

# OPINION

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503-288-0033 • FAX 503-288-0015 • EMAIL: news@portlandobserver.com subscription@portlandobserver.com ads@portlandobserver.com

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## Support Children of Deployed Military

A longtime supporter of Boys & Girls Clubs, Secretary of state Colin Powell, has called on the organization to support the children of deployed military personnel.

Boys & Girls Clubs of Portland Metropolitan Area has answered the urgent request by announcing it will keep the doors open for all kids in the community as a safe haven in this difficult time.

As chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Powell oversaw Operation Desert Storm in the 1991 Persian Gulf War. At that time, the Boys & Girls Club partnership with the U.S. military began, with local clubs providing memberships and special programming to 17,000 children of deployed Reservists and National Guard members.

Since then, the organization has formed formal partnerships with military Youth Centers on more than 350 military bases worldwide, serving some 400,000 young people.

Secretary Powell rightly points out that the clubs have a tremendous opportunity and re-



Secretary of State Colin Powell

sponsibility to serve all youth, particularly from military families, at this critical time. Secretary Powell believes, that club programs allow young people to overcome the fiercest obstacles. This is why he has taken the time, despite tremendous responsibilities, to urge us to reach children of deployed military personnel.

## War Would Violate International Law

Minority nations have no right to dictate to the rest of the world

BY REV. JESSE L. JACKSON SR.

They could not meet in London, or Madrid, or Lisbon, because the protests would have been too massive. They did not want to come to Washington, D.C., because that would be interpreted back home as kissing George W. Bush's ring. So the Gang of Four gathered on an island in the Azores, to make their plans to circumvent the United Nations, override world opinion and violate international law.

Voices that were at best silent to democracy in Selma and South Africa and voices that were opposed to democracy in Florida, announced their heartfelt desire to launch a pre-emptive military strike to bring democracy to Iraq.

Some of us, though, still have our memories. We remember Bush refusing to count every vote in Florida, and then telling African Americans to get over it. We remember confronting Britain on its support for apartheid in South Africa. We remember confronting Portugal for its colony in Angola. We remember Franco ruling Spain, after overthrowing Spanish democracy with the help of Hitler and Mussolini.

The rest of the world looks at this Gang of Four and says to themselves, let's see: we are supposed to take dictation from the world's current superpower and three of the biggest colonial powers in world history? This is just not credible. Africa, India, Latin America and the rest of the world understand that "territorial integrity," "reconstruction," and "democracy" have not always been the top issues for these four nations. The rest of the world remembers that "power politics" and "oil" and "empire" have been important to these nations in the past.

The spectacle at Fantasy Island was a minority group of nations (the U.S., Great Britain, Spain and Portugal) attempting to dictate to the U.N. and to the people of the world. There were veiled and not-so-veiled threats and ultimatums, but there were no incentives for the rest of the world to change their minds. A mere 6 percent of the globe announced, in Tony Blair's revealing statement: "We will do what we believe to be in the best interests of the United Nations." The hubris. The arrogance.

The U.N. decided that war was not yet justified. The fact that Bush and his advisers disagree, and that Blair and Spain's leadership have trapped themselves in the same box, does not justify dictating to the rest of the world. These four nations have no right under international law to decide what the U.N. should do. They have no right to launch an attack because they have failed to get their way through arm-twisting and diplomacy.

President Bush said that it is important for the "U.N. to begin to get its 'legs of responsibility' back." Whatever he thinks he meant by "legs of responsibility," he has no right to cut the legs out from under the United Nations, to attack it when he cannot get his way, to announce that the U.N. only has meaning when it follows his lead. It is Bush's "my way or the highway" approach which even supporters of the coming attack believe has hopelessly

bungled the lead-in to war.

Compare his father's war coalition with the son's, or with the unified world support that the U.S. enjoyed after 9/11. What we have now is not even a coalition of the coerced, but a coalition of the diminished—a Gang of Four, operating out-of-sync with the U.N., in direct opposition to world popular opinion and in total defiance of the people's desires in their own nations.

The myopic focus on Iraq contrasts starkly with the ignoring of Iran (70 million people, compared to Iraq's 22 million); allows North Korea to continue to threaten its neighbors with nuclear weapons; has allowed the Middle East situation to continue to deteriorate; and is about to turn into the biggest recruiting drive al Qaeda could ask for.

President Bush said, "When the U.N. says something, it needs to mean it." We wonder how this rule applies to George W. Bush, who promised us "compassion" at home and "humility" abroad. We wonder how this standard will apply to Tony Blair, when he goes back home to Great Britain and tries to explain why there is no need for the second resolution he promised his party and his people.

We also remember that the Republican Party in the U.S., which George Bush heads, spent the entire decade of the 1990s undercutting the U.N., attacking it, calling it weak and irrelevant. President Bush cited Rwanda and Kosovo as U.N. failures—but we don't remember his voice speaking up either time. We do remember that the U.S. refused to pay its dues, because Jesse Helms would not let us.

A pre-emptive strike by this minority elite focus group will violate international law. It will violate the U.S. Constitution. It will violate promises made to the United Nations, to the world and to the people of these four nations. It will violate human standards of decency and moral conduct.

A pre-emptive strike has been condemned as immoral and wrong by the Pope, by the Archbishop of Canterbury, by the leaders of the Methodist Church, by Bishop Tutu and by Nelson Mandela. George W. Bush told us during the campaign that Jesus changed his heart. Well, would Jesus launch an aggressive war, a war of "shock and awe" which will kill thousands of Iraqi women and children?

A pre-emptive strike would be a "war crime," by definition. As columnist/activist Norman Solomon pointed out, last November more than 300 law professors signed a statement that made the point that "the international rule of law is not a soft luxury to be discarded whenever leaders find it convenient or popular to resort to savage violence."

Perhaps the leaders of the Gang of Four could ponder these words from Supreme Court Justice Robert L. Jackson, who represented the U.S. at the Nuremberg trials after World War II: "We must make clear to the Germans that the wrong for which their fallen leaders are on trial is not that they lost the war, but that they started it.... No grievances or policies will justify resort to aggressive war. It is utterly renounced and condemned as an instrument of policy."

Rev. Jesse L. Jackson Sr. is a long time civil rights leader and founder of the National Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, a multiracial, multi-issue, international membership organization.



Rev. Jesse L. Jackson Sr.

*George W. Bush told us during the campaign that Jesus changed his heart. Well, would Jesus launch an aggressive war, a war of "shock and awe" which will kill thousands of Iraqi women and children?*

— Rev. Jesse L. Jackson Sr.



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