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FOCUS

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Black Economic Advancement: New Goals for a New Decade

As Discrimination Continues to Plague Our Society, Black Economic Empowerment Remains on the Nation's Unfinished Civil Rights Agenda

The Downside of Downsizing the Military

Plans for Massive Cuts in Military Personnel Will Strain the Economy and Reduce Opportunities for Black Americans

Black America and African Liberation

Second of Two Historical Articles on the Relationship Between Black Americans and Africa

POLITICAL TRENDLETTER®

Perspective

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Black Economic Advancement: New Goals for a New Decade

by Eddie N. Williams

When scholars and analysts assess the second half of the twentieth century and probe as far into the next century as their skills will allow, few issues will loom larger than race relations as a defining force in our national character.

On the one hand, history books will surely speak of what is fairly seen as a social revolution over the past fifty years. Through the powers of law, politics, and moral suasion, walls of segregation have been razed and most racial barriers have been shattered. From the desegregation of public schools in 1954 to the election of the first election of a black governor in 1989, we have witnessed developments that once were dreams deferred.

On the other hand, history books that chronicle success must also sound a warning about the problems that lie ahead. Nowhere is this warning more vividly expressed than in the National Academy of Sciences report, *A Common Destiny: Blacks and American Society*, which concludes on these two somber notes: "significant discrimination against blacks is still a feature of American society" and "barring unforeseen events or policy changes, the future status of black Americans will continue to stagnate and decline, with tragic consequences for blacks and for American society."

This dire warning is based on the many problems that remain unsolved, including poverty, joblessness, drug abuse, teenage parenthood, and low levels of educational achievement, especially among young black males. Despite a growing black middle class and the advance of a number of blacks into the economic mainstream, blacks lag behind whites in all economic areas, and the general economic condition of the black community is deteriorating.

There are no quick solutions to these complex problems; nor is there a single way to address them. However, economic stability and advancement bear a critical relationship to each of these problem areas. If blacks were better off economically, it stands to reason that they would be better off socially as well.

It is not surprising, therefore, that strengthening the role of blacks in the American economy is widely viewed as the nation's most important unfinished civil rights agenda. Indeed, the economic advancement of black Americans must become the new cutting edge in our pursuit of racial justice. With our national economy ailing, one might argue that this is not a good time for black Americans to push for economic empowerment. After all, most civil rights gains have come during periods when the economy was strong. Nevertheless, the circumstances are different today. Corporate and government leaders are slowly recognizing that it is in the national interest for blacks to become a significant boost for the economy rather than a drag on it.

There are at least two incentives for the nation to vigorously pursue black economic empowerment now. One is the rising chorus of black voices demanding a bigger slice of the nation's economic pie. A second incentive comes from the competition we face from Japan, Germany, and, beginning in 1992, the European Community. In the face of this competition and our acknowledged declining productivity, rising unemployment, and nagging federal deficit, the nation can ill afford to ignore the economic potential inherent in its black population (and its Hispanic population as well) which comprises a greater proportion of the national labor force with each year that passes.

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Since blacks' economic interests are the same as the nation's economic interests, namely productivity, competitiveness, and profitability, it would seem that for pragmatic reasons, if not for moral reasons, corporate and government leaders should promote the economic advancement of black Americans. Thus, what is good for blacks would also profit the society as a whole—a not insignificant convergence of interests.

There are several strategies blacks themselves can pursue to accelerate their advancement. The first—and the most obvious—is to substantially increase their levels of educational involvement, attainment, and achievement. Too many blacks are losing the battle for better jobs and incomes before they ever get to the labor market because of soaring school drop-out rates and poor educational performance. Education and training are the primary vehicles for upward mobility in our society. We must insist on the best educational systems that government can provide. We must also insist on a new attitude among our young people that embraces educational excellence and intellectual competitiveness.

Strengthening the role of blacks in the American economy is widely viewed as the nation's most important unfinished civil rights agenda. Indeed, the economic advancement of black Americans must become the new cutting edge in our pursuit of racial justice . . . Corporate and government leaders are slowly recognizing that it is in the national interest for blacks to become a significant boost for the economy rather than a drag on it.

Second, we must make a stronger commitment to black entrepreneurship and to investing more capital in black-owned business ventures. All around us are a growing number of successful black businessmen and -women and a much larger pool of aspiring entrepreneurs. We need to support their enterprises and their aspirations and to press for an end to the obstacles that impede the development of viable black-owned establishments.

The third strategy follows naturally from the first two. With better jobs, better earnings, and more prosperous businesses, we will also increase the buying power of black consumers. Blacks must use that increased purchasing power, and the increased political clout that comes with it, to put a larger goal squarely on the public agenda: wiping out poverty.

Fourth, black leaders must become major players on the economic stage. They must fully understand and engage the rapidly evolving new economic order in all its complexity. Succeeding in this new environment requires identifying specific objectives and fashioning strategies to achieve them.

Fifth, blacks must strengthen and expand their self-help initiatives. Many of today's problems—family disintegration, drug abuse, crime—must be addressed by blacks themselves in concert with government action. Our rich tradition of self help, which dates back to our African heritage, is alive today in thousands of efforts sponsored by our churches, our sororities and fraternities, and our civic, service, and social organizations. Blacks must expand these efforts to the benefit of their community and nation.

