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FOCUS

SPECIAL ISSUE

The Congressional Black Caucus

Joint Center for Political Studies

Perspective

The torrid summer of '77 has passed. Few will mourn its demise or long to remember its scorching days and uncomfortable nights. Yet the summer months brought forth one positive development which will bear watching through the winter: a rekindling of the black *esprit de corps* which proved to be the glue of the civil rights movement of the Sixties. The catalyst for this development is the unchecked erosion of blacks' economic well-being and the growing fear that blacks are the victims of "callous neglect."

One might say it all started last July with Vernon Jordan's criticism of President Carter's neglect of problems of blacks and the poor. But Jordan merely articulated publicly what was already on the minds of blacks throughout the country. Even so, it was perhaps President Carter himself who triggered the new sense of black togetherness one finds today. By his unfortunate reply to Jordan, which gave the appearance of holding himself above criticism while putting Jordan down with the demagogues, Carter gave blacks a target on which to focus their concerns and frustrations. The result was to galvanize black thinking around crucial survival issues, mainly jobs, welfare reform, economic development, and to precipitate new thinking about self-help and coalition building.

Thus, the honeymoon between Carter and blacks started to end as precipitously and as curiously as it had begun last Spring. Instead of reliance upon "our main man in the White House" there was a call for self-help.

This unanticipated development set the stage for the August 29 "Summit" meeting of national black civil rights and political leaders in New York. The summit not only brought together 15 of the nation's most influential blacks in public life, it also put in motion a series of similar meetings to mobilize black influence in the public policy arena and to heal old wounds that had kept some of the leaders from cooperating in the past.

As impressive and eye-catching as the summit was, it no doubt would have lost some of its luster if yet another one of the summer's bombshells had not exploded shortly after the New York meeting adjourned. The announcement by the Department of Labor that white unemployment was declining while black joblessness was rising, gave the summit and the rising tide of black expectations more urgent meaning. In the White House the President agreed something had to be done. His administration speeded up discussions to target funds to areas of heavy black unemployment and to develop an urban policy. Blacks were involved in these discussions.

No doubt the President will respond to these problems because they are national problems and because they have been spotlighted in such a way that they can no longer be ignored.

No doubt the black summit, as a reflection of the mood of black America and as the lucky beneficiary of the summer's largesse, helped to precipitate whatever response the administration will eventually make.

Yet the future of the black summit coalition is less certain at this stage, although clearly it is an idea whose time has come. the summit coalition could well be to the Seventies what the charismatic leader was to the Sixties. A great deal of care, restraint and cooperation is going into the development of this new leadership mechanism. It would be a tragedy if it failed.

If the coalition survives as a much needed rallying point for the new sense of togetherness in the black community, it will signal yet another step toward maximizing our political influence. It also will be one cool and refreshing reminder of the torrid summer of '77.

Eddie N. Williams
President

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A historical look at the CBC

By Marguerite Ross Barnett

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Although the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) was not formally organized until 1971, the idea of joint action by black members of the U.S. House of Representatives has a longer history. In 1954, Rep. Charles Diggs (D Mich.) was elected to the House. Diggs' election marked the beginning of an effort to promote communication between black House members. When Diggs arrived in the House there were only two black representatives —Adam Clayton Powell (D N.Y.) and William Dawson (D Ill.). Powell had been a member of the house for 10 years and Dawson for 12. However, during those years there had been little political communication between the two men. Diggs, politically left of Dawson but right of Powell, got along well with both and formed a bridge between them.

As black congressional representation increased with the elections of Rep. Robert Nix (D Pa.) in 1957, Rep. Augustus Hawkins (D Calif.) in 1962, and Rep. John Conyers (D Mich.) in 1964, informal discussions developed but no efforts were made to institutionalize ties among black congressional representatives. The turning point came in 1968 when Reps. Louis Stokes (D Ohio), William Clay (D Mo.), and Shirley Chisholm (D N.Y.) were elected. Coming at the end of the tumultuous 1960's, their simultaneous election seemed to encapsulate the rising black interest in electoral politics. Their impact, therefore, was psychological as well as numerical—with their arrival the "critical mass" for an organization was reached.

Democratic Select Committee

In 1969, Diggs, by then the most senior active black representative (Dawson and Powell were often absent—both were ill and Powell had been stripped of his seniority), called a meeting of the nine black members of the House and proposed formation of what later became the Democratic Select Committee. The purpose of the Democratic Select Committee, according to Diggs, was to facilitate communication among black representatives and between those representatives and the House leadership. The Democratic Select Committee operated informally—no elections were held—Diggs was simply designated "temporary"chairman by group consensus; there was no autonomous staff, budget, or facilities for long-range planning, and many activities centered around social functions. Despite its informality, the Democratic Select Committee was not inactive. The group worked together to fight the Nixon administration on issues, including Supreme Court appointments, social welfare problems, and civil rights. It was as the Democratic Select Committee that the black representatives sent a letter to President Nixon in February 1970 requesting a meeting on black and poor people in the United States.

Both internal and external factors contributed to the reorganization of the Democratic Select Committee. Externally, the climate of the Nixon administration and the development of a protracted confrontation between black members of the House and the President helped forge the group's sense of common purpose and identity. Internally, there was mounting concern, particularly among the more recently elected black members, about the informality of the Democratic Select Committee. Rep. Clay was the most vocal. In a terse 1970 memo to his black colleagues in the House, he warned that ". . .without adequate programming and planning, we might well degenerate into the Kongressional Koffee Klatch Club." Clay's dissatisfaction led to the drafting of a proposal for a new organization. He suggested (1) that formal elections be held; (2) that an executive committee of three members be elected as the policy-making group within the organization and that this group be given authorization to act in the absence of the total membership; and (3) that sub-committees be established in policy areas of particular concern to minorities. Finally, Clay recommended that the name "Democratic Select Committee" be changed because it politicized the group along party lines and might potentially exclude any black member from a different party.

