
The logo for the magazine 'FOCUS' is rendered in a bold, red, sans-serif font. The letter 'O' is replaced by a stylized graphic consisting of a white circle with eight red segments radiating from its center, resembling a fan or a target.

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Fixing America's Voting System

We will celebrate Martin Luther King's birthday this year, five days before the January 20 inauguration of George W. Bush as President of the United States. As we watch a new administration take form in Washington, the nation must not lose sight of one of our treasured democratic principles—guaranteeing that the vote of each American is counted. I can't think of a better way to honor Dr. King, who fought to eliminate all barriers to voting, especially in the South, and to gain support for passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

It is important to guarantee that every vote counts, not only because of our democratic heritage and Dr. King, but because a few weeks ago the nation's confidence in our election system was shaken by revelations that the votes of thousands of black Floridians were never counted and that votes in low-income areas across the country are routinely undercounted. The NAACP and the media exposed cases where voters of color were denied access to the ballot or were stuck with unreliable voting machines. It was reported that police profiled black men on their way to the polls, and the names of law-abiding black men, wrongfully labeled felons, were purged from voter rolls. Students from Bethune-Cookman and Florida A&M universities, with their voter cards in hand, were turned away from the polls by election officials who said their names were not on the voter rolls.

Nor were blacks the only victims of a broken voting system. We're now all too familiar with the infamous "butterfly ballots," which were so confusing that many residents of Palm Beach County who intended to vote for Al Gore ended up voting for Pat Buchanan. Even more alarming, there are strong indications that these problems were not unique to Florida but occurred in other states as well. For a nation that holds itself up to be the greatest democracy on the globe, these irregularities are unacceptable.

Bipartisan legislation has already been introduced in both houses of Congress to establish a federal commission to help implement election reforms. The proposed commission would investigate the things that went wrong last November and recommend ways they can be fixed. Good! These bills would also provide funds for grants to state and local governments to enable them to improve and modernize their election systems. The most glaring problems should be addressed before the primaries of the 2002 midterm elections.

Legislation alone will not be enough, however. It should be augmented by a massive voter education program to inform voters of their rights and teach them how to use voting machines. The right to ask for additional ballots if a voter makes an error, the right to have a ballot explained, what forms of identification (if any) are required, and other rights should be uniform and posted prominently at each polling place. The Justice Department should dispatch voting monitors to areas where voting irregularities were the most prevalent over the last three elections. And serious thought should be given to making election day in Novem-

ber a national holiday when federal elections are held, so that citizens with rigid work schedules aren't put at a disadvantage.

As we reflect on Dr. King, civil rights, and voting rights, there is one other right that must be protected, namely, the right not to be harassed or intimidated at the voting booth. ■

PRESIDENT



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Bush Moves Into the White House

After a Controversial Election, George W. Bush Was Inaugurated the Nation's 43rd President and Is Poised to Take the Government in New Directions

by David C. Ruffin

On January 20 at 12:01 p.m., the American constitutional system of presidential succession was affirmed. After a controversial election in which he lost the popular vote, Republican George W. Bush became the 43rd president of the United States. Immediately upon taking the oath of office, Bush received the full powers and authority that come with being the nation's chief executive. Texans and other Bush supporters from across the country came to Washington to celebrate his inauguration, starting with the Black Tie and Boots Ball the night before.

In addition to a Texas style of doing things, Bush will introduce a set of policies and programs that will be dramatically different from those promoted by President Bill Clinton over the last eight years. Bush will have many opportunities to put his own political philosophy into action. He will send to Congress a federal budget of nearly \$2 trillion to pay for things like new highways, Pell Grants, guided missile destroyers, school lunches, weather satellites, and interest on the national debt. During his term, he will pick as many as 200 federal judges, including perhaps two Supreme Court justices. He will also nominate between 3,500 and 4,000 officials to cabinet departments, independent agencies, and regulatory commissions.