Sixth, we must continue to press ahead on the political front where impressive victories already have been won. Since 1965, the number of black elected officials has grown from around 300 to over 7,500. They serve their constituencies in Congress and at the state, local, and county levels. As the number of black elected officials has grown, we have witnessed an increase in the number of blacks competing for public office at all levels, including an unprecedented number elected in predominantly white jurisdictions. Some recent victors are well-known: Governor L. Douglas Wilder in Virginia, Mayor David N. Dinkins in New York. Less well known nationally are Illinois Attorney General Roland Burris, Oklahoma Corporation Commissioner J.C. Watts, and Judge Morris Overstreet of the Texas State Court of Criminal Appeals.

Good politics often makes strange bedfellows. So blacks must be open to coalition partnerships from every quarter: business and labor, the Democratic and Republican parties, liberals and conservatives, other minorities, and women. A critical and urgent challenge for African-Americans today is to seek common cause with Hispanics, Asian-Americans, and Jews who share similar values and aspirations.

Black economic advancement depends not only on self-help and individual initiative but on sound public policies as well. Black economic progress, therefore, is inseparable from continued political progress.

This brings me to the seventh strategy: we must not let government off the hook. The Reagan revolution must be overturned. A fundamental and abiding truth is that the American government should be an active agent for improving the quality of life for *all* its people and for responding to community needs in times of crisis. Therefore, even in the face of huge budget deficits and large budget cuts, the people in need—farmers, children, veterans, immigrants, students, the elderly, small businessmen, minorities—should continue to be the focus of special attention and funding from government. The social and economic crisis in the black community today deserves no less attention. ■

The Downside of Downsizing the Military

Plans for Massive Cuts in Military Personnel Will Strain the Economy and Reduce Opportunities for Black Americans

by Michael Shane

Last September, the West German government agreed to pay the Soviet Union $8 billion for the movement, resettlement, and retraining of some 360,000 Soviet troops stationed in what was then East Germany. The U.S.S.R. was thinking ahead and looking for ways to ease the trauma of shifting this mass of people from military to civilian employment in an already weak economy.

Here in the United States, as our own forces return from the Persian Gulf and the military is required to make similar cutbacks, it is ironic that we find ourselves with much the same problem as the Soviets. Both the government and the private sector should be making plans to accommodate the large influx of Americans who will be trading desert fatigues for business suits and blue collars.

As a result of the "end of the Cold War," including *glasnost* in the Soviet Union, political changes in Eastern Europe, and progress in strategic and conventional arms reduction, Congress and the Bush administration decided to reduce active duty personnel strength by over 500,000 by the middle of this decade. Each branch of the U.S. military will be cut significantly. While the reduction will cause jobs to disappear for military personnel of all races, blacks in uniform will be forced into a civilian job market that is decidedly less friendly to them than to others. Work must begin now to insure that once the "welcome home" parades are over, those displaced by this downsizing can be absorbed into the civilian work force.

Last fall, General Colin L. Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, stated that prior to the crisis in the Persian Gulf he had been pressured by black leaders who were concerned that restructuring and downsizing the military would squeeze out opportunities for black Americans. In October, Lieutenant General Donald W. Jones, the deputy assistant secretary of defense for military manpower and personnel policy, briefed NAACP officials (at their request) on the impact the draw-down would have on African-Americans. Iraq's August invasion of Kuwait and the resultant operations "Desert Shield" and "Desert Storm" supplanted concern over the draw-down with alarm that blacks were disproportionately represented in combat units. The economic impact of troop reductions was temporarily lost in desert sands and political rhetoric. Now that Desert Storm is all but concluded, it is necessary to reexamine the consequences of the downsizing plan.

U.S. Army Colonel Michael Shane is a senior military fellow at the Joint Center.

Trimming the Budget

The Department of Defense (DoD) FY92 budget projects a 25 percent reduction in active-duty military forces (from 2.1 million to 1.58 million) by 1995-96. Since blacks comprise 20 percent of the military and are likely to remain at that level, at least 100,000 fewer blacks can be expected to be on active duty five years from now. That projection could be even higher because the Army, which has the largest percentage of blacks (29 percent compared to 16 percent for the Navy, 15 percent for the Air Force, and 19 percent for the Marine Corps) is currently slated for the largest cut—214,000 troops or 28.5 percent. Thus, the number of blacks on active duty in all branches of the service could be reduced by as many as 110,000.

With the end of Desert Storm, a substantial exodus will take place within the next few months. Most reservists and National Guard members are likely to return to civilian jobs waiting for them. But there will also be a larger than normal number of active duty separations from the services, and these people will be looking for new employment. This surge of departures will occur because normal retirements and discharges were delayed during the Persian Gulf crisis. In the Army, for example, these so-called "Stop Loss" provisions applied to some 32,000 soldiers (over 9,000 of whom may be black) who, having been held past their discharge or retirement dates, must now be quickly released.

All of this, added to normally heavy summer discharges, means a larger than usual group of ex-service members will be trying to enter the civilian labor force this summer. With the recession already pushing unemployment to 6.8 percent, its highest level in four years, these veterans will be coming home to a weak job market.

