

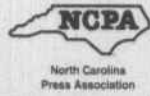
OPINION

Letter to the Editor

THE CHRONICLE

The Choice for African-American News

ERNEST H. PITT Publisher/Co-Founder
ELAINE PITT Business Manager
ERICKA ASBURY Office Manager
T. KEVIN WALKER Managing Editor
KAY STULTZ Production Supervisor



No war

(This is an open letter recently sent to President Bush by Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan. The local NOI mosque will air a speech by Farrakhan on the war Feb. 23 at 2 p.m. at the Benton Convention Center. For tickets, call 721-1616 or 725-9888.)

Dear President Bush:

As-Salaam Alaikum (peace be unto you).
 May this letter find you and your family well.

I am writing this letter to once again appeal to you in the strongest way that you might heed my humble counsel and sincere warning to you. I am not your enemy, nor am I an enemy to this country, but I do believe that the course that you are guiding the nation on will increase many enemies for you and the nation at home and abroad.

In my last letter, I respectfully called your attention to U.S. presidents and their dealings with Islamic nations and leaders over the last several years, and I warned that should you pursue what I know is in your mind and heart concerning Saddam Hussein and Iraq, that you would lose the great advantage that you gained after Sept. 11, 2001, and that the coalition would fall apart and you might be forced to go it alone. Also, I opined that if you did such, you might run into something that your advisers had not thought of or perceived. This is already happening. Nations are becoming afraid of you and the tremendous power of America. In this state of fear, they will not stop trying to attain weapons of mass destruction because they believe that is the only thing that you will respect.

There is a rising chorus of anti-war demonstrations in the nation and throughout the world, and it will intensify as you move toward war with the thought of occupying Iraq. The anti-war demonstrators will blame every death of an American service person and every death of an Iraqi citizen on you, and this will

YOUNG GEORGE W. BUSH IN A WORLD WITHOUT PREFERENCES...



produce a crisis for your administration within the United States, as well as in countries throughout the world.



Farrakhan

I am writing to p l e a d with you that there is a better w a y . However, the more you talk and the stronger you talk a b o u t

regime change, you paint yourself into a corner from which it becomes increasingly difficult to extricate yourself.

There are times in history when "men of conviction go against the tide of world thought and opinion, bringing suffering upon themselves to establish a new truth or a new idea. However, this is not that time for you. In my judgment, this is a time when the president of the United States must not only listen to his advisers and study their agendas, but he must listen to world opinion. If the president of the United

States seems to show no respect for world opinion or for the thoughts of the members of the Security Council of the United Nations, then your actions will turn the nations of the world against you and against America.

Your actions will also render the United Nations an ineffective institution for future peacekeeping.

Ancient Babylon was a city that caused all who traded with her to wax strong, but at a certain point, the neighboring nations turned against Babylon and she was destroyed and left as a sign. The Book of Revelation speaks of a mystery Babylon that ancient Babylon was a sign of. The Honorable Elijah Muhammad, my teacher and guide, said that America is the fulfillment of that mystery Babylon.

Mr. President, you must study prophecy in order to beat it.

Look at the nations to the north and south of you. Are they pleased with you, your administration and your policies? Look at your friends in the Middle East. Are they really pleased with you, your administration and policies? Look at your Euro-

pean friends and your African and Asian friends. The prophecy teaches that they will take your money and whatever you offer, but they will hate you and ultimately make you desolate.

We are headed into a terrible time. I am writing this letter as a final witness of my deep concern for you and for the nation, believing, however, that you are bent on doing what is in your heart with respect to Iraq and Saddam Hussein.

Mr. President, if you do this, you will bring down upon America an increase in the divine judgment of rain, hail, snow, wind, earthquakes, pestilence and famine already witnessed in the country. As you go about destroying other nations and cities, you will bring this kind of divine wrath on the American people and on American cities.

Please reconsider your plans.

May Allah (God) guide you to make the right decision for this nation and for the future of the world. I am your servant in the war against evil.

The Honorable Minister
 Louis Farrakhan



Azalea Terrace was built with HOPE VI money.

HOPE diminished

If the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development is going to unveil a new program to get rid of run-down units, thousands of public housing residents are eagerly waiting for the big news. HUD must obviously have something up its sleeves since it has quietly shelved the HOPE VI program.

The agency says HOPE VI, grants designed to revitalize old public housing communities, will continue as normal with the hundreds of millions of dollars already in the program. But it does not take an accountant to figure that no new money coming in and existing money going out equals the inevitable end of the program.

HUD says part of the reason the program is being discontinued is because some housing authorities have dragged their feet, taking years and years to complete revitalization projects. If that

is the case, perhaps HUD could have provided more support and direction for housing authorities that received the grants. It makes no sense to take away the benefits of HOPE VI from thousands of low-income Americans because of the actions of relatively few people.

HOPE VI's fate may have been sealed by the nation's limping economy, like many other federal, state and local programs. But HOPE VI is a program worth shifting numbers around for. As its name states, the program has given new hope to once run-down communities and has given residents their first taste of the American dream.

It is insane for the Bush administration to push a sweeping tax cut plan that is sweet on the rich, while we try to balance the budget off of the the nation's poorest people.

Wanted: golf pro

There is little doubt that Winston Lake Golf Course would benefit from having Walter Morgan on board. Morgan has earned his marquee value through years of training and hard work on the PGA Seniors' Tour.

