

U.S. right to walk out of UN racism conference

On Saturday, the U. N. Conference on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related



MARK PASSWATERS

Intolerance wrapped up in Durban, South Africa. But by then, the United States delegation walked out. While such an action seems callous on the surface, they were right to do so. This conference had an agenda hijacked by groups looking to change the past instead of the future, leaving those who suffer in the 21st century totally ignored. The United States and other Western nations became the immediate target of African nations who demanded reparations for the slave trade that ended eight generations ago.

"Reparations need to be made in the name of Africa and of those millions of our ancestors who were brutally ripped from their homes and shipped to the new world," said President Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo.

If this was not to be forthcoming, African countries rationalized that their foreign debt should be wiped out in a show of sympathy. The United States and European countries did not go along with these demands.

"The tricky part is whether that entitles someone to compensation, especially if they have no direct link with past slavery," a European diplomat told *The Washington Post*. "How do you identify who is the victim or who is responsible?"

After having slavery and colonialism blamed for everything from famines to centuries-old ethnic conflicts, they questioned whether such an action would be merely a glorified handout, and rightfully so. "I think reparations, given the fact that there is plenty of blame to go around for slavery, plenty of blame to go around among African and Arab states and plenty of blame to go around among Western states, we are better to look forward and not point fingers backward," said National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice on NBC's "Meet The Press."

As pointed out in a Sept. 2 *Washington Post* editorial, these conferences are designed for nations "to criticize the United

States while (managing) to shield their own records of racism from scrutiny."

The United States finally walked out of the conference in disgust over the demands of Arab nations that Israel be declared racist and that the World War II holocaust be minimized in importance. Some Arab nations crowded that this showed the United States was merely a pawn of Israel, but were quickly silenced when the members of the European Union threatened to leave as well.

The Bush administration appeared to regard the entire conference as a tragic disappointment.

"This conference spent far too much time in trying to condemn Israel and single it out," Rice said. "I think the United States made the right decision to leave."

If this is the case, then they are quite correct. In spite of all its hubris about helping the poor of the world, this conference merely passed a resolution vowing to "fight racism wherever it can be found."

Would this be in the Sudan, where Muslims torture, enslave and kill Christians and animists? Perhaps this racism is exhibited in India, where a quarter-billion people, known as "untouchables," live in enforced neglect and squalor. If this applies to minorities in Myanmar, Nigeria, non-Muslims in Afghanistan or the people of occupied Tibet, we will never know. The representatives of the U.N. conference did not mention them.

Even before the conference started, it was apparent that the losers would be the neglected of the present day. Simply put, nobody cared about them. In an Aug. 29 editorial, *The Times of London* predicted the demise of the conference and said the United States should be praised if it ignored the fiasco entirely. "The European way has always been to haggle on the ground that these are merely 'words,'" it said. "Americans have always, honorably, been readier to insist that, even if they are not legally binding, words still matter."

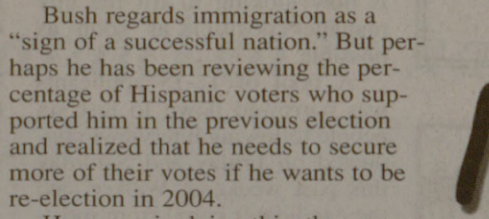
In this case, the words from the United States delegation as it left Durban should probably have been "get serious." Once again, the United Nations has, in the words of the *Times*, made an "irresponsible perversion of a good cause."

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A ^{very} BAD IDEA

Granting amnesty status to illegal immigrants misguided, unfair

In accordance with the rules of the strange and ugly game of politics, President George W. Bush is caught up in a controversial immigration proposal. The idea, floated by the president earlier this year, would grant amnesty to almost 3 million illegal Mexican immigrants who have already been working in the United States.



JENNIFER LOZANO

Bush regards immigration as a "sign of a successful nation." But perhaps he has been reviewing the percentage of Hispanic voters who supported him in the previous election and realized that he needs to secure more of their votes if he wants to be re-elected in 2004.

However, in doing this, the President is coming dangerously close to angering the Republican Party's conservative wing and initiating an ugly partisan conflict.

The idea is a bad policy that rewards lawbreakers and will anger other nations that seek equal immigration laws.

According to *The Washington Post*, the proposal "is expected to include the option of granting legal residency to undocumented Mexican immigrants."

The reasoning is that the proposal would be received warmly by Mexican immigrants, businesses and labor groups. However, it has already been met with strong opposition from conservatives in Bush's own Republican Party who feel it would unfairly reward those who have broken the law.

Immigrants from other nations who will not benefit from this proposal have also voiced their discontent. "Immigration law is supposed to be for everybody," said Samedi Florvil of the Haitian Refugee Center in Miami.