High Marks and Historic Picks

Early indicators of whether Bush will make good on his promise to be a "uniter and not a divider" are reflected among his racially diverse cabinet nominees and people he has named to other high-level posts. He gets high marks for some of his picks. The selection of retired general Colin Powell to be secretary of state is historic, since no African American has ever been appointed to that office. Powell will not only be the top policymaker on U.S. foreign affairs, but, by precedent, he will be the highest ranking cabinet officer and in the line of succession to the presidency. Powell is exceptionally qualified for this position. While he spent most of his professional life in uniform, he is a natural diplomat and a master of the art of persuasion. He was an Army officer with combat experience who served two terms in Vietnam before rising to chair the Joint Chiefs of Staff. No stranger to politics, Powell was a White House fellow and later a top policy aid in the Pentagon. When the Reagan administration was rocked by the Iran-Contra debacle, it was Powell who took over as national security advisor and restored the nation's confidence in that critical area of White House operations.

Similarly, Bush broke new ground by naming Condoleezza Rice as the first woman to be national security

advisor. A professor and provost at Stanford University, Rice, who is also black, speaks fluent Russian and is an expert on Eastern Europe. She served on the National Security Council staff in the administration of George Bush, Sr.

Rod Paige, the black former superintendent of schools in Houston, is Bush's secretary of education and will guide the administration's policy of testing students and extending flexibility to states in implementing education programs. A former college dean and football coach, Paige shares Bush's support for education vouchers to give alternatives to students attending failing public schools. Paige is the first black secretary of education. Bush also retained Norman Y. Mineta, appointed secretary of commerce in the waning months of the Clinton administration, to be secretary of transportation in the new administration. Democrat Mineta is the first Asian American to serve as a cabinet officer.

Divisive Missteps

Despite his diverse appointments, Bush has already made what many are calling major missteps in his cabinet nominations that have done anything but unify various segments of our society. Women's groups, people of color, organized labor, and environmentalists were all angered at the nominations of Linda Chavez, a commentator and former official in the Reagan administration, to be secretary of labor; former Missouri Senator John Ashcroft to be attorney general; and former Colorado attorney general Gale Norton to be secretary of the interior. Each of them has a background that casts doubts on their fitness to enforce the laws and policies under the jurisdictions of the agencies they were named to head.

As secretary of labor, Chavez would be required to enforce minimum wage and affirmative action statutes, for example, but she went on record expressing her philosophical opposition to both policies. She also said she doesn't believe there really is a glass ceiling that limits the professional advancement of women, a view that contradicts the findings of a study released by Lynn Martin, who served as labor secretary under Bush's father. But Chavez was forced to ask Bush to withdraw her name from consideration after it was revealed that she had offered shelter to an illegal alien whom she paid in exchange for domestic services. Chavez had not disclosed this violation of immigration law to Bush transition officials when they interviewed her for the post. Bush was quick to name Elaine L. Chao, a fellow at the Heritage Foundation, to replace Chavez. Chao, whose family immigrated to the United States from Taiwan when she was eight, is a former head of the Peace Corps and of United Way of America.

Bush

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The nomination of John Ashcroft to head the Justice Department drew sharp criticism from advocates for civil rights, reproductive choice, gay rights, and gun control. One of the two or three most conservative members of the U.S. Senate, Ashcroft has been outspoken in his opposition to abortion. Women's groups fear he won't vigorously enforce the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act.

Black groups remember that he mobilized all the Republican members of the Senate in 1999 to vote against the nomination of black Missouri state Supreme Court Justice Ronnie White to be a federal district judge. Ashcroft said that White was against capital punishment, and he labeled the judge 'pro-criminal.'" White did oppose the imposition of the death penalty in one instance, because he was concerned that the defendant might not have received a fair trial. But White upheld death sentences in a majority of the cases he adjudicated. It is generally believed that Ashcroft hoped to curry favor with law enforcement organizations through his effort to sink White's nomination. This actually spurred a massive black voter turnout in Missouri this past November, which provided the margin of victory for Ashcroft's opponent, Governor Mel Carnahan, who died in an airplane crash just three weeks before the election. African Americans opposed to Ashcroft's nomination feel that if he acted in a way that was hostile to their interests out of political expediency as a senator, what's to stop him from acting in a similar manner as attorney general?

