

FORUM

The perils of poisonous politics



Jesse Jackson
Guest Columnist

were Obama White.

Silence in the face of the attack will be seen as proof that the Republican race-based politics of division remains in force. In his decision to weaken the Voting Rights Act in *Shelby v. Holder*, Justice Roberts wrote that "this country has changed." Giuliani's insult ratifies the wisdom of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg's ringing dissent, that while progress has been made, the Congress surely was right in deciding we still have far to go.

Giuliani's rant echoes the new hysteria that Republicans are trying to stoke: that Obama is "withdrawing" from the world, and thereby weakening America. A parade of horrors - Russia in Ukraine, ISIS in Syria and Iraq, negotiations over nukes with Iran, terrorist violence in Paris - is summoned up and blamed on the president.

Recently, Obama made the simple and common sense observation that we are not at war with Islam, but with terrorist extremists who want to hijack the reli-



President Obama



Giuliani

gion for their own ends. His statement was similar to that repeated frequently by George W. Bush when he was president.

Any future president from either party will make similar statements - both to reflect reality and to keep the fear-mongers from fanning hatred here at home. Yet the president's comments sparked hysterical comments from across the right-wing noise machine as if common sense were somehow heresy.

This clamor is feeding a mindless war fever. Do we want to have an armed confrontation with Russia over Ukraine? Not really, the macho hawks basically want to fight to the last Ukrainian. Do we want to put troops back into Iraq? Not really, although as President Obama has escalated the U.S. response to ISIS, the armchair hawks have moved to more muscular positions, now even mumbling about "boots on the ground." We are fight-

ing wars in Afghanistan, providing troops and arms and bombs against ISIS, running drone attacks in nearly a dozen countries, dispatching special forces to 120 countries. And somehow this is scorned as withdrawal from the world.

Missing in the hysteria and the vile attacks on patriotism is a sensible policy debate - and a sensible reckoning of how we got to where we are. The reality is that excessive belief in military force has done more than anything to cause this mess. The catastrophic invasion of Iraq is the worst foreign policy debacle since Vietnam.

The decision not simply to go after Bin Laden and al Qaeda, but to wage a counterinsurgency war in Afghanistan and "rebuild" that nation has led to the longest war in our history that shows no sign of ending.

The "humanitarian intervention" in Libya has left chaos and violence in its wake.

The US invasion of Iraq turned the country over to Shiite rule, ironically empowering Iran. ISIS comes out of the Sunni

reaction to that reality. Meanwhile we've only begun to pay the \$3 trillion tab for Bush's Iraq War, even as our own roads, rail, sewage and water systems grow ever more dangerous for lack of investment.

Those who mindlessly call the president weak, impugn his patriotism, and accuse him of withdrawing from the world ought to be called to account. Enough with the rhetoric, the posturing, and the poison. What is the policy that they want? Let us hear them explain how they will drive a confrontation with Russia in Ukraine, while fighting in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Yemen and elsewhere.

The only way Americans will accept this nonsense is if they are scared out of their wits. Sadly, that seems to be the intent of the fear mongers, who need to be challenged before they frighten us into yet another costly debacle.

Jesse L. Jackson, Sr. is founder and president of the Chicago-based Rainbow PUSH Coalition. The website is www.rainbowpush.org.

FCC did the right thing with Internet vote

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

WASHINGTON - A cohort of civil rights leaders applaud the Federal Communications Commission for listening to communities of color who have called on the agency to protect the open Internet applying strong and enforceable Net Neutrality rules.

The FCC voted 3-2 on Thursday to adopt rules that prevent Internet service providers like AT&T, Comcast and Verizon from blocking, throttling or otherwise discriminating against Web traffic and services. The rules apply the agency's authority under Title II of the Communications Act to prevent these providers from creating a pay-for-play Internet with fast lanes for the few who can afford steep tolls and slow lanes for the rest of us.

The following statements are from civil rights and racial justice leaders representing organizations that are members of the Voices for Internet Freedom Coalition:

Malkia Cyril, executive director of the Center for Media Justice

"The Center for Media Justice - home of the Media Action Grassroots Network - vigorously applauds today's vote for Title II Net Neutrality. On this historic day, the FCC rejected separate and unequal representation online and proved that a small group of committed people can make very big changes. Instead of capitulating to the virulent race-baiting and industry lies, or cowering before the



threat of legal action or legislation, today the FCC codified rules that lock in place the power of the Internet to help close gaps in equity that disadvantage communities of color."