Birth of the CBC

At the first meeting of the Democratic Select Committee during the 92nd Congress, Clay's suggestions were reviewed and agreement reached on the reorganization of the Democratic Select Committee as the Congressional Black Caucus. The name "Congressional Black Caucus" reflected a *de facto* policy decision about the nature and primary constituency of the new organization. Three other names were considered: Congressional Committee on Minority Interests, Congressional Committee on Minority Rights, and Congressional Committee for the Protection of Minority Rights. Some felt that if the group were to expand its area of interest to include Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, Indians, etc., then the word "Black" would be constraining. Most members agreed, however, that for the forseeable future at least, their focus would be on problems of the black community. In addition, there was a proposal for establishment of an auxiliary organization "Friends of the CBC" that could include liberal whites (including members of Congress), non-black minority group politicians and leaders, and blacks from outside the Congress. Another idea was to establish a network of black experts that would serve as resources to the CBC staff (much the way the current CBC braintrust works).

By 1971 when the CBC was formed, there were 12 black representatives: Ronald Dellums (D Calif.), Parren Mitchell (D Md.), and George Collins (D Ill.) were new members, Ralph Metcalfe (D Ill.) replaced Dawson, and Charles Rangel (D N.Y.) defeated Powell. Walter E. Fauntroy (D D.C.) joined the group as a non-voting delegate on April 19, 1971, bringing the number to 13. Diggs was elected chairman of the new CBC.

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The Nixon Meeting

From its inception, the CBC was caught up in presidential politics. Their request to meet with Nixon had been ignored for 14 months. Finally, after prolonged efforts to get an appointment, black representatives staged a boycott of the President's State of the Union message in protest over his high-handed treatment. Paradoxically, Nixon's eventual consent to a meeting created a crisis for the newly developing organization. There was no staff and no money to hire one. Yet, if the CBC was to make an effective presentation to the President, it was necessary to put together a first rate staff with expertise in issues to be covered in the meeting with Nixon. A decision was made to seek outside help. Black scholars and leaders assisted in developing a media strategy and compiling documents.

When the CBC did meet with the President, 61 recommendations for government action on domestic and foreign issues were presented. In an opening statement, the Caucus set the tone for the meeting by declaring itself the representatives of the nationwide black community:

"Our concerns and obligations as members of Congress do not stop at the boundaries of our districts, our concerns are national and international in scope. We are petitioned daily by citizens living hundreds of miles from our districts who look on us as congressmen-at-large for black people and poor people in the United States." The Nixon meeting marked a turning point in the modern history of blacks in Congress. Almost overnight the CBC was transformed from an episodic, informal protest group within Congress to a highly visible, legitimate vehicle that could speak for the black community.

The First Year

During the first year of its existence, the CBC maintained the self-perception of itself as "Congressman-at-large" for 20 million black people. Much of the CBC visibility that first year came from a series of hearings held around the country on health, education, black enterprise, the mass media, Africa, and racism in the military. Results of these hearings were to be incorporated in the CBC proposed "Black Agenda." The Black Agenda, which eventually came to fruition in altered form, was to be presented to both Democratic and Republican presidential candidates and to serve as the basis for a CBC legislative agenda inside Congress.

To raise money for its activities, the CBC organized a $100 a plate fund-raising dinner with the assistance of a number of black public relations and media specialists. Funds collected through the dinner plus use of clerk-hire (a system for making staff allocations within Congress) allowed assembly of a CBC staff under the direction of Howard Robinson.

Robinson began his one-year tenure as executive director in July 1971 with a memo setting out his view that the CBC should "launch a public relations and substantively based spectrum of activities and . . . sharply focus its energies upon the type of program activity that will establish a reputation for being concerned with the wider institutional issues which affect the poor and the black." Robinson felt internal service to the individual representatives should be a secondary priority of the Caucus staff because the staffs of the representatives could perform those functions adequately.

However, by the end of Robinson's term, a shift had taken place in the CBC self-perception that negated the activist strategy favored by Robinson and a minority of the black representatives. During the first year of its operation, the CBC functioned outside the congressional arena much like a civil rights group—the emphasis was on the CBC as an autonomous vehicle greater than the sum of its individual parts.

A Change In Strategy

By the end of 1972, however, most CBC members rejected continuation of a visible leadership role outside Congress and opted instead to focus their energies on legislative matters within Congress. Rep. Stokes, the second CBC chairperson, put it succinctly: "If we were to be effective, if we were going to make the meaningful contribution to minority citizens in this country, then it must be as legislators. This is the area in which we possess expertise—it is within the halls of Congress that we must make this expertise felt."

During this period, the Caucus staff, by now under the direction of a new director, Dr. Augustus Adair, began to provide caucus members with assistance in the form of legislative analysis, development of networks of black experts, mobilization of support for passage of priority legislation, and so on. Unfortunately, it was not until the 94th Congress that this strategy could be given a fair test. 1973 and 1974 were unique years as the CBC, and Congress generally, became caught up in the deepening crisis of the Nixon administration. Indeed, during 1974, much of the energies of Reps. Rangel (who replaced Stokes as CBC chairman in 1973), Barbara Jordan (D Texas), and Conyers was absorbed by their tenure on the House Judiciary Committee during the impeachment process. Further, the entire Congress was caught up in the historical drama surrounding the tangled web of Watergate.

In December 1974, the CBC undertook a thorough re-evaluation of its structure, goals, and direction. By that time the group had at least some experience with two orientations: the externally-oriented activists model stressing leadership outside Congress to complement legislative pursuits and the internally-oriented legislative model deemphasizing the CBC as a leadership organization outside the Congressional arena. Significantly, the CBC (by then consisting of 16 members including former Rep. Andrew Young (D Ga.), and Rep. Cardiss Collins (D Ill.) reaffirmed its commitment to remain a union of legislators.

In 1976 Rep. Yvonne Burke (D Calif.) succeeded Rep. Rangel as Caucus chairperson, Burke was succeeded in 1977 by Rep. Mitchell, the current CBC chairperson. And Barbara Williams succeeded Adair as executive director of the Caucus in 1975, a position she retains today.

