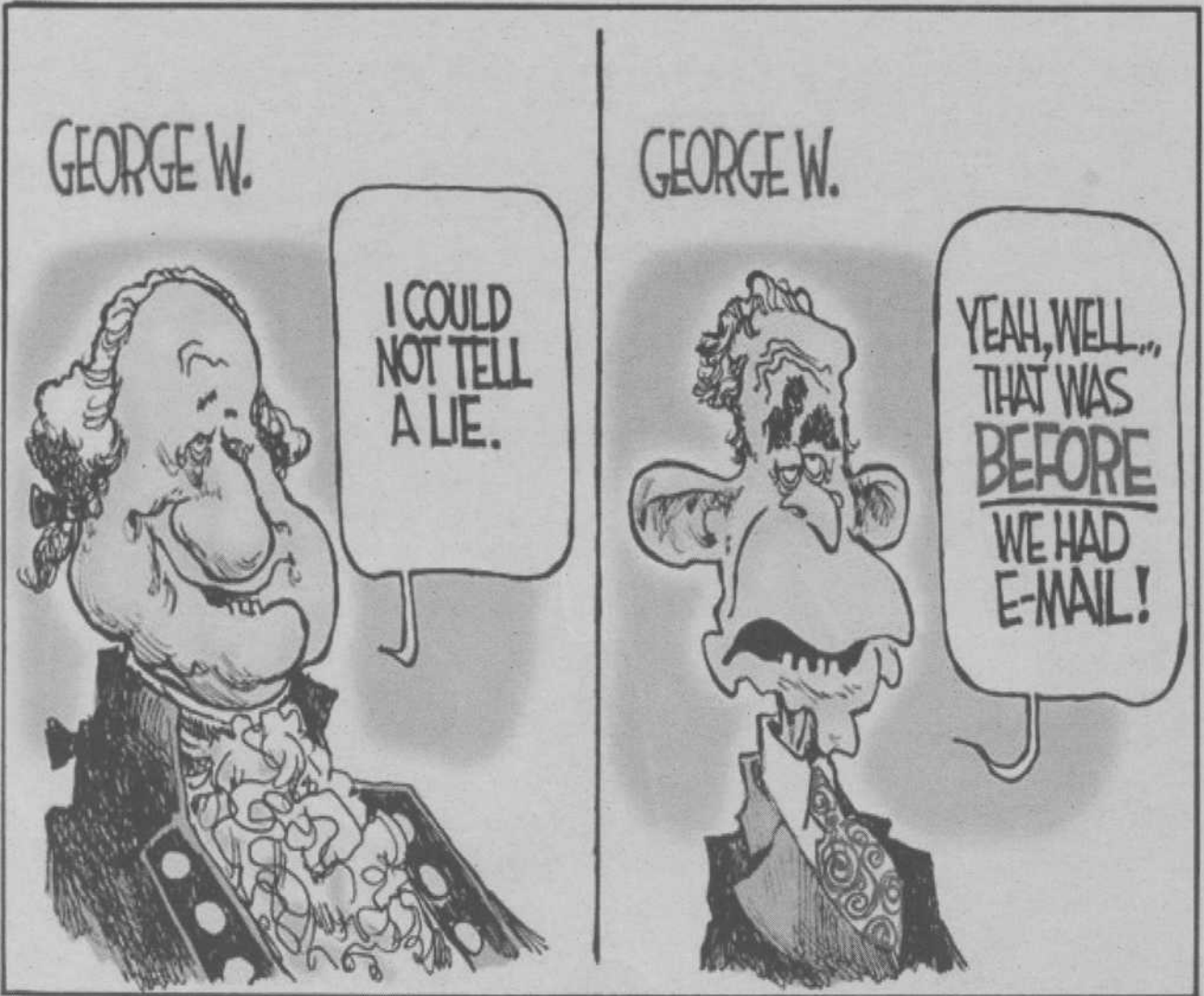
War supporters (Republicans, invariably) have resorted to using any shred of good news to justify U.S. involvement. Yet these same people (who are, invariably, Republicans) raise Cain when you talk about pumping more money into education. The No Child Left Behind Act is the fruit of a Republican brain. While its goals are lofty—requiring academic proficiency from all students—it's an underfunded mandate. Thus the question: why is it okay to mortgage the economy's health to fund a war that is failing and is increasingly unpopular with the American people, but it's not okay to shift sorely needed resources into public education. Those who say throwing money at the problem when it comes to improving education are misguided because, in fact, money has never been thrown at the problem. To the comparison between the war: Critics often say that additional monies for public education are often spent on bureaucracy and never reach the students. So, where are all the additional funds for this war going? Our troops still don't have the equipment—Kevlar vests, armored Humvees, etc.—they need to survive improvised explosive devices, mortar attacks and ambushes.

