

OPINION

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Our Transformational President

Nobel Prize is call to action

BY MARC MORIAL



There has been such a whirlwind of analysis, criticism and even some derision among certain segments of the chattering class about President Obama's Nobel Peace Prize that I decided to go to the source for some answers.

In choosing Obama, the five-member Norwegian Nobel Committee reaffirmed the importance of America in the world and recognized the transformative spirit of both our new president and these times.

Here's how they put it: "Only very rarely has a person to the same extent as Obama captured the world's attention and given its people hope for a better future. His diplomacy is founded

in the concept that those who are to lead the world must do so on the basis of values and attitudes that are shared by the majority of the world's population."

The Committee's decision was influenced in large part by the dramatic change of course in American foreign policy since Obama took office. This includes the President's commitment to end the war in Iraq, his concrete steps towards nuclear disarmament, his outreach to the Muslim world, his work for Middle East peace, his repudiation of the use of torture and his determination to act decisively on issues like the global economic crisis and climate change.

Every eye on the planet looks to America for leadership in these areas. President Obama not only understands that fact, he is personally leading the charge for change. From Berlin to Cairo to Ghana, he has consistently emphasized that there

For his extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples.

-- The Norwegian Nobel Committee on presenting President Barack Obama with the Nobel Peace Prize

is much more that unites the people of the world today than divides us.

The Nobel Committee specifically cited the words from his recent speech before the United Nations General Assembly:

"Now is the time for all of us to take our share of responsibility for a global response to global challenges."

While it was a tremendous surprise for President Obama to win the Nobel Peace Prize, it is

not unprecedented. He joins Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson and Jimmy Carter as the fourth American president to win the award. And he stands alongside Ralph Bunche and Martin Luther King Jr. as the third African American Peace Prize winner.

The President said he was "deeply humbled" by the honor. And seeming to sense the storm of questions to come, he acknowledged that throughout history, the Nobel Peace Prize has not just been used to honor specific accomplishments, it's also been used as a

means to give momentum to a set of causes.

"I will accept this award as a call to action...for all nations to confront the common challenges of the 21st century," he said.

We share that hope and we applaud and congratulate President Obama on winning the Nobel Peace Prize. It is a win for the nation and reaffirmation to refocus America's foreign policy on diplomacy and dialogue.

Marc Morial is president and chief executive officer of the National Urban League.

Focus on America's Workers

People need jobs now

BY JUDGE GREG MATHIS



Economists are telling us that we are turning the corner on this recession. They say stocks - particularly bank stocks - are rebounding. Too bad the 15.1 million unemployed Americans aren't feeling any relief.

The unemployment rate for September was well over 9-percent but is actually much higher. Over 570,000 people dropped out of the work force last month, probably because they gave up hope thinking they'd find a job. If they were still looking, they would have been counted as among the unemployed.

The jobless numbers are the highest in decades. Men, traditionally responsible for caring for their families are hit the hardest. Black men, who often have trouble finding sustainable work, even in good economic times, are struggling the most. America needs to focus on creating jobs for its workers. The much-debated healthcare reform could create new jobs. With government funding, hospitals and clinics would need to hire additional medical support staff, creating a growing workforce.

Pending energy legislation will also create new jobs. As companies, with the support of federal dollars, work to 'green' their operations and environ-

ments, American workers would have a new career opportunities available to them.

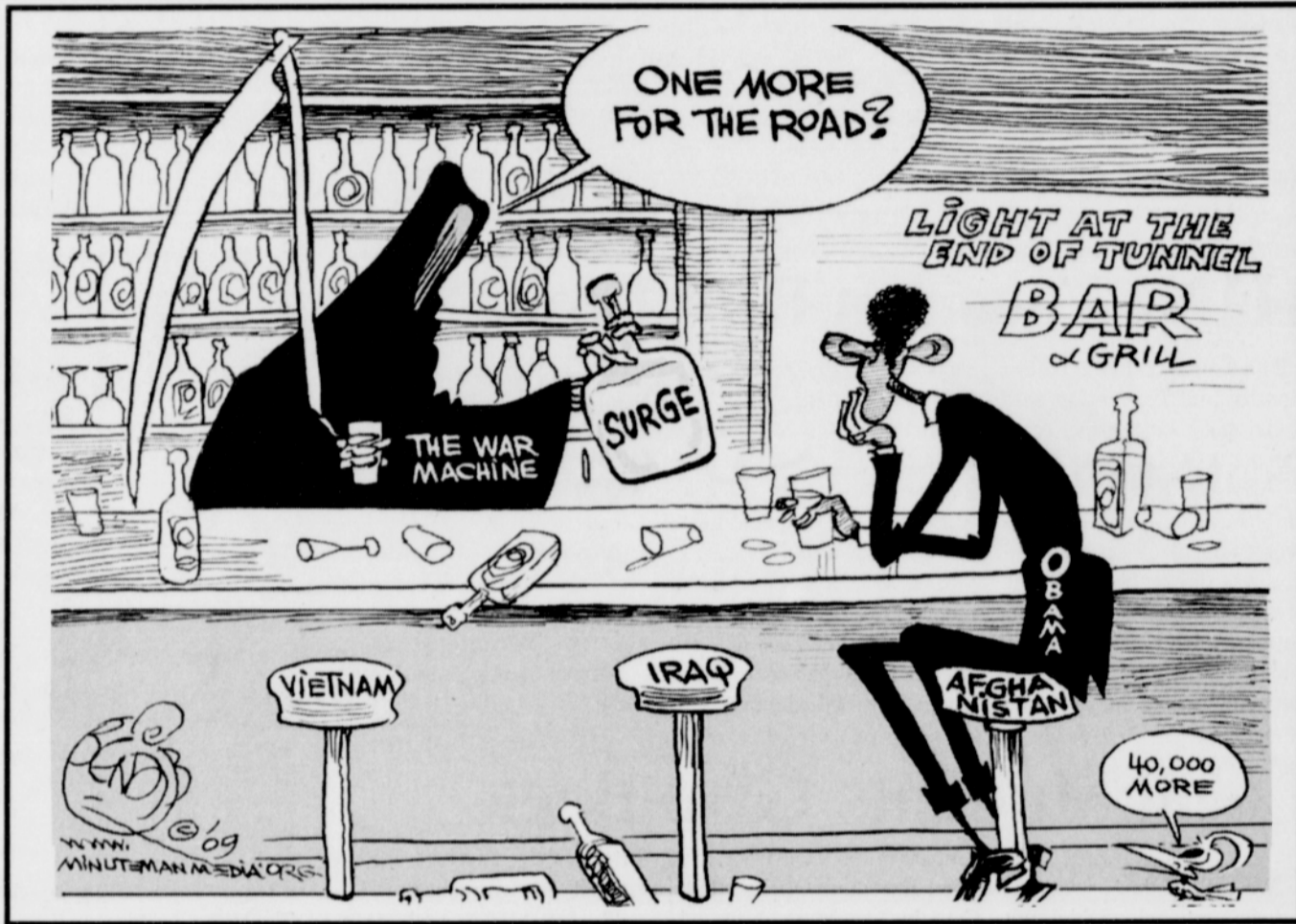
But more must be done. The government should mandate that companies who receive any federal funding should not be allowed to outsource jobs to other countries. Outsourcing has cost America hundreds of thousands of jobs over the last several years. Additionally, legislators should create a job program specifically geared to hiring and putting Americans into jobs.