The history of the CBC shows a growing organizational maturity and movement from the stage of embryonic formation to emerging institutionalization.

Telescope

JCPS Selects Five New Fellows

The Joint Center for Political Studies selected five more candidates for fellowships in its Human Resources Fellowship program. Under the program, ten fellowships will be awarded each year to minority persons interested in pursuing careers as administrators of human resources programs. Those selected for the one-year fellowship term which began September 1 are: Constance Cole of Ann Arbor, Michigan; Freddie Durant of Laurelton, New York; William Peace of Atlanta, Georgia; Steven Sims of New York City; and Shirley Wesley of Birmingham, Alabama.

Ms. Cole holds a Masters degree in Sociology from the University of Michigan. Since 1974, she has worked at the university as a student advisor. Ms. Cole is concerned with the needs and interests of minority people as they pursue educational, social and political opportunities at the higher educational level.

Mr. Durant has a Masters degree in Educational Administration from the University of Pennsylvania. Since 1973, he has worked for New York City's Human Resources Administration as director of the Executive High School Internships Program. Mr. Durant is interested in policy development and administration of educational and social service programs for people in urban areas.

Mr. Peace is a graduate of Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina. Since 1972, he has served as housing director for the Bureau of Community Affairs at the State Office of Housing in Atlanta, Georgia.

From 1967 to 1971, Mr. Peace served as the executive director of the Southern Rural Project, a demonstration project sponsored by the National Sharecroppers Fund to provide technical assistance for community and program development in the rural areas of Georgia. He is interested in program design and implementation of human resources service delivery in rural areas.

Mr. Sims has a Masters degree from the Columbia School of Social Work. Since 1975, he has worked in the Technical Assistance Unit of the Community Service Society in New York City as a development specialist. He is interested in citizen participation in local government and its political impact on change.

Ms. Wesley received her Masters degree in Social Work from the University of Pittsburgh. While working on her doctorate in Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, she worked as a research associate at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville in East St. Louis. She is interested in health care and service delivery for the aged.

Black State Legislators Plan Caucus

Forty of the nation's 285 black state legislators met in Detroit in August to draft plans to create a National Caucus of Black State Legislators. Final plans, including the approval of by-laws and the election of officers, will be ratified at a national conference of black state legislators which is scheduled to be held in Nashville, Tenn., November 17-20.

Matthew McNeely, Michigan State Rep. and temporary chairperson of the caucus, said that the purpose of the proposed organization would be to "seek the fulfillment of the goals and aspirations of black and disadvantaged Americans while working inside of major national organizations of state legislators and while working outside such structures."

He added, "The organization would serve as the major forum of black state legislators and would play a leadership role in national civil rights and governmental activities."

The caucus' executive committee plans to meet in Washington, D.C. on September 24 to finalize plans for the November national meeting.

McNeely said a formal invitation will be sent to all black state legislators following the September 24 meeting.

Black Caucus to Hold Annual Workshops

The Congressional Black Caucus will hold its annual legislative workshops for black elected officials and other persons interested in the legislative decision-making process on Sept. 23 from 9 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. The workshops will be held in conjunction with the Caucus' Annual Dinner Weekend in Washington, D.C.

Caucus members will conduct legislative workshops in nine issue areas: Aged - Rep. Harold Ford (D Tenn.); Communications - Rep. William Clay (D Mo.); Voter Participation - Reps. Barbara Jordan (D Texas) and Walter Fauntroy (D D.C.); Criminal Justice - Rep. Charles Rangel (D N.Y.); Health - Reps. Ralph Metcalfe (D Ill.), Ronald Dellums (D Calif.) and Louis Stokes (D Ohio); Education - Rep. Shirley Chisholm (D N.Y.); International Affairs - Reps. Charles Diggs (D Mich.), Cardiss Collins (D Ill.) and Yvonne Burke (D Calif.); Economy/Full Employment - Reps. Augustus Hawkins (D Calif.) and John Conyers (D Mich.); and Minority Enterprise and Housing - Rep. Parren Mitchell (D Md.).

The workshop format will include: (a) briefings by administration representatives on issues important to minority citizens; (b) legislative update on key issues; (c) development of goals in critical areas between now and 1980; and (d) development of strategies for reaching these goals.

Congress Urged to Require Greater Minority Access to Broadcasting Outlets

Testifying before the House Subcommittee on Communications on July 27, Rep. William Clay (D Mo.), representing the Congressional Black Caucus, urged Congress to require greater minority access to broadcasting outlets.

Clay told the subcommittee that blacks owned 56 of 7,000 radio stations and only one of 2,000 television stations.

The subcommittee is attempting to rewrite the Communications Act, which has not had major revisions since 1934.

Clay told the subcommittee that they had not dealt with the issue of minority access to the communications media and asked the subcommittee to follow the lead of the Federal Communications Commission and other agencies that have addressed the issue this year.

"The issues are astounding," he said, "and hardly satisfy the legislative purpose of the act - 'to make available, so far as possible, to all the people, the rapid, ef-

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The CBC: An unfolding drama

By Rep. Parren J. Mitchell

Rep. Mitchell (D Md.) is chairperson of the Congressional Black Caucus.

The story of black America is filled with obvious drama, from the violent confrontations during the March on Selma, to the decisive black impact on the 1976 presidential election.

But there is another form of drama that is less obvious. A drama in which well-thought out plans and strategies move relentlessly toward a truly significant accomplishment. The evolution of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) is such a drama.

In 1971, the Caucus set out to develop a plan for the future survival and progress of blacks. The plan was to be comprehensive yet fashioned in such a way that it could be easily implemented. Slowly, carefully, the Congressional Black Caucus started to build "The Plan".

