

Portland Observer **Opinion**

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We Must Fulfill Dr. King's Vision

The House Democratic Leader, Richard A. Gephardt, released the following statement in honor of Monday's national holiday honoring the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr:

Dr. King represented the American nation and the American people at their bright, shining best.

He was a voice for hope for millions of human beings. He stood strong in the face of oppression and injustice with an unflinching commitment to non-violence. He challenged us all to reach higher, tapped the "better angels of our nature," in Lincoln's memorable phrase, and changed the

We, as Americans, have an obligation to serve our communities to help others fulfill their potential as people; to work to ensure justice and equality for all; and to strive for a more blessed democracy in which all participate and in which all feel a part of the whole.

course of American history.

On this day of remembrance and tribute to his lifetime of achievements, it is important for all Americans to recall his spirit and work towards achievement of "the

beloved community."

Dr. King above all believed in service and in equality of opportunity. He laid his body and his life on the line repeatedly in order to create a better world for all our children.

We, as Americans, have an obligation to serve our communities to help others fulfill their potential as people; to work to ensure justice and equality for all; and to strive for a more blessed democracy in which all participate and in which all feel a part of the whole. This is Dr. King's vision - and we must work to fulfill it because it is profoundly important to the future of our great nation.

Dr. King is one of my heroes. Let his heroic sacrifice and commitment to justice continue to inspire all Americans as we move forward in this time of national challenge.

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Black Hawk Down Perpetuates Stereotypes

Movie depicts Somalis as savages without human element

(AP) — Somali leaders have called for a boycott of the movie "Black Hawk Down" because it depicts Somalis as savages and could create a backlash against refugees who fled to the U.S.

"We don't know what Americans will think of us Somalis after they watch this movie," said Omar Jamal, executive director of the Somali Justice Advocacy Center in St. Paul, Minn.

A Minneapolis newspaper invited about a dozen people from the Advocacy Center to see the movie in advance of

Friday's nationwide release.

Jamal said they all left in shock. The film was confusing and didn't have a story or message, he said.

"The Somali people are depicted as very savage beasts without any human element," Jamal said. "It's just people shooting each other."

The movie is an attempt to portray the 1993 firefight in Somalia that left 18 American soldiers dead and more than 70 wounded. The military mission to Mogadishu was to capture two top lieutenants of warlord Mohamed Farrah

Aidid.

In Columbus, Ohio, Abdi Mohamud, a board member of the Council of American-Islamic Relations, said he had not heard about a boycott, but added that people should know the movie perpetuates stereotypes.

"I found the movie to sensationalize the whole issue and to put the Somalis in one category," said Mohamud, who emigrated from Somalia and became a U.S. citizen.

"There were many Somalis against the warlords." Many in the Columbus So-

malicommunity, second in size to Minneapolis, are worried about the timing, Mohamud said.

"Most of the Somalis in Ohio and here in Columbus have family members, people they care about, in Somalia," he said. "They're retired of war." Some also fear a backlash here, Mohamud said.

"There's a segment of society that takes movies for reality," he said. U.S. Somali groups have worked hard to show they support the war against terrorism, Jamal said.

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