Gale Norton, Bush's interior secretary-designate, has environmental groups up in arms over her support for opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling. This stance lends credence to charges that she favors mining, grazing, and logging interests over the protection of endangered species and public lands. The NAACP also is alarmed by her suggestion in a 1996 speech that curbing "states rights" was too great a price for the Confederacy to pay for losing the Civil War, even though it also ended slavery.

Shaping Justice for a Generation

Groups representing working families, people of color, and gender equality are concerned that these nominations may be harbingers of Bush appointments to subcabinet posts. That concern certainly extends to nominations to head specific positions such as the assistant attorney general for civil rights and the heads of other civil rights agencies, the assistant secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, the administrator of the Minority Business Development Agency in the Department of Commerce, the assistant secretary of Employment and Training Administration at Labor, and the head of the Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families.

A broad spectrum of organizations is apprehensive about Bush's judicial nominees. Critical rulings affecting the civil rights and civil liberties of all Americans are decided by federal district and appeals court judges and Supreme Court justices who serve life terms. Federal courts take on cases dealing with attacks on affirmative action, reproductive

rights, workers rights, redistricting, and the separation of church and state. Court rulings like the Supreme Court's 1954 landmark *Brown* school desegregation decision have advanced racial justice in America. That Court was led by Chief Justice Earl Warren and champion of racial equality William Brennan. But the Supreme Court today has a conservative majority whose decisions have eroded laws protecting civil rights. Bush's appointments to the federal bench will go a long way towards shaping the administration of justice in our courts for the next generation.

Measuring Compassionate Conservatism

Bush's policy pronouncements and budget priorities will best reflect how he intends to govern and will be the truest measure of his "compassionate conservatism." How he deals with important policy issues will affect African Americans profoundly. Over the next two year, states will redraw their legislative districts for state legislators and members of Congress. After the last reapportionment in 1990, 13 new majority or near-majority black congressional districts were formed, dramatically increasing the number of black representatives on Capitol Hill. But over the past decade, legal challenges to these districts have placed the election of many black legislators in jeopardy. The question for civil rights advocates is: How actively will Bush's attorney general enforce the Voting Rights Act of 1965 to preserve a strong representation of African Americans in Congress?

Another issue is education. Bush has indicated that he hopes to introduce school vouchers some time during his administration. But when voters had the opportunity to express their position on vouchers, they rejected them decisively. In November, a majority of voters in California and Michigan said "No" to voucher initiatives—about 70 percent voting against them in each case.

Health is another important social issue of special concern to African Americans. Blacks have a much higher incidence of heart disease, stroke, and tuberculosis than the general population. And black women are more likely to die from breast cancer than any other group of American women. Yet African Americans are far less likely to be immunized, screened for cancer, or receive regular primary care. It is unknown whether President Bush will extend the initiatives of his predecessor, which were aimed at eliminating racial disparities in the areas of infant mortality, diabetes, cancer screening and management, heart disease, HIV/AIDS, and adult and child immunizations.

All of the above are areas in which African Americans and the new president can either be divided or work toward compromise. If Bush genuinely seeks compromise, he would do well to harken back to the speech he gave at the July 2000 NAACP convention, where he said: "The history of the Republican Party and the NAACP has not been one of regular partnership. But our nation is harmed when we let our differences separate us and divide us. ... I am here today because I believe there is much we can do together to advance racial harmony and economic opportunity. ... The NAACP and the GOP have not always been allies. But recognizing our past and confronting the future with a common vision, I believe we can find common ground." ■

The Future of U.S. Policy Toward Africa

Relations With Africa Were Strengthened in Recent Years, But How the Bush Administration Will View the Continent Remains a Question Mark

by Carole Henderson Tyson and Mary K. Garber

Among the many tasks facing President George W. Bush as his administration takes shape will be crafting his own approach to foreign policy while maintaining continuity with long-held commitments throughout the world. The question in the minds of many black leaders is whether Africa will be counted among the regions of the world that are to receive the new administration's meaningful attention.