Now he wants to bring that work ethic to Winston Lake as the course's new golf pro. Morgan says he can give Winston Lake Golf Course the kind of respect it certainly deserves by bringing in top-name golfers and possibly securing big-name sponsors for events at the course. Morgan says no other candidate for the golf pro job would be able to do those things. That may sound a bit cocky, but Morgan's credentials give him leeway to talk a little smack.

The 1995 N.C. Black Golf Hall of Fame inductee has three tournament championships, and he nearly edged out Ed Dougherty at the 2001 TD Waterhouse Championship. Other candidates vying for the job don't have Morgan's credentials. Ralph Gaillard, another candidate for the job, does have a long record of being dedicated to the course - in the good and bad times, a credential that Morgan can't claim.

Although opinions vary



over who is the best man for the golf pro job, everyone agrees that anyone who can bring new life to the course would be welcomed with open arms.

The Winston Lake Golf Course is one of the most beautiful courses in the city, yet it has not received its due. The person who can give the course that respect and make it a shining star in East Winston should be given the job. That should be the main criteria the city should consider before making a decision.

The 'New' Pepsi Challenge



James Clingman
 Guest Columnist

Russell Simmons has called for a boycott of Pepsi Cola because Pepsi dissed hip-hop personality Ludacris, pulling his appearance in Pepsi commercials and opting for the Osbourne family. You may also remember that Fox News' Bill O'Reilly used one of his tirades to pillory Pepsi for using Ludacris and said he would not buy Pepsi until the company removed Ludacris from Pepsi's advertisements. Looks like Pepsi is in a no-win situation, doesn't it? Will O'Reilly get his way, or will Pepsi bend to Russell Simmons' request for an apology and a reinstatement of Ludacris in its commercials? The plot thickens.

It was ironic that just before BET News did the story that featured Simmons at a news conference announcing a boycott of Pepsi Cola, BET (owned by Viacom) ran a Pepsi commercial featuring three or four young, black, hip-hop-looking brothers dancing, as usual, to a funky beat and drinking Pepsi. At the end of the commercial, one of the young brothers said, "You know how we do." As I watched this strange juxtaposition, I wondered if the airing of that particular commercial was planned for that particular time.

Here's my take on this: Russell Simmons has demonstrated his ability to rally the troops in the hip-hop world, especially around social and political issues. He is one of the most articulate, dedicated and tenacious brothers on the scene today. He is also a multimillionaire, having done tremendously well in his personal economic empowerment. It will be interesting to watch, for instance, how much money Pepsi dangles in the faces of young brothers and sisters, such as those in the commercial to which I referred, to get them to repel Simmons' message.

As to the boycott of Pepsi, I



have no problem with it. I do have a problem with Simmons' call for a boycott of Pepsi, which simply says, "Don't buy Pepsi Cola," but does not say, "Here's what you can buy instead. And guess what? We have a black-owned alternative." Russell may not know it, but there is a black-owned soft drink company in Elyria, Ohio (near Cleveland), called New World Beverages, started by Larry Jones. We could be pushing our youths (and our adults) to support it as hip-hop withdraws its dollars from Pepsi.

I also have a problem with calling economic sanctions and settling for social solutions, e.g., apologies, as remedies to the issues at hand. We have seen it many times, and it makes no sense to stop spending your money with others, and then as soon as they apologize for a transgression, we return with our money in hand to continue building their wealth.

Is it reasonable for black folks to concede and go back to business as usual after we get an apology? Is it reasonable for us to call a boycott against Pepsi and tell them it will be lifted if they reinstate a rap artist into one of their commercials? I am sure Ludacris

has more than enough money and does not need Pepsi's. (But I do understand that a little more won't hurt him.) I am also certain that most black people can do without Pepsi and many other products, and have the ability to mix and sell soft drinks, as well as hundreds of other products.

So, I say to Brother Russell Simmons, please tell the hip-hop community to take the money they withdraw from Pepsi and spend it with black-owned businesses.

Tell them to emulate you and other young entrepreneurs who made millions by owning businesses. Tell them to invest in the black-owned soft drink company. Tell them that our economic freedom is worth much more than mere apologies and platitudes. Tell them, as they come to the Hip-Hop Summit in Atlanta, to pool their money and build an economic foundation, in addition to using their voting power. Tell them, Brother Russell; tell them.

To the young brother in the Pepsi commercial who said, "You know how we do," I say to you: "They know how you do." They know that you will buy their products and compete to be in their commercials, even despite what

Russell Simmons is asking you to do. They know that your group spends millions per year on soft drinks and other items they make and sell. They know that you, young brother, are a threat to their sales if you are an educated consumer, and if you are on the road to your own collective economic empowerment via business ownership. They also know that if you geared more of your interests toward being producers rather than consumers, they could no longer just use you to dance in their commercials. Who knows? They would probably offer you a few distributorships.

To Pepsi, I say, I don't envy your position. O'Reilly obviously carries a lot of weight. After all, he scared you into taking Ludacris out of your commercials by threatening a boycott. Now Russell Simmons has called a boycott, and he has a great deal of clout, too. Looks like a new Pepsi Challenge to me.

James E. Clingman is an adjunct professor at the University of Cincinnati's African-American studies department. He can be reached at (513) 489-4132 or by e-mail at jclingman@blackonomics.com.