

OPINION

Opinion articles do not necessarily represent the views of the Portland Observer. We welcome reader essays, photos and story ideas. Submit to news@portlandobserver.com.

Rape as a Tool of War

Congo brutality must stop

BY JUDGE GREG MATHIS

Here, in America, when we hear the word 'rape' we think of women being snatched off the streets by a stranger or being forced by a man they know. But in eastern Congo, located in Central Africa, rape is used as a tool of war. Women, girls and, increasingly, men are subject to this brutal act that damages both the victim's body and spirit.

In an unprecedented move, Secretary of State Hilary Clinton visited the area and pledged \$17 million in support of Congo rape victims. At least \$10 million of the money the U.S. has pledged will be used



eral resources, political corruption and tribal and ethnic pride. Rebel militia groups, the government and mining companies all wish to control and exploit the area's rich mineral resources. Rebels fund their operations by smuggling diamonds, copper and other minerals so that they can purchase guns and fuel. Governments are forced to create military regimes in mineral rich areas so that they are protected; these military forces are often corrupt, with little respect for civilians.

The U.S. has paid little attention to the Congo over the last

Millions have suffered as a result of the ongoing war in the Congo and it will take much more than the U.S. has pledged to end the violence.

to train doctors who will treat rape victims. Much of what is left will be used to help prevent the sex attacks.

The U.S. must not only follow through on its pledge, but it must lead the way and encourage other international powerhouses to join forces to end sex violence in the Congo.

The United Nations considers eastern Congo the rape capital of the world, having recorded close to 200,000 cases of sexual violence against girls and women in the region since 1996. The number of cases where men have been raped has also risen; workers in the region theorize that the male rapes are a tool militia groups use to humiliate and break the spirits of the Congolese people.

The war in the Congo has been going on for years and is one of the longest ongoing wars in recent decades. The conflict is rooted in land disputes, a desire to control min-

several years. In 1995, under the watch of former President Bill Clinton, we did little in the region when nearly a million Africans were slaughtered over the course of 90 days during a violent uprising.

Hilary Clinton's recent visit to the Congo is a good sign; she is the first secretary of state to visit in a decade. In her role, she must also lobby the international community, asking that they too get involved.

So many European countries have benefited from Africa's rich resources; they must begin to give back what they have taken. Millions have suffered as a result of the ongoing war in the Congo and it will take much more than the U.S. has pledged to end the violence, stabilize the government and rebuild lives.

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



Righting our Economic Ship

Sharing hope that the worst is over

BY MARC H. MORIAL

One of the highlights of the National Urban League's recently concluded annual conference in Chicago was Vice President Joe Biden's keynote speech.

The Vice President focused on the progress the Obama Administration has made in combating the economic downturn, which he called, "the great recession," and declared that the nation would emerge from this crisis stronger than ever.

Vice President Biden directly addressed critics who question the effectiveness of the Administration's recovery efforts as unemployment continues to rise and nears 15 per-

cent among African Americans.

He reminded conference attendees and the nation that six months ago, the nation's economy was clearly sinking, but today, while we are certainly not out of the water, our economic ship is beginning to right itself.

As proof, he pointed to the slowdown in housing foreclosures, the stabilization of the financial system and the "relief, recovery and reinvestment" that is beginning to take hold as a result of the Administration's \$787 billion stimulus package. All these signs give us hope that the worst may be over.

The Vice President explicitly thanked the National Urban League for reminding the Administration early on that while job creation was our long-term goal, millions of people in our cities and across this nation

needed immediate help.

That is why the stimulus plan included more money to extend unemployment benefits, to lower health care costs for people who have lost their jobs, to provide tax relief for individuals and businesses, to extend food stamp benefits to 30 million more people, to keep 20 million people from falling off the Medicaid rolls and to prevent layoffs of tens of thousands of teachers, police and firefighters.

Fully one-third of the stimulus plan has been devoted to providing immediate relief for people who are in danger of falling through the deep hole of our troubled economy.

The Vice President spoke passionately and personally about, not only the loss of income, but the loss of dignity resulting from being out of work. He recalled the day his own father took what he called the longest walk in the world up a short flight of stairs to tell

his son that daddy had just lost his job.

Quoting Urban League legend, Whitney M. Young Jr., he added, "The hardest work in the world is being out of work."

The Vice President also said that the Obama Administration is committed to building "a new economy", rooted in green jobs, renewable energy, and greater investments in health care and education.

In his customary folksy way, he cautioned that while progress is being made, more pain may lie ahead. "Less bad is not good," he said, "but less bad is better than worse."

He concluded by predicting that with continued improvements in the gross domestic product, we could be out of the recession by the last quarter of this year.

We hope he's right.
Marc H. Morial is president and chief executive officer of the National Urban League.

