

OPINION

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Anniversary is No Cause to Celebrate

Sadness, one year after Katrina

BY JUDGE GREG MATHIS

The city of New Orleans has canceled plans for a comedy hour and a fireworks celebration, originally scheduled to mark the one-year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. That's good news. There is nothing fun or festive about thousands of people trapped, without the basics necessities of food, water and medical care, in the sweltering heat, floodwaters rising around them.

There is no joy to be found in mass devastation or in mass neglect; the federal government's failure to quickly respond to those

residents in need is, after all, the biggest tragedy of them all.

This is not a time for New Orleans - or any other city - to celebrate. This particular anniversary should be used as an opportunity to remember and reflect and to reaffirm the commitment to rebuild this culturally rich city.

While Katrina affected other Gulf Coast cities, it was New Orleans that we paid the most attention to,

and with good reason. When those levees broke and water started rushing in to the city, we realized that

at least, to the reality of urban poverty. People were saddened and outraged; support and promises

According to the Brookings Institution, an independent research organization, the city's public services are slow to bounce back. Rent and home prices are at an all time high. There are still thousands of city residents without a permanent place to call home.

On the one-year anniversary of 9/11, this nation came to a standstill. In cities across America, at exactly the same time, people stopped their lives and marked the precise moment the first plane hit the World Trade Center.

Katrina anniversary events should memorialize the loss of life and mobilize support for those in

need. Jazz funerals, a New Orleans tradition, with their slow, somber start and their upbeat endings, are a nice - and appropriate - way to mark this anniversary.

But, to truly pay tribute to the men, women and children who died and suffered, perhaps those that failed the residents of the Gulf Coast, could publicly acknowledge the collapse in leadership and reveal a plan for getting this city back on track. That's a commemorative effort that will mean more than any poster or concert ever will.

Judge Greg Mathis is national vice president of Rainbow PUSH and a national board member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.



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many of those left behind, with no means to evacuate as ordered, had two things in common: they were black and they were poor.

On Aug. 29, 2005, the nation's eyes were opened, for a short time

came rushing in. New Orleans, we were told, would be rebuilt.

A year later, the city is showing signs of rebirth. But it's slow going. Too slow. And more needs to be done.

Lebanon Looking a Lot Like Iraq

New thinking needed to avoid similar failures

BY CHRISTOPHER HELLMAN

As Israel's army withdraws from Southern Lebanon, military analysts and politicians in Tel Aviv are already asking, what happened?

The Israelis sustained heavy casualties and fought to an unsatisfactory draw against a numerically inferior and outgunned enemy.

The United States faces a parallel debate over our continued inability to quell the sectarian violence - a civil war to most -- in Iraq.

One of the most significant causes is the military's failure to adapt to the changing nature of warfare, despite extensive experience in previous decades in dealing with post-combat operations that are not easily solved by bullets or bombs.

The unfortunate experience in Somalia, where a number of American soldiers were killed in intense urban combat, make the military reluctant to take on additional peace making, peacekeeping and stability operations.

The most advanced military machine in the world does not easily deal with civil conflict.

Yet it is these kinds of missions, which the military refers to as "Operations Other Than War," that it will increasingly be called on to perform rather than the traditional form of conventional war fighting that has dominated Pentagon thinking since World War II.

As a practical matter in Iraq, the military's unwillingness to acknowledge the shortcomings of its methods and tactics has stymied its ability to develop an effective strategy against a growing insurgency in Iraq.

The Israelis have discovered in Lebanon what the United States has learned in Iraq: a conventional military force, no matter how strong, cannot by itself defeat a guerilla army, quell an insurgency or rehabilitate a failed state.

The security community in this country, and in fact around the world, must start thinking much more broadly about viable solutions to such problems if we are to avoid similar failures in the future.

Christopher Hellman is a military policy analyst with the Center for Arms Control and Nonproliferation in Washington, D.C.



The Unequal Treatment of Women

Somehow we've all been taught in this country that race discrimination is wrong, but a little sex discrimination here and there is okay.



Men Still Get the Advantages

BY MARTHA BURK

Quick - what did we celebrate on Aug. 26? If your answer is "uh-huh," you're not alone. Most Americans don't know it was the date in 1920 when women won the vote. Christened Women's Equality Day by Congress, it's usually marked by floor speeches on Capitol Hill, with women's history buffs and feminists, but few others joining in the commemoration. And indeed we have come a long way since women couldn't vote, attend universities, hold professional jobs or even have ownership of their own earnings or inheritances.

But are we really there yet when it comes to equality? Worldwide, the answer is a resounding "no." In the Middle East, women are still in the veil or head-to-toe burqas and girls' schools are burned to the ground. The Japanese are praying for a male heir to the throne so the country won't face the "crisis" of an imperial granddaughter as the only one next in line. AIDS is ravaging the women of Africa, most often because husbands are contracting the disease through other liaisons and then forcing their wives to engage in unprotected sex.

Here at home, it's still big news when a woman is appointed CEO of a large corporation. And in the "New York Times," we learned that a new kind of school is drilling children ages 7 to 14 for nine hours a day, even in summer, so they can memorize the Quran. The director of the Jamaica Muslim Center says the children will not only become religious leaders, but doctors, and engineers (even though they do not study math and science) and they will bridge the gap between the Muslim world and American

society. A good goal -- except for one tiny flaw. The students are all male. Male supremacy is part of the culture, and these kids are getting the message.

It's no surprise that one student says his favorite video game in off-hours is Grand Theft Auto. Players get points for having sex with a prostitute, then rack up even higher scores when they kill her to avoid paying for her services.

Of course we can't blame our national misogyny on this school or these boys and their parents alone. Wal-Mart, that bastion of family values, also peddles Grand Theft Auto, which millions of non-Muslim kids buy. And the U.S. Department of Education is praising single sex schools as a way for boys to get ahead academically.

"The Education Innovator," a DOE official publication, gushed about Albany, New York's Brighter Choice Charter School for Boys and the companion school for girls, which have "the unique distinction as the first elementary charter schools in the nation to educate boys and girls in separate classrooms."

Isn't this what we fought against for years when girls were consigned to home economics while boys got star treatment in accelerated science classes?

Somehow we've all been taught in this country that race discrimination is wrong, but a little sex discrimination here and there is Okay. Can you imagine Albany separating students by race and then giving the white kids a new school?

Equality day? Not yet. Martha Burk is the author of "Cult of Power: Sex Discrimination in Corporate America and What Can Be Done About It."

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