The Plan

Operating on the basis that every act of Congress impacted directly or indirectly on black Americans, the Caucus members made the strategic decision not to bunch up on two or three congressional committees, but rather to spread out over as many committees as they could. This strategic decision has paid enormous dividends, Black Caucus members now serve on 25 committees of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Another major strategic decision was the formulation of subcommittees of the Caucus. Each Caucus member belongs to at least one Caucus subcommittee which is related to that member's Congressional committee assignments and interests. Through this subcommittee system each member takes leadership on behalf of the Caucus in an area of particular concern to minorities.

Recognizing that a handful of blacks serving in the 435-member House of Representatives needed all the resources it could muster, the Caucus sought and gained support from the wealth and variety of black expertise in America.

In 1972, the first "Brain Trust" was organized to deal with the issue of minority business enterprise. Currently, there are brain trusts operating in eight of the 13 Caucus subcommittees. Each Brain Trust is composed of individual and organizational experts and activists who serve in an advisory capacity to the subcommittee chairperson in shaping legislative and regulatory policies and responses. Each Brain Trust meets in Washington, D.C. on a quarterly basis. At each meeting ideas for amendments, new legislation, and new regulations are proposed. It is the responsibility of the Caucus subcommittee chairperson to seek to implement recommendations from the Brain Trust. These meetings have generally numbered several hundred persons. The following Caucus subcommittees have held Brain Trust meetings during the year. They are: The Aged; Education; Minority Business Enterprise; Criminal Justice; International Affairs; Health; Communications; and Voter Participation.

Another major decision in building "The Plan" grew out of our awareness that future major developments in America would be based upon economic/monetary considerations. CBC members sought and gained representation on the four major House committees having jurisdiction over these areas. Thus, Reps. Louis Stokes (D Ohio) and Yvonne Burke (D Calif.) serve on the Appropriations Committee; Rep. Walter Fauntroy (D D.C.) and I serve on the Banking Finance and Urban Affairs Committee; Reps. Charles Rangel (D N.Y.) and Harold Ford (D Tenn.) serve on the Ways and Means Committee; and Rep. Stokes and I serve on the Budget Committee.

Has this careful, brick by brick building of "The Plan" yielded significant results? The answer is an emphatic yes. The members of the Caucus are proud of its successes but are ever mindful of some defeats and the need for more victories. Some issues on which the Caucus has exerted its influence are:

Youth Employment—The Caucus was instrumental in ensuring that legislation designed to reduce the high unemployment rate among the nation's youth had built-in benefits for minorities. A two-day brainstorming session sponsored by the Caucus and led by Rep. Ronald Dellums (D Calif.) provided ideas for legislation needed to provide more job opportunities for young blacks. Rep. Dellums incorporated many of these ideas into his testimony before House and Senate committees on youth employment legislation.

On May 17, 1977, the House passed a bill (HR 6138) which included some of the recommendations from the Caucus' two-day meeting. The final version of the bill included a pilot program of guaranteed jobs for disadvantaged youth who stayed in—or returned to school. The program is designed to provide part-time jobs to youths from poverty backgrounds as an incentive to complete their high school education. These youths would also qualify for full-time work during their summer vacations.

Hatch Act Reform—Federal government employees, including many blacks, are prohibited by the Hatch Act from participating fully in partisan political campaigns. Legislation to permit federal government employees to participate more fully in federal elections was introduced by Rep. William Clay (D Mo.) and supported by the Caucus. The bill HR 10 was reported by the Civil Service Subcommittee of the House Post Office and Civil Service Committee, which Rep. Clay chairs, and by the full Post Office and Civil Service Committee, chaired by Caucus member Rep. Robert Nix (D Pa.). The bill was passed by the House on June 7.

Food Stamps—Following last year's one-year extension of the food stamp program, the House Agriculture Committee held extensive hearings on reform of the Food Stamp program, designed to streamline program administration and ensure that benefits reached eligible recipients. Rep. Shirley Chisholm (D N.Y.) testified in March before the Domestic Marketing Subcommittee of the Agriculture Committee in favor of food stamp program reforms advocated by the Congressional Black Caucus. A number of these reforms, including elimination of the purchase price requirement, were adopted by the Committee. The House passed the food stamp reform measure on July 28.

Full Employment—The Humphrey-Hawkins Full

Employment and Balanced Growth Act has become the major legislative agenda item for the Congressional Black Caucus. The Act was introduced in the House by Rep. Augustus Hawkins (D Calif.) and calls for an unemployment rate of no more than 4 percent.

Although the Humphrey-Hawkins bill has yet to reach the floor of either the House or Senate, it has been the subject of national debate since the presidential campaign when the Caucus urged Jimmy Carter to endorse a full employment concept for the nation.

On Sept. 7, 1977, President Carter met with the Caucus and pledged to make swift passage of full employment legislation a top priority of his administration.

Universal Voter Registration—Proposals to simplify voter registration procedures have been endorsed by the Caucus, and this year the Caucus has endorsed and worked for passage of legislation to provide election day voter registration. Reps. Barbara Jordan (D Texas) and Walter Fauntroy (D D.C.) have been the primary spokespersons for the Caucus on this issue and convened a Caucus-sponsored Brain Trust meeting on voter participation during July to develop broader understanding among black local elected officials about the impact of this measure.

Affirmative Action—The Caucus has convened a series of meetings and been involved in legislative action in an attempt to stem the continuing attacks on affirmative action and equal opportunity. These include meetings with attorneys involved with the case of *The Regents of the University of California vs. Allan Bakke,* a case under consideration by the Supreme Court which challenges the constitutionality of university minority admissions programs. In April, a letter was sent to United States Attorney General Griffin Bell on behalf of the Caucus, urging the Justice Department to file a friend of the court brief in support of the University of California in the Bakke case. In addition, Rep. Jordan is introducing legislation with the Caucus' full support to spell out enforcement steps for civil rights violations where federal funds are involved. This legislative proposal parallels the civil rights provisions added recently through Jordan's efforts to the General Revenue Sharing Act and to the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration law.

