

Support the troops: Stop the war...

Opposition to war is not opposition to troops

By Ron Walters
Special to Sentinel-Voice

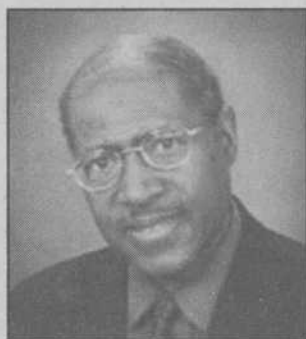
It is extraordinary that George Bush has managed to position the U.S. military's "Support the Troops" into a phrase icon that is symbolic of the war-fighting policy in Iraq. It has effectively put the Democrats in a quandary, because the mindset of the American people has been socialized by the administration to "support the troops" — regardless — and, in a way, that mindset also has served the Bush group's purpose to pursue and perpetuate the war. All of the other rationales for pursuing the war have soured with the American people, but the remaining emotional root of their willingness to follow the administration's formulation of the war appears to be "support the troops."

It works, first, because there was much made about the troops' introduction into Iraq with less than effective war materiel such as bullet-proof vests, armored Humvees, etc. Then, there seems to be a desire to prove the

opposite of the Vietnam War: that the troops, although serving a dishonorable war, are themselves honorable people worth supporting. In this, Democrats appear reticent to aggressively carry out the mandate the American people gave them in the 2006 election: bring the war to a close. But to do this, Democrats, as well as the public, have to disentangle the honor due to the troops from the dishonor accorded the war.

Here, there is an eerie similarity to the Vietnam War in that between 1970 and 1977 the Congress entertained 21 separate attempts by members to limit the administration's spending for the war in order to end it.

Democrats have begun to go down this road with their first proposal to fund the troops with benchmarks of progress by the



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Iraqi government and a date to begin to reposition the troops, a proposal that has recently been vetoed by Bush. At this writing, a second attempt is being formulated that would fund the troops until late July with benchmarks, which will probably be opposed by the Senate, where Democrats are even more loathe to appear as if they don't support the troops.

If Democrats are to stop the war, they have to climb out of the box created by the Bush administration and re-conceptualize it for the American people. First, so that Democrats will not appear to be vulnerable on whether or not they did or did not support the troops, they have to explain effectively that the troops are not the policy, they are the instrument of the policy; and that the funds provided — or not provided — are directed to the war effort in general.

If Congress does not provide the funds for the war effort, then Bush has to decide whether to put the troops further into harm's way. Second, on the heels of a majority vote by the Iraq parliament to establish benchmarks of progress related to a date for the departure of American troops, Cheney made a frantic trip to Iraq. There he repeated the mantra, "If we don't fight them there, we'll have to fight them here." But how does he justify Iraq as the center of a "global" war if the opposition to American policy in the Middle East is truly global, finding terrorist cells even in New Jersey!

The Democrats cannot just hope to legislate their way out of the war in Iraq, they also have to reshape the public's thinking about it, so that the Republican logic (illogic) has no remaining credibility.

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On Malcolm X and fighting psychological poison

By A. Peter Bailey
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) — Saturday is the 82nd anniversary of the birth of Malcolm X. This day, as has happened annually since he was assassinated on February 21, 1995, will be celebrated by thousands of Malcolmites in cities throughout the country.

They will celebrate the life of a man whose love for and commitment to the empowerment and psychological liberation of Black people was total and inspiring.

One of these celebrations will be held in New York at the site of the Audubon Ballroom where he was assassinated. A part of it is now the Malcolm X-Dr. Betty Shabazz Memorial and Edu-

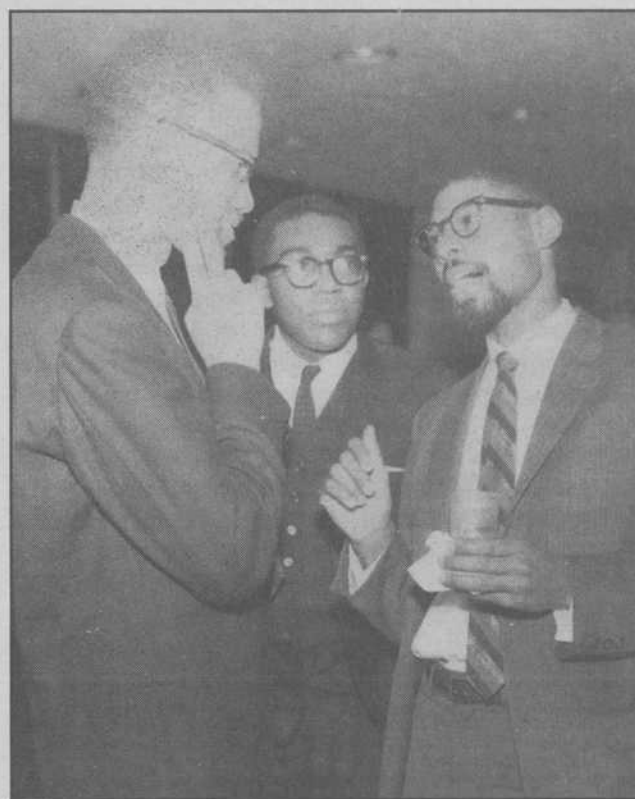
cation Center.