Rashad Robinson, executive director of ColorOfChange.org

"The open Internet is the platform that allows ordinary people to speak with an unfiltered voice, and Net Neutrality is what protects that. A new civil rights movement is now flourishing in this country in response to tragic and unjust police violence in Ferguson, Staten Island, and many other communities. But without Net Neutrality, the voices of everyday people wouldn't have a chance. Today the FCC has taken crucial steps toward protecting a vital tool in the fight for equality and justice. This victory shows that people power can sometimes triumph over corporate dollars."

Arturo Carmona, executive director of Presente.org

"Today we celebrate the FCC's decision to protect Net Neutrality. This is an important win for the rights of Latinos and all people of color. Our ability to produce our own content, speak for ourselves, and use the Internet as a crucial tool for engaging in our democracy has been protected. We need to ensure that the fight to protect Net Neutrality is protected and that the FCC is empowered to do its job as a regulatory agency."

Jessica Gonzalez, executive vice president and general counsel, National Hispanic Media Coalition

"This is a historic day and a historic victory. As people of color, we have come to rely on the open Internet to educate ourselves, organize for social change, engage in the political process and push back against a history of discrimination and

exclusion in traditional media. I applaud the FCC majority for sifting through the nonsense arguments of a few Internet service providers and their massive team of lobbyists, and siding with the American people for a truly open Internet."

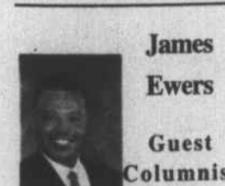
Joseph Torres, senior external affairs director of Free Press

"The FCC's decision today is a victory in the struggle for racial justice in our country. It's simply hard to fight for the health and well being of communities of color if we aren't able to speak for ourselves. While we celebrate today's victory, we know we're going to need to continue to fight for our digital rights to ensure our voices are never silenced."

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Coaches play an important role in our society



James Ewers
Guest Columnist

as we were told. None of us talked back to our coach nor did our parents ask him about our playing time.

Upon reflection now, Coach Bryant was also a life coach. He asked us how our grades were and if we were excited to return to school in the fall. He talked with us about having goals and dreams.

He was always pleasant but he was also keenly interested in us as boys. He was much more than a coach.

Coaches have always played an important role in our society. They have served as role models and mentors for us.

The title "coach" is one that you hear a lot but should not be taken lightly. Those who wear it understand the awesome responsibility that they have.

Students depend upon coaches not only for sports instruction but for social instruction as well.

I can recall many years ago when my sons, Aaron



Basketball superstar Michael Jordan, left, still showed admiration for his college coach, Dean Smith, the longtime coach at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Smith died last month.

and Chris, would come home and tell me what the coach said. What the coach said was the gold standard and had to be followed. My sons had men who wore the title coach well and they were both influenced positively by them.

I grew up in Winston-Salem, N.C. during the 1960s and sports was always the talk of the town.

For example, the recent CIAA basketball tourna-

ment had its early beginnings in my hometown. You know what it has become now. My friends and I saw Clarence "Big House" Gaines a lot as he lived around the corner from us. What we soon found out was that Coach Gaines was the basketball coach at Winston-Salem Teachers College, now Winston-Salem State University. His wife, Mrs. Clara Gaines, even taught

me Latin in high school.

Coach Gaines was a legend who coached Earl "The Pearl" Monroe and received many national honors along with winning championships. He was quite influential in our lives as he provided us with much needed guidance and direction. I felt the gravity of his mentorship as I later became a tennis coach at both the high school and college level.

Dean Smith, the iconic basketball coach at the University of North Carolina, passed away recently, and the comments about his character and his love for his players came from all across America. I was privileged to have taken a picture with him many years ago now. One of my college classmates' son, Hubert Davis, was one of his players. How interesting it was on that Sunday years ago that one of the ABC television announcers for the Carolina game against

Georgia Tech was Jim Valvano. That was after his time as a coach where he led North Carolina State University to a national championship against the University of Houston.

Our children and grandchildren have every confidence in their coaches. If you want to enter the coaching ranks, know that you will be held to the highest of standards.

It is a privilege to be called coach. Wear the title with dignity and honor.

Let it be said about you that you fostered in young people high ideals and lofty goals.

James B. Ewers Jr. Ed.D. is a former tennis champion at Atkins High School and played college tennis at Johnson C Smith University, where he was all-conference for four years. He is a retired college administrator. He can be reached at ewersjr56@yahoo.com.