Lost Opportunities for Youths

The reductions agreed upon by the Bush administration and Congress are slated to occur between fiscal years 1992 and 1996. The Defense Department does not plan to accomplish this reduction by summarily discharging over half a million service members. In briefing the NAACP, the Department's representative stated that the reduction would be accomplished "without forced separations, where possible." DoD plans to achieve 60 to 80 percent of the draw-down by "reducing accessions," that is, by cutting back on the number of people recruited into the services. "Voluntary releases" (normal separations after fixed terms

April 1991

POLITICAL TRENDLETTER®

Inside This Issue:

- The number of black women in politics is increasing at a faster rate than that of any other group in American politics.
- The controversy over federal scholarships for minorities has been revived as the Department of Education gets a new chief.
- A new commission has been formed to investigate the crisis of black males in society.
- Across the Nation: Richard Hatcher attempts a comeback as mayor of Gary; and the mayoral race heats up in Philadelphia.

Black Women Are Fastest Growing Group in Politics

In electoral politics, black women now constitute the fastest-growing group, according to data compiled over the past two decades by the Joint Center. "The increase in the number of blacks winning election to public office is a real success story," says the Joint Center's president EDDIE N. WILLIAMS. "An even bigger success story is the rising level of achievement among black women in politics. Just two examples are the elections of mayors SHARON PRATT DIXON in Washington, D.C., and CARRIE PERRY in Hartford, Connecticut, which have brought black women into the arena of big city leadership."

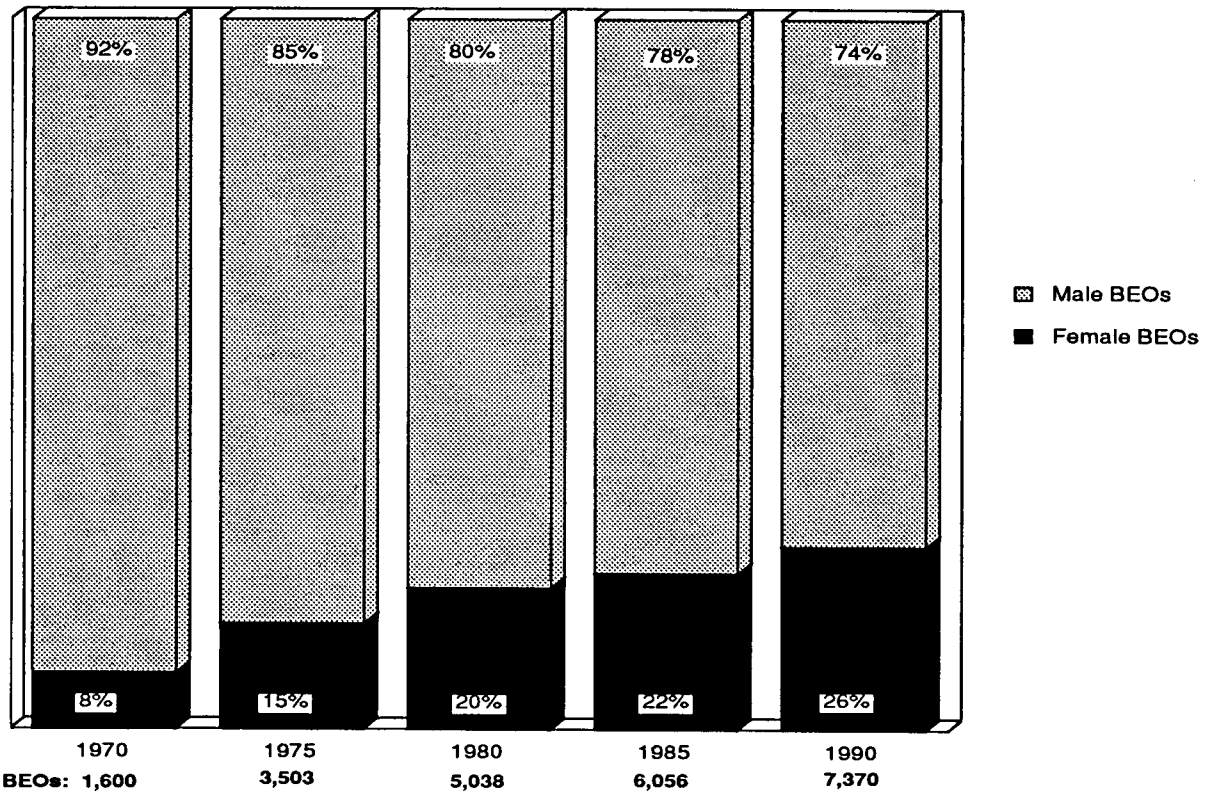
Since 1970, the overall number of black women elected to local, county, state, and congressional offices has risen from 131 to 1,950. In 1970, only one out of every 12 black elected officials was a woman; today the ratio is one out of four. In state elective offices overall, black women constitute about 26 percent of all black elected officials. In 1976, just 38 state legislators were black women. As of 1989, that figure had grown to 96—78 state assembly members and 18 senators. And the numbers are still growing: in the 1990 elections, 33 of the 70 newly elected black state legislators—or nearly half—were women.

This growth is likely to continue. Women now make up about 37 percent of all BEOs on school boards, which are traditionally "entry-level" political positions; many of these female board members are likely to move up to higher levels of office over time.

Black women have already been moving into positions of greater influence within the elected bodies on which they already serve. Two examples in California are State Senator DIANA WATSON and Representative GWEN MOORE, who chair the committees on Health and Human Services and on Utilities and Commerce, respectively. In Alabama, the Committee on the Constitution and Elections is chaired by State Representative BOBBIE MCDOWELL. And in Michigan, representative TEOLA HUNTER chairs the Economic Development and Energy Committee and is speaker pro tempore of the state house.

