

OPINION

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War is Always Evil

What has happened to our country and our world?

BY BERNICE POWELL JACKSON

"War may sometimes be a necessary evil, but no matter how necessary, it is always evil, never good. We will not learn how to live together in peace by killing each other's children." Those were the words of President Jimmy Carter in his acceptance speech for the Nobel Peace Prize. Must we learn that anew in every generation?

The pictures of the abuse and

torture conducted by U.S. troops and private contractors turn my stomach and those of millions of Americans. They threaten the lives of American troops still in Iraq

and they may threaten any possibility of good will by many Iraqis and many in the Arab world in the future.

But we should not be surprised. War is always evil and sometimes even good people do evil things during war. Should we be surprised?

Those pictures were horrible and Congress and the American people, not to mention the Iraqi people, rightly demand justice. But, I wonder, where were our cries of outrage when pictures surfaced of the children injured in the siege of Fallujah and other Iraqi cities? Are not the broken bodies of Iraqi children just as horrible?

As I looked at the pictures and saw the woman soldier standing above the naked bodies of the Iraqi prisoners, I wondered to myself, is this what so many of us who have fought for equal rights for women worked for? What could she have been thinking?

As I looked at the pictures of the hooded prisoner standing with wires extending from his arms, I thought about the 2,805 docu-

mented Iraqis. Did we stop to think about what the image of U.S. troops holding prisoners in Abu Ghraib would say? Did we care?

And then I was struck with three little words in the statement of Army Maj. Gen. Antonio M. Taguba, "two private contractors." It seems that there may have been private contractors—a.k.a. mercenaries involved in some of the abuses at this prison. It's one thing to talk about private contractors providing supplies for our armed forces, but it's



Are these new pictures from the Abu Ghraib prison a remnant of the racism of our past?

— Bernice Powell Jackson

mented cases of lynching of African Americans in this nation. And I wasn't the only one—others, including both African Americans and Arab Americans, are remembering those horrible picture postcards of black men, women and children hanging from trees, sometimes with crowds of white families having lunch nearby.

So I have to ask, are these new pictures from the Abu Ghraib prison a remnant of the racism of our past?

And, speaking of the Abu Ghraib prison, what were we even doing there? It was an infamous prison, where Saddam Hussein's soldiers tor-

another thing altogether to talk about private contractors doing the actual work of the armed forces. How do we hold them accountable for what may be considered war crimes?

War is evil. We need to say that. We need to apologize to those who were tortured and abused and to the people of Iraq. We need to hold not only our military accountable, but those civilian leaders of the military as well. We need to question the role of private military contractors and we need to search into our souls about what has happened to our country and our world.

This court has gotten involved in deciding political issues when it appears to benefit Republicans, but seems to use the shield of nonpartisanship when it comes to enforcing the voting rights of African Americans.

— Judge Greg Mathis

Supreme Court Fails on Voting Rights

BY JUDGE GREG MATHIS

Nearly four years after the U.S. Supreme Court decided to engage in partisan politics and the majority Republican-appointed Justices selected Bush as President, the high court recently ruled against an important voting rights case.

In a 5 to 4 vote the justices ruled against a democratic challenge to an unfair Pennsylvania redistricting map. The case involved efforts by the Republican-controlled Pennsylvania legislature to redistrict their congressional maps in a manner that would reduce the political power of democrats and minorities, resulting in less minority political power in the U.S. Congress.

The practice of Congressional redistricting to reduce political power of a party or minority group is as old as politics itself. Gerrymandering, the name given to this practice, occurs when



the political party, which has control of the state legislature, redraws the voting maps and dissects neighborhoods to create a voting district that

the party in control knows they will win.

In past years, the U.S. Supreme Court has struck down this practice as a violation of the "one man, one vote" standard of American democracy. In the 1960s, the court was active in outlawing this practice because it was frequently used to dilute the voting bloc of African Americans who were fighting for political empowerment.

The current Republican dominated U.S. Supreme Court in an opinion written by Justice Scalia, reversed the courts usual protection of voting rights and Scalia even stated that such cases

should never have been heard by the court because it involves political issues beyond the courts jurisdiction.

This same Supreme Court, which in this current case of Vieth vs. Jubelirer allowed Republican gerrymandering, has repeatedly invalidated black-majority districts. In other words, this court has gotten involved in deciding political issues when it appears to benefit Republicans, but seems to use the shield of nonpartisanship when it comes to enforcing the voting rights of African Americans and other minorities.