These jobs should not be dependent on federal funding. Rather, the program should investigate new job creation strategies and work to implement them.

Lastly, the funds distributed via the stimulus package, intended to repair the nation's infrastructure, creating new jobs in the process, should be monitored more closely. Reports indicate funds are not being used as intended. Cities not using the funds as planned should be sanctioned.

The economy may indeed be improving. But it will be some time before the average American sees that change. People need jobs now. And American must work to create them.

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



We Didn't Even Get the Bronze

Olympics should have gone to Chicago

BY DONALD KAUL



Let's face it. Chicago is just not the International Olympic Committee's kind of town. In a show of disdain not seen since we threatened Libya with our Navy and Moammar Kadafi came out in a boat and made faces at it, the IOC rejected Chicago's bid to host the 2016 summer Olympics. And that wasn't the worst part.

There were four finalists competing for the bid-Chicago, Madrid, Tokyo, and Rio de Janeiro. Chicago came in fourth.

Fourth! We didn't even get the bronze. And that still wasn't the worst part.

Barack Obama, president of the United States, leader of the Free World and Chicago homeboy, went to

Copenhagen to plead his hometown's case personally. And the committee rejected it. That was the worst part.

How can he hope to convince Iran to give up its dream of an atom bomb when he can't even convince more-or-less friendly countries to

I have been to Rio and I have been to Chicago. Chicago is better.

give Chicago the Olympic Games?

The Righteous Right was tickled giddy by the result. Precious Leader Rush Limbaugh brayed his glee like an evangelist selling salvation. Cheers erupted at a staff meeting of The Weekly Standard, a little-read, much quoted journal of the Ideologically Impaired.

Obviously then, the response of the Right had nothing to do with prosperity or pa-

triotism or any other substantive matter. America's right wing is buried up to its neck in hatred for Barack Obama. It will accept any result-lack of health care, high unemployment, a failed financial system, no Olympics-if it causes him embarrassment or pain. (Some-

times I think it would welcome an atomic attack on Los Angeles if it could lay the blame on Obama, and it probably could. Conservatives don't much like California anyway. Too much freedom of a kind they don't endorse.)

The Committee eventually chose Rio as the site of the 2016 Games. I think it made a mistake. I have been to Rio and I have been to Chicago. Chicago is better. Oh, Rio is beautiful; I'll give it that. It's got that gorgeous Guanabara Bay and those spectacular ocean beaches festooned with very nice-looking people wearing smiles and precious little else.

But look closer and you'll find it's dirty and noisy and crime-ridden. The New Yorker magazine just ran a long piece on Rio's gangs, which virtually control large portions of the

city. Rio ranks at the very top of the world in "violent intentional deaths." Last year, according to police, there were nearly 5,000 murders in the city, 22 of them police. But the police got theirs back. They killed 1,188 suspects for "resisting arrest," more than any other police force anywhere.

And the slums, called favelas, are among the world's worst.

Things weren't quite that bad when I was there years ago, but they were bad. It was during Carnival and I went with some South American friends to a talent show at one of the favelas. It was a little city of shacks, corrugated tin and cardboard lean-tos, stretched up a hill. There was no sanitation, very little fresh water. It was a kind of hell, and it wasn't the worst favela around.

Chicago by contrast, is the quintessential American place. It bursts with vitality and confidence. It's easily our most interesting big city architecturally and is second only to New York in cultural advantages. And yes it's got a beach and pretty girls and its slums look like Switzerland compared to those of Rio. It's got its graft and corruption and its police force can sometimes be a bit stern (see the 1968 Democratic Convention) but basically, it's my kind of town-American and proud of it.

Donald Kaul is a national correspondent.

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