Greater power is also accruing to black women within their local, state, and national party structures. This is putting them in a strong position for future advancement. In Texas, blacks are the Democratic party committeewomen in six districts and a black woman is vice chair of the state party. Half of the seats on the black caucus of the Democratic National Committee are held by black women, giving them an equal voice with black men within their party'sdecision-making body. Williams concludes, "The impressive political achievements of black women reflect their longstanding prominent role within the black community and their extraordinary commitment to public service. As black Americans continue to expand their role in the nation's political mainstream, black women are becoming a highly visible and increasingly influential part of that leadership."

Growth in the Proportion of Women Among Black Elected Officials, 1970-1990



Source: Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, Inc.

Federal Minority Scholarships: Act II

On March 20, just days after being sworn in as Secretary of Education, former Republican governor of Tennessee LAMAR ALEXANDER announced in a news conference that he will initiate new federal guidelines on awarding scholarships that assist minority college students. The guidelines will be issued following a review of the department's current scholarship policies.

Last December, the Education Department's assistant secretary for civil rights, **MICHAEL WILLIAMS**, stirred up a major controversy when he wrote a letter to organizers of the Fiesta Bowl football game in Tempe, Arizona, who intended to contribute $200,000 for the two schools that played in the New Years Day game, declaring that minority scholarships were illegal. Williams, who is black, charged that "race-exclusive" scholarships violate Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and warned that colleges which continue to award such scholarships would be denied federal funds. The letter immediately raised the ire of the higher education community—including college presidents and financial aid administrators as well as parents and students.

Financial aid officers oppose Williams' letter ruling because it places a cloud over the legality of scholarship programs already run by thousands of academic institutions. Some university administrators have attacked the premise of Williams' letter—that scholarships which benefit minorities are indeed "race-exclusive." To examine the nature of these programs, the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU) surveyed its 826 member schools in December. The survey showed that most scholarship programs use a variety of reward criteria apart from race, including financial need and academic merit. It found that only 13.7 percent of the scholarship programs and 2.8 percent of student aid fund could be considered purely race based. In an attempt at damage control, the Bush administration has modified Williams' decision by permitting federally assisted universities to administer "restricted scholarships" earmarked for minorities as long as funds come from private sources and are not financed out of the institutions' general aid moneys. That move, however, did not quell the storm.

Alexander has said that the current uncertainty about the policy exists because the department's decisions have been rare and inconsistent during the past decade. He has stated that one goal of his policy review is to clear up confusion about the extent to which a student's race or national origin may be considered in awarding financial aid. At his March press conference, Alexander said his review would include a survey of colleges and universities to determine the features and rationales of existing financial aid programs that consider race or national origin. Views from the academic community and other interested parties will also be considered in the review. Alexander predicted that the review process, which will be conducted in consultation with the Justice Department, will take about six months. When finished, new Education Department guidelines will be published and distributed to colleges and universities. Final decisions on pending disputes over scholarship awards to minorities have been postponed until the new guidelines are issued.

Meanwhile, a new player in the controversy surfaced during congressional hearings conducted on March 19 and 20 by the House Government Operations Subcommittee on Human Resources and Intergovernmental Relations. The subcommittee learned that Williams was not the originator of the letter in the first place, but that Deputy Assistant Secretary of Education RICHARD D. KOMER, who is white, was the moving force behind its release. The House panel also discovered that the Education Department began to develop the scholarship policy during the Reagan administration with input from some right-wing organizations, including the Washington Legal Foundation. Komer initially refused to appear before the subcommittee and was subsequently forced to reveal his role in the policy decision under congressional subpoena.

Commission to Address Problems of Black Men

New York City Mayor DAVID N. DINKINS, Virginia Governor L. DOUGLAS WILDER, U.S. Senator TERRY SANFORD of North Carolina, and U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Chairman ARTHUR FLETCHER have joined with other political leaders to establish the 21st Century Commission on African American Males, which will assist Congress in developing a national policy for addressing the crisis facing black men in this country. In March, U.S. Senator DON RIEGLE (D-Mich.), one of the commission's honorary board members, convened a roundtable hearing on the issue before the housing and urban affairs subcommittee of the Senate Banking Committee. The crisis was framed in grim testimony to the subcommittee: black males have the lowest life expectancy of any group in the United States; their unemployment rate is more than twice as high as that of white males; black men with college degrees are three times more likely to be unemployed than their white counterparts; approximately one in four black men between the ages of 20 and 29 is behind bars, and they receive longer prison sentences than whites who have committed the same crimes. Closely related to the crisis is the 20 percent decrease in marriages among black couples over the last 20 years.

A second hearing has been scheduled by the subcommittee in conjunction with the commission's "National Conference on the Crisis Status of Black Males in America," to be held May 22 to 25 in Washington. According to **KATHY WELLMAN**, executive director of the 30-member bipartisan commission, the May conference will bring together elected officials, civic leaders, educators, corporate executives, and foundation representatives to develop a national policy initiative consisting of achievable recommendations for mitigating the problems confronting the black male. "Clearly this is not a black problem but a national concern, and that is why the goal is for a national policy initiative," said Wellman. She said that in addition to the second congressional hearing convened by Riegle, the conference will feature 11 panels, including education, health care, black family life, employment, and drugs. After the conference, the commission members will continue to meet to develop recommendations.

