

Open Letter To President George Bush

*Blessed by the Promise of Peace
We Bear the Burdens With Bush
The Honorable George Bush
President of the United States
THE WHITE HOUSE
Washington, DC 20500-001*

Dear Mr. President:
Today, March 6, you spoke to me among millions of others listening to your address before the joint session of Congress. It was a well-deserved accolade accorded to you, and among those applauding, my own two hands parted from their prayerful thanks to extend you their personal tribute.

What excellent and feeling words you greeted me with, "We meet in a world blessed by the promise of Peace." I shall never forget those words, nor your counsel that you would offer no simple solutions to the trouble spots still existing in Lebanon, with our hostages, and elsewhere.

I have listened since to the criticism come down. And that, in our free democracy is perfectly anticipated. Some said you missed the opportunity to call for a more completed domestic agenda.

I do not agree with them. I respect your call for Congress to "rise above the parochial and pork barrel" and to put together a "Comprehensive agenda to prepare for the next century." You specifically cited the need to enact legislation for energy, child care, schools, expanded choices in education, you asked further for bills impacting crime, a disabilities act, a civil rights bill, aviation, and highway legislation.

As the Publisher of the Portland Observer my ecclesiastical ears perked to your terminology and request for "reform and renewal." That phrase is straight to the heart of my church and I understand it so well. We strive hard to meet that challenge in preserving the kingdoms of religion across America in keeping with contemporary democracy and the needs of the people...all our people."

Your words, President Bush, drew us so close together. And I wish that our founder, the ex-slave Richard Allen could have heard you...indeed, maybe he inspired you down through the centuries in the names of all God's children to utter the simple invocation that will echo through time when you spoke of "setting the face of the nation against discrimination, hate and bigotry and to eliminate that."

I wrote you a letter some weeks ago, and that letter sought your help in seeking specific remedies for the ills that beset many of my people...and millions of others, beyond the ethnic-imposed limitations imposed by conditioning and being born into an environment of limited opportunity, education-wise, employment-wise, housing-and-health-wise.

I have been reminded by the Republican Party affiliation that it is time to send in my financial support.

I have trouble doing so. With you, I commit to be as you admonished, "caring, good and generous in all we do."

Yet I must exact something else from you.

I must be assured that you have the integrity to rise above rhetoric on the road to righteousness for these United States of America and its people.

I want to believe beyond a shadow of doubt.

I already respect you for your courage to emancipate Kuwait and prove to the world that you could be the soldier for peace...not just war.

I think of myself as a Soldier for Peace, at your side, however, in order to preserve that peace, you were right sending troops to stop Saddam Hussein's ruthless aggression...before it got worse.

Popularity is fleeting, and I am sure that you are not going to follow such polls to ascertain your percentages every time you turn around.

But if I may, please rest assured that your popularity shall always stay

as steady as the good faith you show this nation in initiating the specific planks that match your expressions of March 6 to move this nation forward domestically as well as in a world made more secure by your decisive intervention against unfair aggression.

I ask that you keep us informed. I ask that you follow through. I ask that you experience for yourself and your family the blessings of the prosperity you have mapped out for the nation which one day, realistically, can be enjoyed by those now denied.

Thanks to you, that can be changed. I pray that you have the strength and fortitude to see it through.

You shall always have critics denying your sincerity. I know better. I know that you are sincere because you told me so on March 6 before the entire world.

I know that you do not suffer fools gladly, and that you are wise enough to know exactly what you are doing. Your extraordinary words mapped those areas wherein you will initiate our progression from underachievers to superachievers.

Where there is help available, you will use it. You can count on me, I'm with you all the way. And we will get there.

Avail yourself of the top strategists you drew upon militarily to inspire you to locate those top strategists you can draw upon domestically.

Those who served, served brilliantly...all those you paid tribute to in the military...those who made the supreme sacrifice and those who will be coming home now, alive and free.

We bear the burdens with you at home.

Use us. Use us to build that "new world order" on a home front that demonstrates its eagerness to change and make changes before it is too late.

Sincerely,
A. Lee Henderson

Atlanta Based Minority Firm Provides Telephone Services To Troops In Saudi Arabia

A consortium of companies led by Communications International, Inc. (CII), an Atlanta based minority owned telecommunications systems integrator, is providing telephone service for American troops in Saudi Arabia. CII has engineered, installed and is operating "telecenters" at sites along the Saudi desert. The first sites were operable on Christmas day and American troops are still enjoying this opportunity to keep in touch with their loved ones at home in the U.S. "Project Phone Home" has seen virtual 24 hour usage since it was launched. CII plans to operate these telecenters in Saudi Arabia as long as there is a need for this service for the American troops.