Such a policy of immigration does not reflect fairness toward other nations who also wish for their illegal immigrants working in the United States to be granted amnesty.

Hispanic support for the Republican Party has suffered since 1994, when former California Governor Pete Wilson led the campaign for California's Proposition 187. This proposition cut off important state benefits to illegal immigrants and deeply offended Mexican-Americans everywhere.

These sentiments still exist among many Hispanics. A recent television advertisement broadcast on Spanish-speaking net-

works Univision and Telemundo blatantly told the Hispanic population that Bush's interest in them is only politically motivated.

Although the Democratic National Committee claims the advertisement is aimed at challenging President Bush "to be compassionate and inclusive in his immigration policy," it is clearly exploiting the GOP's electoral weakness among America's fastest growing voting bloc.

To make matters even more politically-

rewarding those who disregard the law and the proper process for legalization.

Millions of Mexican citizens and other nations who were waiting to enter the United States legally would be betrayed by such a system. There are many immigrants of other nationalities who will not be granted amnesty, unlike their Mexican counterparts. Should this idea ever come to fruition, Americans will know that politicians will do anything to secure a few more votes.

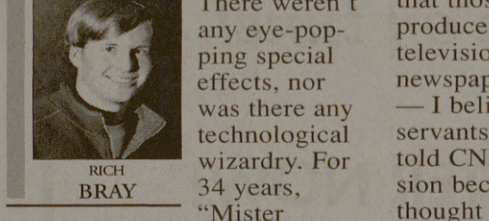


JOE PEDEN • THE BATTALION

This conference had an agenda hijacked by groups looking to change the past instead of the future.

Mr. Rogers represents good in TV wasteland

There were rarely any fancy guest stars, unless you count Mr. McFeeney or Lady Elaine Fairchild.



RICH BRAY

There weren't any eye-popping special effects, nor was there any technological wizardry. For 34 years, "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood" entertained countless children with a simple, predictable format. Last Friday, "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood" aired its last new episode, meaning Mr. Rogers will only be available to children in reruns and on the PBS web site, where he will be providing the voices for puppets. With the end of the show, simplicity and innocence in children's television has been chipped away.

The man who provided children's television with innocence and simplicity has moved on to other things, leaving weekday mornings with a weak supply of quality programming.

"Mister Rogers' Neighborhood" first aired on Pittsburgh's WQED in 1968, before being picked up by PBS in 1969. Rogers, an ordained Presbyterian minister, started the show to use television to teach children. Rogers got into his profes-

sion with the right motivations, and parents should turn off shows that do not teach the same types of values he communicated so well. "I believe that those of us who are the producers and purveyors of television - or video games or newspapers or any mass media - I believe that we are the servants of this nation," he told CNN. "I got into television because I hated it so and I thought there was some way of using this fabulous instrument to be of nurture to those who would watch and listen."

Today's children's programming is filled with quick-paced action, plenty of violence and colorful animation. These qualities do not necessarily make them bad shows, but there is something to be said for straightforward friendliness. And the children responded. Above all else, simplicity was the key to Mr. Rogers' many years of success, and that is what will be missed most of all.

Every week, Mr. Rogers would come into children's homes with a smile and a rendition of "Won't You Be My Neighbor?" Children could count on him to come in with a cardigan sweater and a pair of loafers. They could count on the same visitors the same

songs and the same routines. That routine brought Mr. Rogers numerous awards, including four Emmys, a Lifetime Achievement Award and more than 30 honorary degrees from universities throughout the nation.

These were well deserved recognitions for an honorable man who did much positive for nation's children. Although current children's programming is brimming with animated violence, Mr. Rogers thrived on an endless supply of tranquility.

In all those years, Mr. Rogers never raised his voice. His movements were never any faster than a friendly wave goodbye

before he went out the door at the end of the show. From the soft singing to the show's slow tempo, "Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood" was a lesson in inner peace for almost three and a half decades. This is something sorely missing across all television programs since he went on the air.

Nearly everyone has a fond memory of "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood." Those who watched the show can recall the serenity of watching tales from the magical world of Make-Believe. Today's parents fondly recall that half hour of

charged, in last week's meeting between President Bush and Mexican President Vicente Fox, Fox challenged the United States to strike an agreement on immigration reform by the end of this year.

The ramifications of President Bush's possible proposal are stacking up in a rather negative way. No wonder he has been backing away from it. If realized, the government not only will be allowing, but

The president has said that "good neighbors work together and benefit from each other's success."

This may be true, but it can also be noted that the great American poet Robert Frost once said "good fences make good neighbors."

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Simplicity was the key to Mr. Rogers' many years of success.

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CARTOON OF THE DAY



THE DUNARTOONIST

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