In looking at the problem, Senator Sanford noted, it is important to remember the other side of the picture. He reminded participants at the March hearing that 75 percent of black men aged 20 to 29 have not had serious encounters with the law and approximately 56 percent of black males between the ages of 16 and 24 are gainfully employed. "In other words, the complete story of black males in this country is not one of failure. The level of success exceeds the level of failure," said Sanford. He continued, "It is toward these success stories that public policymakers must look if we are to frame policies to reduce those environmental factors which threaten the growth and development of future generations of young black males."

In his testimony at the March hearing, Joint Center president Eddie N. Williams, a member of the commission's board, said "I personally would not expect that there would ever be a policy for young black males; but rather that public policies dealing with employment and education, forexample, will acknowledge and be sensitive to the problems of young black males as we try to formulate our programmatic solutions."

Across the Nation

INDIANA: One of the nation's first black mayors of a major city, RICHARD HATCHER, is trying to regain his position as mayor of Gary. In the May 7 Democratic primary, Hatcher must face one-term incumbent THOMAS BARNES, who is also black, as well as seven other candidates.

Barnes was a Hatcher ally during the former mayor's 20 years in office. But the two became embroiled in a bitter election primary in 1987, in which Barnes prevailed. Hatcher has said his bid to regain the mayorship is not motivated by revenge but is an effort to return the city to better times. The biggest campaign issue is how to revive the city's economy. The community is divided over a proposal to raise new revenue by allowing casino gambling, an idea that Barnes, alone among the candidates, publicly supports. Hatcher has criticized Barnes for failing to implement an economic development plan, charging "not a house has been built, not a brick has been laid" since Hatcher left office in 1987.

Barnes supporters counter that Hatcher himself was ousted in 1987 because of his 20 years of ineffectiveness, and that one term has not given Barnes enough time to repair the harm done to the city during the Hatcher years.

A white Democratic candidate, **SCOTT KING**, is also running. A political newcomer, King is a former state and federal prosecutor who cites the need for economic development and more efficient management of city hall as his reasons for seeking the mayor's seat. He says "City hall must be revamped to operate like a business and not like a political organization." If elected, King said he plans to reorganize the police department and the school board and attract private investment for development. King claims to have attracted a silent following in the black community, but he has yet to receive a major black endorsement.

PENNSYLVANIA: Eight candidates—three black and five white—are vying for the seat of two-term black Philadelphia mayor WILSON GOODE in the city's hotly contested May 21 primary. Goode is prevented by law from running for a third term. Among the black candidates are LUCIEN BLACKWELL, a former city councilman and union leader; GEORGE R. BURRELL, JR., a city councilman and attorney; and JAMES S. WHITE, former city managing director. In addition, the Democratic contest includes two white candidates, former two-term district attorney EDWARD RENDELL and PETER HEARN, a millionaire attorney who had been the chancellor of the Philadelphia Bar Association.

Among the Republican contenders is **RONALD CASTILLE**, who resigned as district attorney before announcing his candidacy. Castille has been endorsed by the Republican Party leadership and seems to have the inside track to that party's nomination. Another GOP hopeful is municipal financial consultant and former liberal Democrat **SAM KATZ**, who switched parties to run for mayor. Finally, there is Democrat turned Republican **FRANK RIZZO**, former police commissioner and two-term mayor. Rizzo, who has strong support among white ethnics and blue collar workers, gained a reputation for being hostile to blacks during his tenure as mayor from 1971 to 1979.

As the campaign stands now, Goode appears likely to be succeeded by a white mayor. Among the Democrats, Rendell has taken a strong lead in the opinion polls. Furthermore, the three black candidates in the race are certain to split the black vote (the city is 40 percent black). Rendell has been a Pennsylvania special prosecutor and in 1986 was a gubernatorial candidate. Although he's popular among both white and black Democrats and has been endorsed by black state senator **HARDY WILLIAMS**, Rendell is not a shoe-in. Many blacks have not forgiven him for reneging on his promise not to run against Goode in the 1987 primary.

Blackwell and Burrell, who are considered the leading black candidates, appeal to very different segments of the black community. Blackwell's reputation is as a street-savvy, grass-roots politician who has been on the city's political scene for a long time. A former state senator, he served 17 years on the city council and is in his 18th year as president of the International Longshoremen's Association, Local 332. Through the years, Blackwell has developed rock-solid working class backing in the black community, but opponents warn that in the general election he wouldn't attract white cross-over votes .

Burrell, by contrast, is a corporate attorney who served two years on the city council and was deputy mayor from 1980 to 1983. He stakes his hopes on the multiracial coalition that brought Goode into office. He has been endorsed by powerful black Philadelphia congressman **WILLIAM H. GRAY** and by other established black political figures. Despite these assets, polls indicate that his candidacy hasn't caught on with many voters. Whoever becomes mayor will have to deal with Philadelphia's monumental fiscal crisis—the one issue that has dominated the campaign. The city has been on the brink of bankruptcy for the past year and its projected budget deficit for the next fiscal year is $230 million.