These telecenters consist of mobile satellite terminals and communications vans equipped with state-of-the-art telecommunications facilities such as digital switches, Republic and Avanti multiplexers, and power supplies. Connectivity is accomplished via INTELSAT into the U.S. telephone network.

"Our expansion into the international arena is in keeping with the company's aggressive growth plans," according to CII President, Joseph Profit, Sr. "We also want to do what we can to support our troops and our country at this crucial time." CII in addition to establishing the first of its kind telephone service available to the troops, CII has been instrumental in helping Washington, D.C. base, non-profit minority business advocate, NAMTEC, launch "Operation G.I. FoneHome" to encourage the American public to help defray costs in association with the troops making these calls home to the U.S.

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Vantage Point

By Ron Daniels

America's Shameful War Against the People of Iraq

In Martin Luther King's speech "A Time to Break Silence," in which he passionately articulated his opposition to the Viet Nam War, King argued that: "If we do not act we shall surely be dragged down the long dark and shameful corridors of time reserved for those who possess power without compassion, might without morality and strength without sight." This passage is certainly appropriate to the U.S. led war against Iraq.

The vast majority of Americans are engaged in an exhilarating national orgy of celebration of the U.S. victory over Iraq. The U.S. flexed its military might with awesome weaponry and astounding technological superiority. The "victory" was all the more "satisfying" because the ground war was short and the U.S. casualties were "amazingly light." President Bush, the euphoric commander-in-chief, declared that the U.S. has finally buried the "Viet Nam syndrome". U.S. power reigns supreme again. Lost in the euphoria of the victory celebration are the questions of the necessity and morality of the war in the first place.

As the quote by Martin Luther King suggests, it is the measure of a great nation that it uses its power with COMPASSION, MORALITY and SIGHT. Certainly Saddam Hussein's invasion and occupation of Kuwait and the crimes committed against the Kuwaiti people were wrong and clearly unacceptable to the international community. But the U.S. response was totally

out of proportion to Iraq's acts of aggression.

In the final analysis we must ask ourselves whether or not it was absolutely necessary to launch a war to solve the crisis in the Persian Gulf? Did the United States really exhaust all channels to achieve a negotiated settlement to the conflict? Or was a peaceful settlement the "worst case scenario" as some analysts described it? Finally, we must ask ourselves whether it was necessary to bring such devastating destruction and death on the Iraqi people including its military?

As the air war was prosecuted with brutal precision and the ground war was initiated (after the U.S. hastily ignored the Soviet peace plan), it became increasingly clear that the U.S. wanted to punish the Iraqi people and totally humiliate Saddam Hussein. The U.S. was hell bent on sending a clear signal and warning that the U.S. is now the world's only super power. Third World nations must play by U.S. sponsored rules within the "New World Order" or suffer the same fate as Saddam Hussein and Iraq. A terrible number of casualties were inflicted on the Iraqi people to make this point.

The great tragedy of the war in the Gulf is that Americans seem incapable of seeing beyond "our" casualties. As the celebration continues there is little empathy for the "enemy" and the horrendous loss of life and suffering which the victorious American led forces inflicted on a nation of 18 million people

whose bellicose leader commanded a third rate military force at best.

In what amounted to a massive war game complete with live targets, the U.S. flew nearly 100,000 combat missions against the Iraqi forces. More "sorties" were flown against Iraq than against Japan, Nazi Germany or North Viet Nam. The industrial infrastructure of Iraq was almost totally decimated as bridges, highways, factories, communication facilities and water purification plants were bombed again, and again. Inevitably the "collateral" damage resulted in the deaths of thousands of Iraqi civilians.

The horrible human toll of dead and wounded Iraqi HUMAN BEINGS is the most shameful and immoral legacy of this arrogant mis-use of power by the United States. The estimate of the Iraqis killed is from 50,000 to 150,000 people. Perhaps another 250,000 Iraqis were wounded. How can we justify this staggering and unthinkable human carnage? Are Americans immune from feeling the suffering and pain of other people who have lost sons and daughters, children and love ones? The physical and human destruction heaped upon the Iraqi people is a crime against the people of Iraq and humanity.