Letters to the Editor

Heroic Firefighter

As citizens of the Albina community and members of the Johnson Family Reunion, we would like to express our appreciation for the excellent training of the Portland Fire and Rescue Bureau and acknowledge the professional actions of firefighter Terry Kimmons.

On Sunday, July 19, we were celebrating our reunion and playing a softball game when a family member suffered a stroke and went into cardiac arrest.

Although several members of our family have had CPR training, a traumatic incident can become very stressful and chaotic with so many voices shouting out commands.

Kimmons was off duty at the time, providing music for an event in another section of the park, but he immediately rushed over to the situation and took total control. His ability to block his emotions, the shouts of so many others, and focus on administering CPR until fire and ambulance personnel arrived was amazing.

The emergency responders quickly diagnosed the condition of our family member and used a defibrillator to obtain a heart rhythm. They transported him to the nearest hospital.

Our family member is doing well and is expected to make a full recovery.

We know that Terry Kimmons feels he was just doing what he was trained to do, but we feel that Terry is truly a heroic member of the community who has shown his professionalism during a personal and traumatic crisis.

We hope that you too will acknowledge his heroic actions.
Eddie Barnett, Jeanette Curry, Rhonda K. Taylor and Salina Taylor

Evidence for Reform

Several prominent Republicans have argued that the U.S. health care system needs no reform. However, non-partisan studies suggest otherwise.

According to a 2007 study by the independent Commonwealth Fund, significantly more Americans want their health system "completely rebuilt," compared to respondents in six other major industrialized countries with universal health insurance. Americans were also most likely to report not receiving care when needed, because of costs.

As further evidence for reform, the study found that per capita health care costs in the U. S. are higher than all of the other major industrialized countries surveyed—twice as expensive, in fact, as the 2nd highest country. Yet despite exorbitant costs, a report from the World Health Organization found that the U.S. health care system ranked 37th in performance, far below all other industrialized nations.

President Obama should be applauded for his proposals to expand access to health insurance coverage for all Americans while at the same time reducing costs.

Rather than proposing a "government take over" of health care, Obama's plan advocates for the further adoption successful practices already in place in the current health care system.

Obama argues for the further adoption of health care currently delivered in two not-for-profit health care systems in the U.S.; Intermountain Health Care and Kaiser Permanente. These organizations provide high-quality care that is below national cost averages by delivering care that is based on scientific-evidence that rewards and encourages preventive care.

The further adoption of these practices on a national level can meet both goals of health reform: expanded insurance coverage and cost containment.

David Mosen
Southeast Portland

The Portland Observer Established 1970
USPS 959-680
4747 NE Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., Portland, OR 97211
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, PUBLISHER: Charles H. Washington
EDITOR: Michael Leighton
DISTRIBUTION MANAGER: Mark Washington
CREATIVE DIRECTOR: Paul Neufeldt
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Portland Observer, PO Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208
CALL 503-288-0033 FAX 503-288-0015
news@portlandobserver.com ads@portlandobserver.com
subscription@portlandobserver.com

The Portland Observer welcomes freelance submissions. Manuscripts and photographs should be clearly labeled and will be returned if accompanied by a self addressed envelope. All created design display ads become the sole property of the newspaper and cannot be used in other publications or personal usage without the written consent of the general manager, unless the client has purchased the composition of such ad. © 2008 THE PORTLAND OBSERVER. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. REPRODUCTION IN WHOLE OR IN PART WITHOUT PERMISSION IS PROHIBITED. The Portland Observer—Oregon's Oldest Multicultural Publication—is a member of the National Newspaper Association—Founded in 1885, and The National Advertising Representative Amalgamated Publishers, Inc. New York, NY, and The West Coast Black Publishers Association

THE SPINA COLUMN™
An ongoing series of questions and answers about America's natural healing profession.

Dr. Billy R. Flowers

Part 34. Osteoporosis and Bone Loss Reversal

Q: Could my golf swing hurt my back?
A: People who exercise regularly and perform stretching and strengthening exercise are less likely to injure their backs. Their supporting muscles, such as their stomach, hamstrings, and gluteals are stronger and more flexible from regular conditioning.
However, people who play golf or racquet sports are more prone to injuries because of the frequent twisting and bending motions. And casual athletes could be more at risk for injuries as well; depending on their level of fitness.

Most injuries of these types respond well to conservative chiropractic treatments. A chiropractor can show you how to prevent these injuries with proper conditioning and technique.

Flowers' Chiropractic Office
2124 N.E. Hancock Street, Portland Oregon 97212
Phone: (503) 287-5504

Subscribe! 503-288-0033 The Portland Observer
Fill Out & Send To: Attn: Subscriptions, PO Box 3137, Portland OR 97208
subscriptions are just \$60 per year (please include check with this subscription form)
NAME: _____ TELEPHONE: _____
ADDRESS: _____
or email subscriptions@portlandobserver.com

Advertise with diversity in The Portland Observer
Call 503-288-0033 ads@portlandobserver.com