The conventional wisdom is that in this heavily Democratic city, a candidate from the reigning party will prevail in November. But there is also talk that primary losers from either or both parties might run in the general election as independent candidates. If that happens, all bets are off.

of service) and early retirements would account for another 15 to 25 percent. And only 10 to 30 percent of the cutback would be accomplished by a reduction in force (RIF) or "forced separations."

Those most affected will therefore be young people coming out of high school, many of whose predecessors looked to the military for their first full-time job opportunity. These youngsters are very employable, since the services have for the past several years accepted, almost exclusively, high school graduates who score well on standard military aptitude tests and who are unencumbered by arrest records or histories of serious alcohol or drug use. Yet, they traditionally face difficulty in entering the job market and experience higher unemployment than any other age group. The military draw-down and the current recession will further limit their options.

Helping Those Forced Out of Uniform

Rep. Beverly Byron (D-Md.), chair of the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Personnel and Compensation, says, "I think it is important and critical how we treat our personnel after Desert Storm is over." She asks, "What do we do to help those personnel and what policies will [we] make for those people that have been called up and have gone willingly and served so very, very far away? What are we going to do to make sure that their families are protected and taken care of?"

Congress and the DoD have begun to provide for service members who will be forced to leave the military because of the draw-down. The 1991 National Defense Authorization Act (passed by Congress in October 1990) offers transition assistance in several areas. Officers forced to leave the service have always been eligible for a separation (severance) payment, but for the first time enlisted personnel will be eligible as well. The payments, which will vary by rank and years of service, would amount to approximately $18,000 for a mid-grade enlisted person with 10 years' service. Other separation benefits include access to temporary medical care, temporary commissary and post exchange privileges (military operated discount retail stores), and temporary government housing.

Unfortunately, these are only short-term measures. For the longer term, one of the most promising programs now being put together is the Army Career and Alumni Program, or ACAP. Linda White, ACAP Program Coordinator, says that services are currently available at seven pilot sites (five in the United States and one each in Germany and Korea) and will become on-line at more locations by the end of this summer. For soldiers leaving the Army, ACAP offers services such as job counseling and referrals through newly created Job Assistance Centers.

Army officials are also exploring arrangements with states and corporations, hopeful that through such agreements, separating soldiers can quickly be linked up with available civilian employment. The Army recently signed an agreement with the Florida Department of Education to expedite job referral and placement for new veterans in five areas of employment: transportation, health services, law enforcement, education services, and tourism.

Whether military service is viewed as either a positive or a negative, the fact remains that soon, well over 100,000 fewer black Americans will be employed as uniformed members of the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines. They will be entering a job market that for now, at least, is decidedly inhospitable to them. Federal, state, and local governments, and especially potential employers, need to begin now to prepare for the coming dislocations. These Americans have already demonstrated their value as citizens and future employees. They must be given the same opportunities in civilian life they would have had in the military. This is doubly true for black Americans. ■

The views expressed here are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the policy or position of the U.S. Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. government.

Military Service and Opportunity

There are many budgetary benefits to the military reductions that have been agreed upon by Congress and the administration, including additional funds freed up for domestic spending, to name but one. But for thousands of black Americans currently serving in the military or looking ahead to military service as part of their career plans, the draw-down will reduce solid job opportunities and excellent prospects of upward mobility. Although it may be an indictment of the rest of the nation, the military is arguably the most integrated element of our society. Nowhere else has black leadership been accepted as fully or black accomplishment more greatly rewarded. The armed forces today represent the closest thing we have to a true "meritocracy."

In recent testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, General Powell stated, "I wish that there were other activities in our society and in our nation that were as open [to minorities] as the military is to upward mobility, to achievement, to allowing them in. I wish that corporate America, I wish the trade unions around the nation would show the same level of openness and opportunity to minorities that the military has."

Looking at salary alone, the military compares favorably with the civilian job market. According to a Congressional Budget Office study, the average 18-year-old who is employed full-time earns $800 to $1,000 a month. A private in the Army takes home about $700 a month but, when benefits are factored in—housing, meals, medical and dental care—that private's monthly compensation rises to over $1,600.

The general satisfaction that blacks feel with their careers and lifestyles in the military is most convincingly demonstrated by DoD reenlistment statistics. After their first term, 62 percent of blacks in the Army sign up for another stint. This rate is not only high in and of itself, it is also substantially higher than the reenlistment rate for any other ethnic group; Army reenlistment figures stand at 48 percent for Hispanic and 38 percent for whites. —***M.S.***

Black America and African Liberation

Second of Two Historical Articles on the Relationship Between Black Americans and Africa

by Walter C. Carrington

Throughout the twentieth century black Americans have fought for racial dignity on two fronts. While the major battle was at home against segregation and discrimination, a campaign was also waged on behalf of Africa, an ancestral homeland struggling to break the chains of colonial domination.

One man more than any other symbolized the two-pronged struggle —W.E.B. Du Bois, a founder of the N.A.A.C.P. and the main promulgator of the doctrine of Pan-Africanism. When he proclaimed in 1900 that "the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line" he defined a barrier that limited black aspirations in Africa as much as in America. Du Bois's urging of a cooperative—a Pan-African—effort to erase that line was the opening salvo of a century of struggle. Black Americans would explore many, often divergent, paths leading towards reconciliation with their African heritage. Some would attempt to influence U.S. foreign policy towards Africa, many would reclaim their African cultural roots, while others would seek to separate themselves from white America either by emigrating back to Africa or by creating "African" enclaves within the borders of the United States.