The U.S. may have won the war; but in the process, the U.S. may have lost its soul. To paraphrase a passage from the Bible what profit a nation to conquer the world and lose its soul?

The Federal Government Announced 54 Billion Contracts

The Federal Government has recently announced that 54 billion dollars in government contracts will go to individuals and small businesses. Because of new regulations, many of those contracts have been earmarked for distribution to entrepreneurs, individuals and small businesses.

Larry Hales, president of Media USA, said, "There will be more than 15,000 government jobs and opportunities coming open and we're gearing

up to handle the crush of those seeking information.

Media USA has assisted the CIA, State Department, Department of Commerce, all military branches and many other government agencies as well as many large private sector industries with research and marketing and lobbying efforts over the past twenty years. Hales is quick to point out that his information service is approved by the U.S. Government and has helped thou-

sands find work within and outside of the government.

Media USA has established a 24-hour information hotline to process calls for information. The number is 1-900-468-2437 (GOV-BIDS) (The cost of this call is \$2.95 per minute.) "We have been inundated with calls about jobs and contract opportunities in Kuwait, but we've been able to get the necessary information to all of the callers," Hales said.

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Reinvestments in the Community

Along the Color Line

The Tragedy of Marion Barry

By Dr. Manning Marable

For months, the media followed the controversial trial of Washington, D.C. mayor Marion Barry with a perverse mixture of fascination and disgust. Sex, drugs and public illegality always sell. The Barry trial had it all. Acting as a legal pimp, the federal government obtained the services of Barry's ex-girlfriend, Rasheeda Moore, to snag his victim. Ample evidence was presented in the trial proving to most observers that Barry had been a casual user of drugs for many years. Evidence of government malfeasance was abundant as well. Scores of Barry lieutenants and confidants had been indicted and convicted of various crimes during the past decade.

The political circus came to a disappointing end, however, when the jury found the mayor guilty of only one misdemeanor—possessing cocaine. It acquitted him of one count, and couldn't agree on twelve additional charges. Barry now claims that he was vindicated, and has announced plans to run as an independent for a D.C. Council Seat.

Marion Barry is surely guilty of many things—dependence on cocaine, infidelity to his long-suffering and silent wife, and most of all, political stupidity. But the Barry case makes no sense outside of its broader political and racial context. The federal government's entire case rested on entrapment of the

worst kind. No one seriously believes that Barry's decision to enter a hotel room with his former lover was dictated by a desire for crack. Sex, not drugs, motivated the mayor. Barry's certainly guilty of adultery, and his libido's out of control. His problems with alcohol and cocaine certainly made him unfit to hold public office. But the authorities would have been wiser to pressure Barry to resign, in lieu of facing criminal charges and a protracted and disruptive court trial. Instead, they were determined to place the black Democrat on a federal prison.

Barry's central argument which attempted to justify his behavior was the thesis that a pattern of FBI and judicial harassment exists against African-American civil rights leaders and elected officials. The argument is certainly true, based on the evidence over nearly half a century. In my own research on a political biography of black American leader Malcolm X, I have uncovered an extensive pattern of illegal electronic surveillance, the opening of private mail without warrants, and political harassment. COINTELPRO, the FBI's Counterintelligence Program in the sixties, plotted the destruction of civil rights organizations, and led to the imprisonment of hundreds of black activists. In the 1980s, hundreds of black elected officials, judges and other community leaders were sub-

jected disproportionately to surveillance and harassment. Congressman John Conyers and other members of the Congressional Black Caucus have investigated many instances of political harassment aimed at blacks. The goal is to reduce African-American political clout within the system, and to intimidate leaders to back away from the establishment.

But the real tragedy of Marion Barry lies not in his cocaine dependency, which he shares with literally millions of white, Hispanic, and black Americans. His tragedy is his inability to place his community's objective interests ahead of his own. By his series of errors and criminal acts, Barry's has undermined the drive for D.C. statehood of years. His behavior provides justification for racists and political reactionaries to undermine other African-American leaders. But his greatest tragedy was Barry's failure of vision. The great strength of the black freedom struggle's political tradition, from Frederick Douglass to Martin Luther King, Jr., was the linkage between politics and ethics. What was morally correct was also politically correct. Barry's contempt for the ethics of the black struggle, his contempt for his wife, children and constituents, could never be justified. Marion Barry's only real service which he could perform would be to withdraw permanently from public life.

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