International Relations—Last year, the United States first joined the African Development Fund (ADF), an international lending institution similar for those for Latin America and Asia. It was the Caucus which led the battle for U.S. participation in the fund. The initial U.S. contribution was a minimal $25-million. The Caucus this year called for an increased contribution to the Fund, the Senate has adopted a $50-million contribution to the ADF for next year. The Caucus supports inclusion of that amount in the final bill, rather than the non-specific authorization adopted by the House.

Rhodesian Chrome—Since 1971 Caucus members raised the Rhodesian chrome issue through meetings with executive branch officials, meetings with public interest groups, and by public statements in opposition to the unloading of Rhodesian chrome at U.S. ports. This year, I testified at House hearings which were co-chaired by Caucus member Rep. Charles Diggs (D Mich.), Chairperson of the Africa Subcommittee of the International Relations Committee. As part of the Caucus' efforts, in March of this year, the House and the Senate adopted legislation (HR 1746) repealing the Byrd Amendment so as to prohibit the importation of Rhodesian chrome into the United States. Passage of the measure was aided by the Caucus' rallying of support by outside organizations and individuals.

Public Works—A public works bill containing $4-billion for construction of public works facilities was introduced earlier this year without provisions to ensure that areas of high unemployment would receive a significant share of the funds and program benefits. In a major amendment offered by me and strongly supported by the Caucus, the House and the Senate agreed to require that 10 percent of each contract under the public works bill must go to minority firms. This is a total of some $400 million in contracts. In addition, Rep. John Conyers (D Mich.) testified before the Public Works subcommittee handling the bill and the changes that he recommended to increase allocation of funds to areas with the highest unemployment were adopted.

Caucus Staff

Since its inception, the Caucus has maintained a full time staff which primarily coordinates the legislative research and informational activities of the Caucus as a body.

At present, an eight-person staff works out of offices located on the 3rd floor of the House Office Building Annex #1. This staff, headed by Barbara Williams and aided by countless individual and organizational experts, works to provide the technical and communications coordination around the Caucus members' common concerns.

At the beginning of each year, the Caucus staff, working with members' individual legislative staffs, puts together a legislative agenda of priority Caucus legislative issues for the year. These issues come from our annual legislative workship recommendations, from black elected officials, and other individuals as well as from those items which the Congress identifies as priorities, and which will have major impact on minorities and the poor. This agenda forms the basis of the staff work for the year.

Caucus Goals

This Caucus shall continue to press for full employment, effective affirmative action and other devices designed to achieve economic and political parity.

We find this year a new administration with a new style, and we still find minority and poor communities facing the same economic disabilities as in the past. We recognize that the President faces tremendous challenges and is seeking new solutions. Toward these efforts, we lend our full support. As always, we will continue to speak out where our viewpoint differs from that of officials in the administration, so that they will come to better respond to the needs of our constituents.

While we as individual black members proudly represent our individual districts, with their diverse regional differences, it is our common bond of concern for minorities and the poor that brings us together as a Congressional Black Caucus.

The continuing plight of minority vets

By Robert L. Hill

Mr. Hill is national director of the Veterans Education and Training Service (VETS) which is a project of the National League of Cities and the U.S. Conference of Mayors.

The French have a phrase that means that nothing new has really happened. Déjà Vu. And that would seem to be an apt description of events as they relate to Vietnam-era veterans, particularly blacks and other minorities.

A couple of years ago, in a column for our own publication, REVEILLE, entitled "Forgotten but not Gone," I wrote:

"The problem is that many Americans, in sweeping from their minds the debris of an unpopular and costly war, have also purged from their consciousness those who both fought in Vietnam and who served elsewhere."

The other media were quick to seize upon my phrase, "Forgotten but not Gone," including *United Press International,* which produced a lengthy series on the plight of the Vietnam veteran.

Two years later very little has changed. Recent legislation, pending or enacted, has had scant effect. And none of the administration's major programs have done much to help.

HIRE and CETA

Near the very outset of his term in office, President Carter announced that jobs for young, Vietnam-era veterans, particularly minorities, were a high priority. HIRE—Help through Industry Retraining and Employment—was supposed to create almost 100,000 jobs in the private sector for veterans. Public service employment was to be expanded through CETA—the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act—to provide more than 400,000 jobs in the next two years, with 35 percent of the slots going to Vietnam-era veterans.

And, of course, the President's Special Discharge Upgrade Program, geared mainly toward black and other minorities, was announced in April. But checking the record, we see that nothing much has happened.

A check with some of the project directors in the 27-city VETS network did not yield particularly encouraging reports.

"We haven't heard the first thing in Rhode Island about HIRE yet," says Nick Rose, director of the VETS Rhode Island project. "And not one person has inquired about the program. There's been no publicity on it."

"There's been nothing under HIRE," reports Denver project director Jose Trujillo. "We've had very good results under CETA. I picked up seven full-time public service employment people."

From Minneapolis-St. Paul, Gary Morey, the project's director of public relations, tells us: "HIRE is coming along a lot slower in the Twin Cities than the CETA programs. If employers aren't acting in good faith then all that federal money is going to waste and that's scary."

Even scarier was a *New York Times* survey in August that concluded that the President's program to find jobs for umemployed veterans was proceeding slowly and had little effect on the high rate of veteran unemployment.

The *Times* found the biggest hurdles to progress to be the slow response among industry to the programs and the hard and fast regulations that prevent some veterans from getting jobs under existing programs.

In the spring, Cooper T. Holt, executive director of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, wrote to the President complaining that the goal of 35 percent veterans preference for jobs had been replaced by vague instructions that merely *encouraged* local city halls and other prime sponsors to hire veterans. In recent years the veterans' organizations have fought for *firm guarantees* that veterans receive priority in job hirings. Once again nothing has changed.

Ernest Green, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Employment and Training, told us just prior to this writing that CETA hiring of veterans was running about 25 percent nationally. And, said a confident Green, highest ranking black in the Labor Department:

"If we don't reach 35 percent, we'll explain why not."

