

have been consumed for the past several days over remarks by radio personality Don Imus.

Two weeks ago Imus referred to the women of the Rutgers University women's basketball team in language which can only be described as racist, sexist, and viciously offensive. Faced with an uproar of disgust and protest in response to those remarks, Imus apologized on one hand and on the other denied any racism and insisted that his words carried no malice.

Imus has a history of similar remarks and demands for him to be fired escalated by the hour and day. Under pressure from the public and advertisers, MSNBC agreed to drop the Imus show, and then, of course, CBS came to the same decision. I commend them for coming to the realization that this kind of rhetoric has no place on the public airways. I hope this outcome will be viewed as a victory for free speech and corporate responsibility.

I consider myself an apostle of the first amendment. Free speech is fundamental to our very notions of what and who we are as a people and as a Nation. Nevertheless, I believe that the outcry and protest over the Imus remarks and the demands for his dismissal are not only justified, but are totally consistent with the first amendment.

Nothing has eaten away at the soul of America, nothing has divided our Nation, and nothing has more persistently infected our democracy than the monstrous evil of racism.

Racism dehumanized and continues to dehumanize African Americans and others. Racism continues to ravage the lives of Black America from health to housing and from income to imprisonment. It has taken almost 150 years of struggle and sacrifice, but we no longer accept the racist practices and we no longer excuse racist speech.

No one is demanding that the government muzzle Mr. Imus. However, it is logical and just that large, extremely profitable media companies whose existence and whose profits are based on freedom of speech, would want to ensure that they are not profiting from the abuse of African American women, from the poisoning of relations between Americans, or from discrimination or oppression of any sector of our society.

Last week it was an outcry against Mr. Imus for his remarks. Today and tomorrow it must be against the rappers, hip-hop artists, and comedians who use vile language as a part of their public acts.

My mother used to take washing powder or soap and wash out our mouths if we were to use language that was unacceptable to her. Now, I know that we can't do this with some of our entertainers, but we certainly can sanitize and let them know that we are not appreciative of their language.

I join with those who commend the chairperson of the Congressional Black Caucus, CAROLYN CHEEKS KILPATRICK, for her leadership. And I also commend

Reverend Jesse Jackson and the Reverend Al Sharpton for the tremendous roles that they played in raising this issue.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WATERS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WATERS addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

THE RUTGERS WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I was only going to speak about our Rutgers women, but I do want to also add my voice to the condolences for the Virginia Tech students. Out of the number of students who were killed, four students came from my State of New Jersey. So our hearts are heavy for all of the families, but especially for our four New Jersey students.

I also want to add my congratulations to Congresswoman WOOLSEY for being the persistent voice against the war. Day in and day out she has brought this to our attention, and I think much of what we see today in the movement against the war can directly be attributed to her tenacity.

I want to also commend Speaker PELOSI for the groundbreaking trip she took to Syria. I think that the dignity and the knowledge and the respect that were shown to her will begin to break the ground, and I hope that she continues to do that.

Mr. Speaker, as a Representative from New Jersey, I am pleased to rise here in the United States House of Representatives to praise the young women of the Rutgers basketball team, the Scarlet Knights, and their inspirational coach, C. Vivian Stringer. They are true champions not only for their academic and athletic achievements, but for the dignity, for the strength, for the class they have shown during this ordeal.

These 10 women overcame disappointing early losses in the season to advance, amazingly, to the Final Four. Around the Nation fans watched as the Scarlet Knights of Rutgers, who had lost four of their first seven games, defeated Duke's Blue Devils in an exciting 53-52 upset victory. This was after a lopsided 59-35 victory over LSU.

When the ugly incident with Don Imus cast a shadow over their success, these young women showed what they were made of. In standing up for themselves and their school and for New Jersey, they also took a stand on behalf of all young women who insist on being treated with respect and refuse to be insulted and stereotyped.

Don Imus and those of his ilk vastly underestimated New Jersey's strong

and proud Scarlet Knights. He underestimated the pride we feel in New Jersey about our remarkable women on that team. As a matter of fact, during the founding of the Nation, New Jersey had a theme: "Don't tread on us." Don Imus may have had a microphone, but he was no match for these young women and their coach, who so eloquently spoke up for what is right and fair. I am so proud that through their actions they were able to persuade two major networks, MSNBC and CBS, as well as numerous advertisers, that the days of using public airways to ridicule and debase anyone they choose are over.

Let me add that it is time that the FCC start doing its job by halting the use of racial and gender slurs over the public airways. As long there is weak enforcement, there will continue to be hate language used by the so-called "shock jocks." In Rwanda it was the radio that urged people to kill and to go. It is hate radio that can create problems, serious problems, as we have seen, like I said, in Rwanda.

History has shown us that words matter, and once society accepts ugly language, ugly incidents will follow. We see the indecent exposure at the Super Bowl, where a tremendous amount of attention was paid. However, we let a Don Imus go on year in, year out, year in, year out, and many others. Something is wrong with that picture.

I call on the networks to examine their record of hiring minorities for top on-the-air and executive positions so that African Americans are fairly represented in the media. One reason that the networks made the decision to discontinue the Don Imus show was that the network employees let the management know how disturbed and embarrassed and offended they were by these demeaning commentaries and that they were a part of that institution, and that was the overriding factor. However, it was Rosa Parks, who 50 years ago decided that she would not sit at the back of the bus, and the people from Montgomery walked for a year, 2 years, and broke the back of the bus company. It was once again the economics that had a play in this 50 years later that people said that if you continue to advertise on that station, we will not use your product. So I am proud of the American people.

Finally, let me say that once again I am proud of these young women, one from my district in Newark, New Jersey, from the high school Shabazz that I taught at.