The progenitor of the policy of using black American pressure to lobby for the decolonization of Africa was W. E. B. Du Bois. A distinguished scholar and activist, hewas the first black to receive a Ph.D. from Harvard. His long and productive life began in America at the dawn of Reconstruction and ended in Ghana, 94 years later, on the very eve of the 1963 March on Washington.

At the end of World War I, Du Bois sought to turn Germany's loss into Africa's gain by freeing the German colonies. With the assistance of Blaise Diagne, the Senegalese member of the French parliament, he convened in Paris the first Pan-African Conference which was timed to parallel the post-war Peace Conference in 1919. It was attended mainly by blacks from the United States and the Caribbean who petitioned the Peace Conference in nearby Versailles through a series of anti-colonial resolutions.

Most demands on behalf of African nationalism fared no better with the victorious Allies than similar pleas by Kurds and Armenians for relief from Turkish and Russian rule. The one exception was the fate of the former German colonies. Du Bois and his fellow Pan-Africanists urged that they not be transferred to other colonial powers but instead be placed under international supervision. This led to the establishment of the Mandates Commission, under which the League of Nations kept South West Africa (now Namibia) from being incorporated into South Africa. Namibia, Cameroon, Togo, and Tanganyika were later transformed into Trust Territories under the United Nations.

The Raising of Mass Consciousness

While the Pan-African movement united black intellectuals in the Americas and Africa, it left the masses of blacks in the African diaspora largely unmoved. As the Pan-Africanists were convening in various European capitals during the 1920s, the condition of blacks in the United States was deteriorating, with white mob violence flaring up in Northern cities and Southern towns. It was during these desperate times that Marcus Garvey arrived from Jamaica in 1916 to become the greatest mass leader black America had yet known. His doctrine of "Africa for the Africans at home and abroad" quickly caught on. Garvey instilled pride of self and heritage and called for a return to Africa—of which he named himself provisional president. At the height of his influence, in the early 1920s, Garvey had a following of more than a million people. Had not the U.S. government successfully brought controversial mail fraud charges against him in 1923 and deported him in 1927, there is no telling how much stronger his movement might have grown during the Great Depression.

Garvey never got to Africa himself and his resettlement plans did not succeed, but he had a great impact on nationalist thought in Africa and on the views of ordinary black Americans toward their African roots. His book, *The Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey*, influenced a broad spectrum of African thinking. Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana, later wrote that of all the literature he had studied none did more to fire his enthusiasm for the liberation of his country than Garvey's *Philosophy*.

Organizing to Influence U.S. Policy

The consciousness about Africa that Garvey had resurrected among the black masses did not disappear with his deportation. The embers of that fire flamed up again in 1936 when Italy invaded Ethiopia. Racial pride erupted as never before when Emperor Haile Selassie stood before the League of Nations and warned of the holocaust that would

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come if the nations of the world did not aid his country and embargo Fascist Italy.

The Ethiopian war became the main topic of conversation wherever blacks gathered. Volunteers in America were recruited to go and fight alongside their African brothers. And in a championship boxing match that took on mythic proportions, Joe Louis's fists became instruments of vindication for a whole people when he delivered a beating to the Italian, Primo Carnera.

Over the next two and a half decades, several organizations would be formed to influence U.S. foreign policy. In 1937, Max Yergan, the first black faculty member of the City College of New York, organized the Council on African Affairs (CAA), the first black-led group dedicated to swaying American policy towards Africa. The Council, whose leadership included Paul Robeson, Ralph Bunche, Adam Clayton Powell, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Mordecai Johnson, worked closely with African nationalists and labor leaders and lobbied the U.S. government on their behalf. It paid special attention to South Africa and forged links with the African National Congress. The Council's potential was curtailed in the post-war years by the rise of McCarthyism and charges that it was a Soviet front.

Sensing once again the opportunities for African liberation offered by the conclusion of war—this time World War II—a fifth Pan-African conference, chaired by Du Bois, met in Manchester, England in 1945. It was attended by such future African heads of state as Nkrumah of Ghana and Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, who used the meeting as a springboard for the independence movements which, over the next two decades, were to liberate their continent.

Anti-colonial agitation in Africa during the 1950s caught the attention of more and more American blacks. Many supported Kenya's Mau Mau rebellion and some emigrated to Ghana after independence in 1957. During that period, two important but short-lived groups emerged, the American Society for African Culture (AMSAC) and the American Negro Leadership Conference on Africa (ANLCA). AMSAC was formed by American delegates at a 1956 conference of black intellectuals in Paris called by the francophone African magazine, *Presence Africain.* AMSAC brought important African leaders to the United States, held regular conferences on African issues, and published a leading journal, *African Forum.* The ANLCA was founded shortly afterwards as the foreign policy arm of a consortium of civil rights, church, and fraternal organizations. Through a Washington office it lobbied the White House, Congress, and the State Department.

Whereas the Council on African Affairs ran afoul of the anti-communist hysteria of the 1950s, AMSAC and ANLCA were undone by a reverse stigma of the 1960s. They were unable to survive revelations that they had accepted funding from the CIA. With the demise of ANLCA, African issues became less and less a matter of priority among mainstream civil rights organizations.