Discouraging Statistics

One need only consult the statistics to grasp the dilemma of the black and other minority veteran. Unemployment figures for July showed that in the 20-24 age category, 29.9 percent of black veterans were unemployed, compared with 12.2 percent for whites. Non-vet unemployment in the same range was 19.7 and 8.9 percent respectively.

The average age of the Vietnam-era veteran is now close to 31 years. Unemployment figures for vets in the 30-34 age category were 8.5 percent for black and 4.4 percent for white. Their non-service counterparts were 8.0 and 3.5 percent respectively. In the broader 20-34 year-old category, veterans' unemployment was 15.7 percent for blacks and 6.7 percent for whites, while for non-veterans it was 13.2 and 6.4 percent respectively.

And these figures reflect only individuals registered with state employment services. They do not include the veteran out walking the street, who, in utter frustration, has abandoned the job search.

Graphic evidence of this was available to local NBC-TV viewers in the Washington, D.C. area in July when a reporter and camera crew hit the streets and interviewed 12 blacks at random. All 12 were Vietnam-era veterans. Of the 12 only two had jobs. The others said they had tried unsuccessfully to obtain employment before giving up.

In late spring, Clifford M. Alexander, Jr., the first black Secretary of the Army, when asked if he felt the 22 percent level of blacks in the Army was disproportionate and unfair, replied:

"I don't worry about it at all. The black perception is that opportunities aren't as good out there in civilian life. They see an opportunity, more of a chance of fairness, in the Army."

Project 100,000

But the facts seem to indicate otherwise. Black Vietnam veteran Ralph C. Thomas, III, testified on the President's Special Discharge Review Program, before a special oversight committee of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs in late June. Thomas, now a student at Harvard Law School, is director of the discharge review division of the law school's Committee on Military Justice. He spoke of

the infamous "Project 100,000" plan, initiated by former Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara.

The project lowered the recruiting standards to allow the armed services to admit "underprivileged" individuals, mostly minorities, who would not have otherwise qualified for service. McNamara held that military service would enable the men to get an education and learn a trade. Thomas testified:

" . . . many of the men who entered the service through 'Project 100,000,' got in trouble immediately and never got out of trouble while they were in uniform. Some of those taken into the service were not only unschooled but incapable of learning, because of inability or lack of mental capacity. Yet the Army expected them to perform normally, and the result was, inevitably, tragic."

Thomas went on to cite a Pentagon report of January 1970 telling of the fate of the first 25,000 enlistees, many of them black and other minorities, under "Project 100,000."

"It showed that those who wound up in the Army were court-martialed more than twice as often as the normal soldier. The Army preferred to hang on to the men, however, for combat use if at all possible (37 percent saw combat compared with 23 percent of other enlistees).

"The Navy and the Air Force gave them undesirable or unsuitable discharges at a rate of two and three times higher than for their normal recruits."

A Case Study

Larry Barnett of Minneapolis seems to epitomize the problem of many young black Vietnam veterans. Twenty five years old, married and the father of one child, he served in Vietnam from September 1971 to August 1972 before receiving an undesirable discharge. In the five years since his release from active duty, Larry Barnett has been unemployed for three years.

Most of his jobs since returning to civilian life have been in factories. The one he held the longest and liked best was a psychiatric nursing assistant in a VA hospital. His mother has been a psychiatric nursing assistant for 25 years. He says he had "perfect evaluations" but one day his car was searched on the hospital grounds and marijuana was found. He hasn't been able to get a hospital or any other job since.

"Before I was sent to Vietnam I was an A-1 citizen," he tells us. "I'd never been in trouble."

"I thought going in the service would help me. Instead it hurt. Vietnam has played psychological tricks on my mind. I never smoked marijuana until I went to Vietnam and now I still smoke it."

Indeed, a recent study in Massachusetts shows that most Vietnam veterans in the penal institution of that state displayed no criminal behavior before entering the service.

Barnett's efforts to get a job, education or any training to enable him to support his family have met with frustration.

"CETA is giving me a runaround and the VA is giving me a runaround," Barnett said.

And he doesn't believe that upgrading his discharge will help.

"There are lots of guys with honorables who can't get jobs. No one cares about the Vietnam veteran," Barnett concludes.

Recent Findings

In a report prepared for the VETS project earlier this year the plight of the Vietnam veterans was summed up thusly:

"From start to finish, the Vietnam War followed a pattern of race and class bias. The young men who received deferments for college attendance and other reasons were in the main, white and middle class. So were most of those who evaded the draft—and those who have now been pardoned by President Carter.

"A large proportion of the men who deserted from the military were non-white and poor, as were an even larger proportion of those who stayed and fought. Black and Spanish-speaking soldiers accounted for 38 percent of American casualties in the war, more than twice their proportion in the nation's population."

And on the President's discharge upgrade program the outlook for the minority vet is glum. The program has been given little publicity. This is probably one of the reasons that a mere 8 percent of those eligible have taken advantage of it.

Upgrading Discharges

Approximately 420,000 individuals are eligible for the President's program. Those with bad conduct and dishonorable discharges are excluded. President Carter granted a full pardon to draft evaders, who were largely white and middle class. Why not, in view of the nature of this past war, grant an automatic upgrading for all discharges?

Many of those veterans with bad conduct and dishonorable discharges did nothing worse than those with undesirables. Many of these men and women are the poor, the black and other minorities. Those without the knowledge or the connections for avoiding military service. Those who were led to believe that military service would lead to a better life. Those who felt they were serving their country in a just cause until that service taught them otherwise.

But there are legislators like Rep. Robin Beard (R Tenn.), who wish to make it more difficult to forgive and forget. He's offered an amendment that would deny benefits to anyone upgraded under the President's program. Many of these individuals, as we've noted, are the black, other minorities and the poor.

Without the necessary benefits they will never be able to extricate themselves from the cycle of poverty. And tragically, whatever minor transgressions they may have committed in the military will pale when compared with the crimes they may be forced to commit against society.