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200TH SPECIAL ORDER ON THE WAR IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today for the 200th time to express my

disgust and dismay with our Nation's policy in Iraq. And I want to thank Bart Aceocella, who has helped me with my many, many words calling on the President of the United States to bring our troops home.

Forty-nine months after this failed Iraq policy was launched, we are still being told, Be patient. Progress is just around the corner. All of our sacrifices will somehow be worth it. But all that amounts to nothing more than desperate spin. And the American people aren't buying it; neither, apparently, are some top military brass. The administration can't find someone to take the job of war czar, a job that would coordinate the military campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan. One of the recruits for the job, retired Marine General Jack Sheehan, told The Washington Post last week that he would rather spare himself the ulcer, saying of the Bush administration, "The very fundamental issue is they don't know where the hell they're going."

How can the administration possibly say that Iraq is on the road to freedom and stability when a bomb goes off inside the Green Zone and kills members of the elected Parliament? If it's not safe inside the fortress of the Green Zone, just imagine what it is like in the streets of Baghdad.

How can the administration say progress is being made when the Associated Press reports that dozens of Iraqi police officers were demonstrating outside their Baghdad station chanting, "No, no to America. Get out, occupiers." And now American soldiers can look forward to a few more months of trying valiantly, but in vain, to carry out this misguided mission, as the Pentagon has announced that soldiers' 1-year tours will be extended to 15 months.

I ask my colleagues who gave the President the authority to invade Iraq 4½ years ago if they weren't surprised that they voted for an occupation with no apparent end in sight. They absolutely didn't intend for our troops to be caught in the middle of a civil war that our very presence as occupiers has inspired. Four and a half years later, over 3,300 Americans who will never make it home to their families, and all at the cost of more than \$375 billion to stop Saddam Hussein from using weapons of mass destruction that he didn't have.

This week, Americans sent their 2006 tax returns to the IRS, trusting that our government will send that money back to us in the form of services, benefits, stability and security. So what do we tell them? What do we tell the American people about the staggering costs they are being asked to assume for the occupation of Iraq? Can anyone possibly argue that we have somehow gotten a return on this reckless investment?

The National Priorities Project has broken down the Iraq financial burden, assuming a total of \$456 billion once the latest supplemental is signed by

the President. Here is what it boils down to: \$4,100 for every American household; \$1,500 for every man, woman and child; \$275 million a day; \$11 million every hour. Look what we could do with that kind of money: \$928 million, 3 days in Iraq is enough to build 100 schools or 5,400 affordable housing units, or provide health care for 144,000 children for the length of the Iraq war.

And if national security is what you want to redirect the money toward, we could have used Iraq appropriations for more secure posts, for energy independence initiatives, for nuclear non-proliferation programs, for debt relief in the underprivileged areas of the world. We could have invested in real national security.

Mr. Speaker, we have sacrificed more than enough in lives, in treasure, in national stature and credibility for a mistaken ideological pipe dream.

It is time for our leaders to hear the frustration of the American people, frustration with this shameful, wasteful, futile policy. It is time to end this occupation. It is time to bring our troops home.

THE RUTGERS WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, the women's basketball team of Rutgers University had a great season going to the finals. And as one of two Members of Congress who represents Rutgers University here in Congress, I would like to pay tribute to them, not just for their athletic ability.

After the season was over, they were the subject of hateful, crude and insulting comments; and they responded with restraint, with eloquence and dignity. They were classy. These athletes and Coach Stringer distinguished themselves after the season even more than they did during their extraordinary season. And they serve as a reminder of what college athletics is all about, or should be. We hold up college athletics not for the entertainment of alumni and fans, but because we believe athletic participation builds character. These women of the Rutgers basketball team showed that they have character.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFazio) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFazio addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MCCarthy) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MCCarthy of New York addressed the House. Her remarks will

appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. KUCINICH addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

DEMOCRATIC BLUE DOG COALITION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. ROSS) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, tonight I rise on behalf of the 43 Member strong fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition. We are a group of fiscally conservative Democrats that are committed to restoring common sense and fiscal discipline to our Nation's government.

As you walk the Halls of Congress, Mr. Speaker, it is easy to know when you are walking by the office of a fellow Blue Dog Member because you will see this poster that says "The Blue Dog Coalition." It says, "Today, the U.S. national debt is, 8,887,793,986,597.86." And for every man, woman and child in America, their share of the national debt is \$29,465. It is what we refer to as the "debt tax." And that is one tax that cannot be cut, that cannot go away until this Nation gets its fiscal house in order. The Federal deficit continues to climb.

Mr. Speaker, it is hard now to think back and realize, but from 1998 through 2001, this country had a balanced budget; and yet under the Republican leadership for the previous 6 years, we have seen them rubber-stamp the President's budget year after year after year, giving us the largest deficit after the largest deficit after the largest deficit, record deficits. And as a result of that, we have seen the national debt grow to where it is today, approaching \$9 trillion.

Why does this matter? It matters because the total national debt from 1789 to 2000 was \$5.67 trillion, but by 2010, the total national debt will have increased to \$10.88 trillion. This is a doubling of the 211-year debt in just 10 years. Interest payments on this debt are one of the fastest growing parts of the Federal budget. And the debt tax is one that cannot be repealed. Deficits reduce economic growth. They burden our children and grandchildren with liabilities. They increase our reliance on foreign lenders who own some 40 percent of our debt.

This chart here, Mr. Speaker, graphically depicts why the American people should be concerned about the fact that our country is nearly \$9 trillion in debt. You see, our Nation spends a half a billion dollars a day, give or take a