On the eve of a hot and heavily contested summer campaign for the presidency, both candidates must be challenged on whether they will be sure to appoint Supreme Court Justices that will ensure voting rights.

Judge Greg Mathis is chairman of the Rainbow PUSH-Excel Board and a national board member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

Uninsured Numbers are Staggering African Americans among hardest hit

Editor's note: The following is from Cover the Uninsured Week, a diverse group of organizations representing thousands of individuals, business owners, union members, educators, students, health consumers, hospitals, health insurers, physicians, nurses, faith leaders and many others:

One in five—or approximately 7.3 million—African Americans in the U.S. are uninsured. More than one-third do not have a regular doctor's office or health center at which they can get the medical attention they need, despite their heightened risk for certain chronic conditions such as diabetes and hypertension.

Being uninsured means African Americans go without medical care when it is needed. It means minor illnesses become

major ones because care is delayed. In fact, the Institute of Medicine estimates 18,000 adults in America die each year because they are uninsured and can't get proper care.

Many African Americans

Many African Americans who currently have private health coverage through their jobs are at risk of becoming uninsured.

who currently have private health coverage through their jobs are at risk of becoming uninsured. Rising costs are making health coverage unaffordable for business owners who would like to provide their employees with affordable health care cover-

age and are placing insurance out of the reach of millions of working Americans.

That's why Presidents Ford and Carter and national campaign spokesperson, TV star Noah Wyle, the National Medi-

cal Association, the National Council of Negro Women and some of the most influential organizations in the United States in sponsoring Cover the Uninsured Week—to encourage Americans nationwide to join together to help find a solution.

Letters to the Editor Travesty of Justice Must End

The tragedy of the police killings of (often) innocent victims is not only the death of human beings, but also the death of human justice.

The prime witness cannot testify against the police or defend his or hers own integrity. If a police officer professes fear

and possesses a vivid imagination of impending violence, the officers may shoot to kill with impunity, knowing the grand jury will exonerate the slayer based upon "self-defense."

This travesty of justice must come to an end. First, through the Oregon Legislature, sec-

ond, through weeding out paranoid, emotionally unstable police recruits, and finally, by instituting a more positive philosophy of criminal justice that restores, rather than condemns.

Charles E. Long
Northeast Portland



African American Health Coalition, Inc.

Presents for your health,

Wellness Within REACH Activity Calendar

Aerobics

Mallory Ave. Christian Church
Mon, Wed, Fri, 6-7am, Pierce • 5:30-6:20pm,
Granville • 6:30-7:30pm, Nickerson

Humboldt Elementary
Tue, Thu, 6-7pm, Keller

Low Impact Aerobics

Daniel's Memorial Church
Tue, 7:15-8:15pm, Granville

Water Aerobics (Contact AAHC)

Salvation Army
Matt Dishman

African Dance

Matt Dishman
Sat, 10-11am, Addo

Body Conditioning

Wild Oats Market
Sat, 9:30-10:30am, Nickerson

Pilates

Matt Dishman
Mon, 12:15-1:15pm, Jenkins

Stretching/Body Sculpting

(Class courtesy of Matt Dishman)
Matt Dishman
Tue, Thu, 7-8am, Lois

Walking Group

Peninsula Park
Sat, 12:30pm, Woods

Weight Mgmt./Conditioning

U. of Portland Indoor Track
Tue, Thu, 9-10am, Hasan

Yoga

Wild Oats Market
Tue, Thu, 7:30-8:30pm, O'Rourke

Daniel's Memorial Church, 1234 NE Killingsworth
(12th & Killingsworth)

Humboldt Elementary, 4915 N Gantenbein

Mallory Avenue Christian Church (Gym), 126 NE
Albera

Matt Dishman, 77 NE Knott

Peninsula Park, 700 N Portland

Salvation Army, 5325 N Williams

U. of Portland Indoor Track, 500 N Willamette

Wild Oats Market, 3535 NE 15th

**Must be 21 or older to participate. Please contact AAHC before showing up to the first class and for more information at 503-413-1850 or kdempsey@aahc-portland.org. Please receive approval from your doctor before beginning exercise class.

REACH

Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health
A Program of the African American Health Coalition, Inc.
Sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)



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