As Sen. Henry M. Jackson, (D Wash.) a staunch advocate of better programs and benefits for Vietnam veterans told us last year, addressing the problems of minority veterans:

"When the veterans have been disappointed and turned down by society, they turn on that society."

Somber words. But as we have seen in the past, too often true. Well, this is where we came in.

Déjà Vu.

The new Department of Energy

By Lenneal Henderson

Lenneal Henderson, Ph.D., is on leave from the faculty of the political science department at Howard University and is serving as associate director of research at the Joint Center.

On August 4, 1977, President Carter signed into law legislation creating a cabinet-level Department of Energy (DOE). The new agency is part of the President's comprehensive energy program first announced in April. The first cabinet agency created since the Department of Transportation in 1966, the new Department of Energy consolidates the functions of more than 50 energy-related agencies distributed throughout the federal government. DOE will absorb the powers now exercised by such agencies as the Federal Energy Administration (FEA), the Federal Power Commission (FPC) and Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA). Energy functions now lodged in the Departments of Interior, Commerce and Housing and Urban Development will also be transferred to the new energy agency.

However, Congress significantly reduced the original Carter proposal to invest the new energy secretary with final authority over energy prices, particularly for natural gas. The congressional alternative called for the establishment of a five-member Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to be appointed by the President but to be independent of the Secretary of Energy. Although this commission is part of the structure of the new energy department, it is designed to discharge its responsibilities without interference from other units in the new department and will assume regulatory responsibilities including natural gas pricing, electricity rates and oil transportation cost policies.

Dr. James Schlesinger was appointed the new Secretary of Energy. He has served as President Carter's chief energy advisor. Schlesinger will assume authority to establish oil prices only if President Carter declares a national emergency. And this authority is subject to a fifteen-day grace period to allow for congressional review and possible veto.

Rationale for the New Department

The creation of the Department of Energy is part of a larger administration program to reorganize and streamline federal agencies and, simultaneously, an integral part of the President's program to accomplish the major energy goals embodied in his National Energy Plan. The consolidation of widely dispersed federal energy functions will bring more than 20,000 new employees and an annual budget of $10.6-billion into the new department. Most of these employees and the bulk of this multi-billion dollar complex come from existing energy agencies whose functions variously duplicate, contradict, impede, confuse and fail to interact with one another. However, as the new department completes its integration, additional employees at senior levels will be appointed to coordinate energy functions within the department. Thus, the new energy department represents a serious and concerted effort to realize the President's National Energy Plan. The energy goals which comprise this plan include:

1. Reduction of the rate of growth of energy consumption to below 2 percent per year.
2. Reduced gasoline consumption by 10 percent below 1976 levels.
3. Reduced oil imports to less than 6 million barrels per day, approximately one-eighth of total energy consumption.
4. The establishment of a strategic petroleum reserve of 1 billion barrels.
5. An increase in national coal production by about two-thirds, to more than 1 billion tons of coal annually.
6. Insulation and weatherization of 90 percent of American homes and all new buildings.
7. The eventual use of solar energy in more than 2.5 percent million homes.

The new energy department is designed to concentrate federal and private resources on the speedy accomplishment of these goals. DOE will also generate comprehensive energy information which will be collected and classified for use and dissemination by the Energy Information Administration within the new department.

Unanswered Questions

Despite the ambitious organizational effort embodied in the new energy agency, many of its short-run and long-range implications remain unclear. These areas of uncertainty are of major concern to all household, industrial, commercial and social service energy consumers. Many elected officials at the national, state and local levels are not sure what responsibilities the new department will allow them. And, most importantly, the relationship of low-income and minority energy consumers and elected officials to the new agency remains most uncertain of all. Among the major areas of uncertainty are: 1) Whether and to what extent the new agency plans citizen participation or involvement, particularly in energy pricing policy and the establishment of energy conservation programs; 2) What the impact of the new agency will be on the intergovernmental systems, particularly upon the establishment of new energy-related agencies at the state, metropolitan and city levels and the modification of the powers of existing energy agencies at these levels; 3) Whether the new agency will adopt strong affirmative action programs which not only meet federal requirements but also encourage the active participation of minority officials and professionals in the formulation of national energy decisions; and, 4) Whether the new agency will become the nucleus of new and expanded opportunity for minority business enterprise, particularly in the development of new energy technologies.

Citizen Participation

With the exception of minimal public hearing requirements and several technically-oriented policy advisory committees, the new Department of Energy is as yet without a formal apparatus for citizen participation or involvement. Although the membership of the new Federal Energy Regulatory Commission will undoubtedly include several "citizen" members, these members are likely to be

former federal, state or local energy officials or former executives in energy corporations or non-profit organizations. The issue is not simply broad public participation but also a concerted effort by the leadership of the new agency to include minority officials or other representatives of nonwhite or disadvantaged communities. Of the more than 4,310 black elected officials, almost 300 of these officials serve on energy-related boards, legislative committees, commissions and other entities which has provided them with expertise in the energy problems of minority communities. Added to the ever-increasing pool of minority scientists, economists and energy policy analysts and institutions, an active, competent and informed cadre of minority energy experts is emerging. Through institutions like the American Association of Blacks in Energy, the Joint Center for Political Studies, the National Urban League, the Washington Center for Metropolitan Studies and the Joint Center for Urban Environmental Studies, intensive assessment of the impact of energy policy on the poor is evolving and a pool of prospective minority participants for the new Department of Energy is now available.

Energy and Intergovernmental Relations

Not only is citizen participation in the new federal energy agency critical but active citizen involvement in proliferating state and local energy boards, commissions, agencies and centers is imperative. Following the lead of the federal program, states and localities are vigorously responding to the energy crisis with their own administrative agencies and policy committees. Many of these state and local mechanisms have been created with the expectation of increased federal assistance for conservation, fuel conversion, weatherization and other energy-related activities. The inclusion of special provisions for energy programs in existing community development, transportation and other block grant funding programs promises new organizational arrangements and shifts in the allocation of state and local authority for energy policy.