Linking Black Power and African Liberation

Through the 1960s and 1970s, then, it was not in the civil rights mainstream but in countless eddies of mass movements where black nationalism and Pan-Africanism were finding a revival. Responding to the death in 1961 of the charismatic young leader of the Congo, Patrice Lumumba, black nationalists who believed the United States had conspired in his overthrow and murder rioted at the United Nations. It was a watershed event. America's mainstream leaders, black and white, were taken aback by the passions Lumumba's death had unleashed.

Those same leaders were also slow to appreciate the mass appeal of a fiery young Muslim minister who called himself Malcolm X. In 1964, he made his pilgrimage to Mecca. While abroad he made his first visit to Africa and attended the meeting of the Organization of African Unity where he equated the racist practices of the United States with those of South Africa. So while the civil rights movement was turning the energies of black Americans inward and southward, the more militant among the young were flirting with nationalist and Pan-African concepts. Malcolm X had helped these youths to see the larger connection with Africa and to link the American struggle with that of people of color around the globe.

Embracing Malcolm X's ideas, militants took over the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) by electing Stokely Carmichael to replace John Lewis, the organization's more traditionally integrationist head. In 1966, the SNCC took up Carmichael's cry of "Black Power," with its powerful Pan-African connotations.

On another front, Robert Williams, a deposed NAACP leader in North Carolina who argued that blacks had the right to take up arms in self defense, returned from self-imposed exile in Africa to proclaim a new nation. He claimed the five Southern states with the largest black populations—Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, and South Carolina—as "The Republic of New Africa."

Williams' hopes for a black nation in the Black Belt never got much beyond the dedication, in March 1971, of a parcel of land in Mississippi as "the first African capital of the northern Western Hemisphere." This effort to create an African nation within the borders of the United States was no more successful than the earlier attempts by Garvey and others to resettle blacks on African shores.

Challenging U.S. Policy

The passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 had moved the civil rights movement from the streets to the polling booths. A critical mass of blacks was now in the U.S. House of Representatives and, under the leadership of Democratic Congressman Charles Diggs of Detroit, organized the Congressional Black Caucus in 1970. Diggs himself had risen to the chairmanship of the House Subcommittee on African Affairs and had become the most important critic of U.S. policy on Africa.

In 1972, at Howard University, the Caucus sponsored the largest black American conference on Africa ever held in the United States. At the top of the agenda was the

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African Liberation

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mobilization of black Americans to press for the elimination of white rule from Southern Africa and the Portuguese colonies of Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau.

On the eve of the 1976 presidential election, Diggs convened the National Black Leadership Conference on Southern Africa during the Congressional Black Caucus's annual leadership weekend in September. The conference issued "The African-American Manifesto on Southern Africa," which called for the formation of a black lobby. Representatives of the assembled organizations pledged their financial support. Under the leadership of Randall Robinson, a former staff aide to Diggs who had organized student demonstrations on behalf of sanctions while at Harvard Law School, TransAfrica opened its doors in 1978.

Robinson quickly mobilized the black community to defeat efforts by conservative members of Congress to lift sanctions against the importation of Rhodesian chrome. He persuaded the leaders of nearly all of the major black organizations to go on record for sanctions and rallied black voters in key congressional districts. Sanctions were maintained and TransAfrica, in existence less than a year, was credited with engineering the first major foreign policy victory ever attributed to the direct political intervention of the American black community.

Drought and famine in West Africa had aroused black American concern as much as had the political problems of southern Africa. To address issues of relief and long-term development aid, another important Africa-oriented organization, Africare, was formed in 1971 by C. Payne Lucas, a former Peace Corps official. Working closely with the president of Niger, one of the drought-stricken countries, Lucas began a relief effort centered in the black community. He tapped ordinary black Americans in a way they had not been solicited for an Africa-related cause since the days of Garvey. From all over the country, contributions to help African famine victims poured into Africare's headquarters in Washington.

The presidential election victory of Jimmy Carter in 1976 brought black Americans into the foreign policy mainstream as never before. He appointed Andrew Young, who had been both a lieutenant of Martin Luther King, Jr., and a Georgia congressman, to be ambassador to the United Nations. Partly because of his personal friendship with the President, Young was able to transform his ambassadorship into a politically powerful post. In the public mind he became the embodiment of American policy towards Africa. He and one of his top deputies, Donald McHenry, initiated the process which—in spite of its repudiation for many years by the Reagan Administration—finally led to Namibia's independence.

During the 1980s, black political influence on Africa policy was exerted primarily through the legislative branch. The Free South Africa Movement, which TransAfrica launched soon after the 1984 elections, mobilized the public and lobbied Congress to pass the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986. The act represented blacks' most important legislative victory since the civil rights laws of the sixties. It demonstrated that their considerable political power could now be harnessed in support of international as well as domestic priorities.

As Countee Cullen has reminded us, black Americans are more than "three centuries removed from the land [their] fathers loved." They cannot with certainty boast, as can many other Americans, of the village or even the country from which their ancestors came. Yet their identification with the continent grows stronger.

Inspired by Alex Haley's *Roots*, thousands, in search of a now proud heritage, have made Africa the vacation land of choice. They cheered and wept when Nelson Mandela emerged in February 1990 from a South African prison. When he came to America to thank them for the crucial support they had given to the anti-apartheid struggle, black America greeted him as a conquering hero as if the land he seeks to free were their own.■

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