Republicans can't have it both ways: You can't fund a war and not fund education. By having it both ways, they're ensuring the diminution of America in the world's eyes and guaranteeing that U.S. children won't be able to compete with their counterparts in the rest of the globe.

And then there....

... were two. Soon that number will be one. Ricki Barlow and Stacy Truesdell emerged from a field of 10 candidates vying for the Las Vegas City Council's Ward 5 seat. Now the real race begins, with a winner to be determined on June 5. May the best candidate win.

While both candidates have lots of campaigning ahead and the eventual winner gets what's likely the hardest political job in the state, it's the vanquished contenders who need to continue their involvement. If improving Ward 5 is your passion, then your activism shouldn't be dictated by this election's outcome. Now is the time to hold the candidates accountable. Ward 5 needs you.



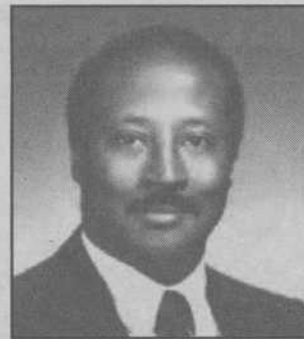
Is 1 percent good enough?

By Harry C. Alford
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Lately, we have been lowering our standards to the point of being "stuck on stupid." A prime example is the recent ownership controversy caused by the new stadium gift going to the owners of the Washington Nationals baseball team here in Washington, D.C. The powers of the "Chocolate City" demanded better local and Black representation within the ownership of the team. This was certainly reasonable as the residents were going to be stuck with the bill for building the new stadium via issuance of revenue bonds. The city is overwhelmingly Black, and Black representation should be realized in any endeavor that the people will have to pay for.

So, when the ownership of the team was unveiled, there was a sprinkling of a few Black faces — high profile, but just a few. Councilman and former Mayor Marion Barry became terribly upset about the "rent-a-Negro" approach to ownership. In the end, Marion was proven correct. Despite the showcase and spreads in the mainstream media, the total dollar amount invested by these so-called owners equated to no more than just 1 percent.

Somehow, the community



HARRY C. ALFORD

of D.C. capitulated and let the deal go through. My brothers and sisters, 1 percent is better than nothing — but not too much better. In fact, it's right next door to nothing. Why do we settle for so little? Where is our outrage? What happened to our ability to protest?

In a city more than 70 percent Black, and a sports game that is over 50 percent non-White, we allow ownership to be 99 percent White? It is economically suicidal.

Cities around this nation are suffering from this low expectation. Philadelphia has a beautiful sports complex. Beautiful baseball stadium, football stadium (perhaps the best in the NFL) and basketball/hockey arena share the same address and provide a venue that makes millions and millions of dollars for the owners of these teams. How much of that ownership belongs to local Black residents of Philadelphia? My estimate is, at best, 1 percent.

Tax breaks, revenue bond

financing by the residents of the city provide treasures for the fat cats and none of the fat cats are us. History will show that these scenarios were some kind of high tech robbery. Stealing from the masses of Black folks for the benefit of a few powerful Whites is something that borders on Hell not Heaven.

God will bless the child who has his own, and we African-Americans have got to start demanding and insisting on our fair share of the pie. We need to get away from "fronting" and paper schemes that profess to include us.

Stadiums, sports teams, casinos, hotels, entertainment projects, etc. must include the people paying the bill or generating the income. Over the years how many record labels, sports teams,

movie studios have built empires through the talent and sweat of African Americans? Yet, we have a pitiful piece of the ownership involved in these industries.

We settle for too little. We have become happy with virtually nothing.

So, let us turn our attention to the biggest opportunity at hand. The Rebuilding of the Gulf is before us and we need to seize this opportunity. Louisiana and Mississippi have Black populations that exceed 30 percent each. The contracts that will be generated from the federal government alone will approach \$100 billion over the next few years. What share of the business participation will our corporations receive? Well, right now it is about 1 percent. That's right, just like that baseball team in

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