How these intergovernmental developments will affect minorities is not clear. But the decision-making discretion now assigned to local officials in existing block grant programs does not sufficiently allow for the creation of innovative programs for minority communities. Unless the new Department of Energy mandates focus on the special energy needs of low-income communities, the prevailing intergovernmental patterns will tend to preclude effective minority involvement in local energy policy-making.

Affirmative Action in the New Department

The intergovernmental influence of the new energy agency will be particularly felt in its personnel policies. Because the new agency represents a significant reorganization of federal administrative activity, the opportunity for developing strong affirmative action programs is substantial. Indeed, a critical goal of the new agency will be the establishment of clear, implementable and effective criteria for including minority natural and physical scientists, engineers, planners, policy analysts, economists, administrators and other professionals in the new agency. If these professionals are included early in the life of the new agency, their participation will ensure minority input in the policies of DOE. A conspicious affirmative action program in the new agency will encourage effective affirmative action programs in old and new state and local agencies.

Expanded Employment and Business Opportunity for Minorities

A critical area of activity in the new Department of Energy is its role in generating employment and corporate opportunities. Although the majority of the more than 20,000 jobs controlled by the agency are civil service jobs transferred from other federal agencies, new employment will be generated at all levels of DOE. Moreover, the proliferation of new public energy agencies in state and local government, in hundreds of existing and newly developed energy enterprises and in non-profit, educational, legal and other institutions will generate approximately 250,000 - 300,000 new jobs in the next two years. Also, through the federal weatherization programs now funded by the Federal Energy Administration and the Community Services Administration and supplemented by demonstration programs subsidized under the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), many semi-skilled, skilled and supervisory job opportunities will be provided, many of which are not controlled by union apprenticeship programs.

Only through a program of coordinated information dissemination will minorities become aware of and take advantage of these expanding job opportunities in energy programs.

Perhaps the most important and immediate challenge of the new Energy Information Administration within DOE will be the effective distribution of job information to minority communities. Similarly, the most critical challenge to the leadership of the new department will be the effective use of the governmental procurement process to involve minority businesses in activities ranging from the insulation of houses to the evaluation of solar technology; from the econometric assessment of energy policy to the administration of municipal energy conservation programs.

How effectively the new Department of Energy faces these challenges not only will determine minority support for the programs of the new agency but also how effective the new agency implements national energy goals. Clearly, Energy Secretary Schlesinger assumes the leadership of a new administrative agency with program responsibilities which will shape the present and future of national energy policy as well as determine the relationship of energy policy to housing, transportation, agriculture, employment and other policy areas. Without a clear and continuous attempt to address the energy needs of America's minority and low-income groups, the new department will not implement a truly *national* program.

Further information on the energy needs of the poor may be obtained by ordering a copy of the proceedings of the Joint Center for Political Studies' Energy Roundtable entitled, *Energy Policy and the Poor.*

Continued from page 5

ficient, nationwide and worldwide wire and radio communications service.' "

Clay said that a number of proposals on wider ownership emerged earlier at a one-day symposium on blacks in the communications media sponsored by the Black Caucus. They were:

- Require a public notice of 45 days when a station owner intends to sell a broadcasting station so that minorities, and not just insiders, may bid on it.
- Provide that a coming wave of new television stations to be authorized for channels 2 to 13 in various cities be open for purchase by new entrants and not just by current owners of licenses.
- Specify that a percentage of yearly station transfers go to blacks or other minorities so that they may have a stake in the industry.

White House Fellowship Applications Available

The White House has announced that applications are now available for the White House Fellowship program for 1978-79. The program is seeking to increase the number of applicants from among women, minority groups, union and business careerists, and previously underrepresented regions of the country, particularly the Southeast and Southwest.

The program is open to all U.S. citizens at least 23 years old, except those in civilian federal positions. Each Fellow is assigned to a Cabinet officer or senior member of the White House staff and participates in a program including seminars with top government officials, leading scholars and journalists who deal with the national government.

Application forms and additional information can be obtained by sending a post card to the President's Commission on White House Fellowships, Washington, D.C. 20415.

Meeting of National Black Leaders Held In New York City

The first in a series of meetings involving national black civil rights and political leaders occurred in New York City on August 29. (See Perspective)

Those present at the meeting were: Berkeley Burrell, National Business League; Julius Chambers, Legal Defense & Education Fund; Richard G. Hatcher, Mayor of Gary, Ind.; Dorothy Height, National Council of Negro Women; M. Carl Holman, National Urban Coalition; Ben Hooks, NAACP; Jesse Jackson, PUSH; Vernon E. Jordan, Jr., National Urban League; Coretta Scott King, Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Social Change; Joseph Lowery, SCLS; Rep. Parren Mitchell (D Md.), Congressional Black Caucus; Jessie Rattley, National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials; Bayard Rustin, A. Philip Randolph Institute; Leon Sullivan, OIC; and Eddie N. Williams, Joint Center for Political Studies.

Carter's Welfare Reform Proposals

President Carter's welfare proposals which were announced August 6, would eliminate present welfare programs and replace them with a "Program for Better Jobs and Income."

As proposed, the welfare plan would cost $30.7-billion in 1978 dollars. It would create 1.4-million public service jobs, provide basic cash benefits to the needy, relieve the financial burden on every state by at least 10 percent the first year of the plan in fiscal 1981 and would include benefits for the first time for the "working poor."

About 32 million persons will receive benefits under the new system which would roll together the existing Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and food stamp programs and replace them with the flat cash grant. About 30 million persons receive aid under these programs now.

Eve Wins Primary

State Rep. Arthur O. Eve (D N.Y.) won the Sept. 9 Democratic primary race for mayor of Buffalo, New York. Eve becomes the first black to be nominated for mayor of Buffalo by either major party.

Eve ran ahead of his three white opponents in the primary with 37 percent of the vote and received nearly 90 percent of the city's black vote. He will face opposition in the November general election from an independent candidate, a republican and a Conservative Party candidate.

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