One of the highlights of that celebration, which will be hosted by two of Brother Malcolm's daughters, Ilyasah and Malaak Shabazz, will be the showing of a 30-minute DVD on a reunion last summer of 18 founding/charter members of the Organization of Afro-American Unity, which was founded by Brother Malcolm after his split from The Nation of Islam. It was the first time that most of us had seen each other since 1965.

From 1:00 in the afternoon until 10:00 at night, we fellowshiped and testified about our eyewitness memories of working with and learning from Brother Malcolm during the last 14 months of his life. It was a

deeply emotional and historical experience. Since we had been there, serving on several levels, we had knowledge and insight that only we could provide. I had served as the editor of the organization's newsletter, "Blacklash." This, my entry into journalism, was greatly influenced by Brother Malcolm's insistence on the importance of collecting and distributing information.

One of my most personal memories about Brother Malcolm, whom I consider to have been one of the most valuable of human beings, a master teacher, was his focus on the intense, unrelenting psychological attacks on the minds and souls of our people by a White supremacist society.



In this never before nationally published photograph, taken in 1964, Malcolm X converses with journalist A. Peter Bailey and educator Lez Edmonds during a reception at the United Nations, hosted by the Tanzanian Ambassador.

He once said that America's greatest crime against Black people was not just slavery, or even lynching, but that we "were taught to wear a mask of self-hate and self-doubt."

He was the first person I had ever heard speak so often, forcefully, and knowledgeably about that critical issue. He told us that when discussing slavery, the focus is usually on the slave traders and the slave owners. Too often ignored was the pivotal role of what Brother Malcolm called the slave-maker — a person whose job was to systematically and brutally take a people who

had their own beliefs, culture and traditions and break them down; not only physically, but psychologically, into slaves, totally dependent on the whims of slave owners. A graphic illustration of the slave-maker in action occurred in "Roots" when Kunta Kinte was forced, through physical brutality, to call himself Toby.

One of the most revealing examples of what self-hate and self-doubt has done to the minds and souls of many, if not most, Black people in this country, is exemplified by an observation made by George Schuyler in his book, "Black and Conserva-

Wrote Schuyler, who is often called the father of Black conservatism, "A Black person learns very early that his color is a disadvantage in a world of White folk. This being an unalterable circumstance, one also learns very early to make the best of it. So, the lifetime endeavor of the intelligent Negro is how to be reasonably happy though colored..."

Unfortunately, perhaps the majority of Black people in this country share Schuyler's defeatist position. They believe White people always were, are now, and always will be the dominating force in the world. Brother Malcolm didn't accept that. He strongly believed that our people needed a "revolution in the mind" to combat such psychological poison.

As we gather in cities from coast to coast in celebration of Brother Malcolm's birthday May 19, we must focus on developing ways to protect ourselves, and especially our children, from the psychological poison of the White supremacists and their self-hating, self-centered Negro allies in the entertainment, academic, civic, journalism and political arenas.

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swers to dumb questions.

But noooo; we continue to go along to get along; we continue to "play" politics, never to win, just simply to play.

What we witnessed in both debates was a mating dance that we have seen over and over again. It was a ritual performed to keep the lemmings in line and to make us believe something serious is going on in the political arena, something different, and maybe even something — this time — that will benefit Black people.

The Democrats held a love fest and the Republicans held a Ronald Reagan séance. We were hit with a left hook, followed by a right cross, in the first round of this fight. I am sure those early blows were delivered to keep our attention diverted from more pressing issues.

There can be no other reason for such "theater," such pretentiousness, such phoniness and such condescension by ten White guys,

on the Repub side, and a "We are the World" cavalcade of stars on the Dem side.

Were you persuaded by anyone? Have you made up your mind yet? Do you think Black folks will benefit no matter who gets elected? My cynicism, as well as my historical perspective, tells me no.

Also, I am reminded that if we continue to do the same thing, we will continue to get the same results.

It's pretty much cut and dried who the Black Dems will support; they have safe bets all around. But I can't wait to see who the Black Republicans endorse from their gang of 10 White guys. Or is it 14 now?

I hope the 2012 Republican debate will not be held at the George W. Bush "Library." What an oxymoronic setting that would be. Meanwhile, back at the Reagan Ranch, there have been Ronnie sightings.

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