

30th anniversary: Gala marks success of The Washington Times - Hyung Jin Moon

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The Rev. Hyung Jin Moon, son of the Rev. Sun Myung Moon, delivers his speech to the crowd during the evening banquet as part of the 30th anniversary celebration of The Washington Times at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel in Washington, D.C., Tuesday, Oct. 2, 2012. (Rod Lamkey Jr./The Washington Times)

Former Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld offered a sharp and at times biting critique of the Obama administration's defense and national security record, saying the president's policies in the Middle East, Europe and East Asia have cost the country prestige and influence and put America on a path to decline.

Giving the keynote address Tuesday evening at a packed Washington gala to mark the 30th anniversary of the founding of The Washington Times, the 80-year-old Pentagon chief under President George W. Bush said President Obama and his aides "fundamentally misunderstand the world situation today," in particular the threat to American interests and Western values still posed by violent strains of radical Islam.

"Let me be clear: I do not believe America is destined to stay on the current trajectory toward becoming something less than a first-rate country ...," he said. "Only America's leaders can stand in the way of the American people's rendezvous with the future.

"I don't think it will surprise anyone to learn that I think changing the trajectory of the last four years requires changing the leadership at the top," Mr. Rumsfeld added.

Mr. Rumsfeld cited what he termed the administration's weak reaction to the wave of violence in the Middle East, including the brutal killing of the U.S. ambassador to Libya that he said Mr. Obama and his aides at first tried to blame on an obscure Internet video.

The real problem, he said, is a theology and political movement in the Islamic world that is "so intolerant it belongs in the Middle Ages, not the Middle East."

Mr. Rumsfeld praised the work of The Washington Times over the past three decades as giving serious voice to conservative ideas, American values and the appropriate uses of American power, singling out the reporters and columnists of The Times such as Bill Gertz, Rowan Scarborough and Tony Blankley from Mr. Rumsfeld's years running the Pentagon.

“I salute your record of accomplishment over three decades and hope to follow your good work for years to come,” Mr. Rumsfeld said.



The Rev. Hyung Jin Moon, the spiritual heir of The Washington Times’ founder, the Rev. Sun Myung Moon, told the crowd of more than 600 who packed the ballroom at the Wardman Park Hotel that he remained committed to the vision of the paper’s role laid out by his father 30 years ago. He said the theological basis of the teachings of his father, who passed away a month ago at the age of 92, was that “freedom is God’s greatest gift.”

Rev. Moon, 33, joked to the crowd that he could “truthfully say I have been reading The Washington Times my entire life.”

Master of ceremonies and Fox Business News correspondent John Stossel told the capacity crowd that the newspaper was conceived and brought to the market to “make sure that our capital had an alternative source of information and opinion.”

“And that’s a good thing,” he said.

In his welcoming remarks, Washington Times President Thomas McDevitt cited the role of the paper’s employees, advertisers and readers in making The Times a viable, visible presence in the city and the country.

He noted the limited number of journalistic choices and conservative viewpoints in the mainstream media when The Times was launched as a daily newspaper in the spring of 1982.

“Rev. Moon once said that he founded The Washington Times ‘to promote the spirit of truth,’ and we’re glad he did,” Mr. McDevitt said, addressing the crowd under a large red, white and blue placard reading “30th Anniversary: Fearless Reporting. American Values. 1982-2012.”

“When you look around at the state of the news media these days, and the polls revealing that trust in the media is at record lows, you can see why we feel that a mission to ‘promote the spirit of truth’ is so important, and one that we take very seriously,” he added.

In addition to dignitaries, business leaders and past and present Times employees, Mr. McDevitt noted that many loyal Times readers also had come to mark the paper’s milestone, some of them subscribers dating back to the paper’s founding days.

“Nothing gives me more satisfaction than to stop by a coffee shop and notice someone engrossed in reading The Times,” he said.

Entertainment for the evening was provided by Internet singing star and “American Idol” contestant Krista Branch, who performed her 2010 hit “I Am America,” considered the unofficial anthem of the tea party movement that was later adopted as the official song of the campaign of GOP presidential candidate Herman Cain in the primary contests.

The gala dinner capped off a daylong symposium marking three decades of publishing in the nation’s capital.



The first issue of The Washington Times appeared May 17, 1982, just months after the demise of the 130-year-old Washington Star left Washington, D.C., a one-paper town. The Times' founders envisioned the new paper as a general-interest alternative to The Washington Post and a daily with a distinctive, conservative editorial voice.

One of the last major metropolitan dailies to establish itself in the marketplace, The Times — and its www.washingtontimes.com digital sister launched in May 1996 — featured a front-page, on-the-ground report of British preparations for the invasion of the Falkland Islands in its first edition. Since then, the paper's writers, editors, photographers and columnists have chronicled a momentous three decades of history in Washington and the world, from the end of the Cold War and the 9/11 attacks to the death of Ronald Reagan and the election of the nation's first black president.



Times' sportswriters were there to cover three Redskins Super Bowl wins and — just this week — the first division title for the fledgling Washington Nationals. The Times' Metro section published a special afternoon edition the day D.C. Mayor Marion Barry was arrested on cocaine charges, and another special edition the day the charges were dismissed because of a mistrial.

The Times' investigative reporters have broken major scoops of issues such as the House Bank check-kiting scandal, President Clinton's Whitewater real estate dealings and the Obama administration's Fast and Furious gunrunning operation along the Mexican border. The Times has also branched out with a daily radio talk show featuring longtime Washington radio personality Andy Parks and a news aggregation service, Times 24/7.

The choice of Mr. Rumsfeld reflects in part The Times' dedication to coverage of military issues large and small. Reporters at The Times aggressively covered China's military buildup and the challenges facing U.S. military forces, as well as the problems of those in the ranks with the paper's long-running Sgt. Shaft column.