President Clinton recognized that it is in the interest of the United States to be engaged in Africa. U.S. trade with Africa is greater than with all the former Soviet Union countries combined. U.S. exports to Africa total more than \$6 billion and generate employment for some 130,000 American workers. Critical imports from Africa, such as 6 to 8 percent of our imported oil, are substantial and increasing. Furthermore, the return on investments in Africa is higher than in any other region.

The recently enacted African Growth and Opportunity Act of 2000 (AGOA) should be fully supported by Bush. This first-ever Africa trade bill is intended to increase trade between the United States and African nations while promoting economic growth and democracy among them. In addition to AGOA, other programs such as the Africa Crisis Response Initiative and the African Center for Strategic Studies should be supported.

Some advocates for better relations with Africa are skeptical about how the Bush administration will engage the continent. The United States has generally underestimated the value of our relationships with the countries on this resource-rich continent. For more than four decades after World War II, successive administrations viewed African countries through the lens of the Cold War. Aid packages and trade practices were based largely on competition with the Soviet Union for influence with African states. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the United States as the world's sole superpower, Washington has failed to assign Africa a place of importance within the framework of its overall foreign policy. That failure is due, in part, to a negative perception of Africa resulting from centuries of Western ignorance and racism that continue to perpetuate a public image that does not match reality.

Nevertheless, many African states have made substantial progress over the last decade. For example, in the 1990s, the number of elected governments has quadrupled. Three dozen nations initiated meaningful economic reforms. African economies are expanding, and U.S.-Africa trade is

poised to increase. Meaningful policies agreed to by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and individual countries such as South Africa, Senegal, Botswana, Mali, Benin, and Ghana support peaceful transitions to elected government. In a highly significant act, the OAU decided not to accept as member any leader who came to power through a coup-d'etat.

Hoping to augment this progress, the Clinton administration's foreign policy goal for Africa has been broad-based and sustainable economic growth. This policy was grounded in the premise that a multifaceted approach to economic development would lead to balanced long-term growth. Due to differing and fluctuating levels of development and political stability across a very diverse continent, however, several distinct approaches were employed to further this ultimate goal. These approaches were generally based on countries' levels of development.

The bulk of U.S. economic assistance was allocated to countries engaged in sustainable development, with annual growth of 4 to 8 percent. Two examples with the fastest growth are Botswana and Mozambique (prior to recent floods). Efforts are focused principally on social and economic development. Here, a comprehensive approach has been employed, which combines expanded educational resources, better health care, effective agricultural systems, democratic rule and good governance, with appropriate macro-economic reforms. In addition, investments in these countries attract more private-sector investments from inside and outside the countries, further fueling growth.

The African Growth and Opportunity Act will stimulate trade primarily with this group of countries. Among its provisions, this act grants duty-free access to U.S. markets for 1,800 African products. Within the context of the act, the United States, working with other G-8 countries, is also providing needed debt relief to many poor countries in Africa. These elements of the act are not being implemented in a vacuum. What is happening in parallel is an expansion of U.S. involvement in bilateral and multilateral relationships. American officials and African leaders now meet annually in U.S.-Africa ministerial meetings to chart courses for successful economic cooperation. Engaging as a partner with Africa, the United States participates in the U.S.-South African Binational Commission, U.S.-Nigeria Joint Economic Partnership Commission, U.S.-Angola Bilateral Consultative Commission, and U.S.-Southern African Development Community Forum.

Dr. Tyson is vice president for International Affairs at the Joint Center and Ms. Garber is a writer on national policy issues.

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Africa

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For countries in transition the goal remained sustainable economic growth. However, greater emphasis was placed on democratization and political stability as the underpinnings of development. In this very sensitive area of foreign policy, it is necessary to construct policies carefully so that Western values and institutions are not inappropriately imposed. By providing information about institutional and development choices, African countries are given the impetus to help build their public and nonprofit sectors.

Conflict resolution, including Nigeria, and humanitarian assistance have typically characterized U.S. policy in countries where there is high conflict. Given the extreme circumstances in these countries, sustainable economic development is generally not possible. In addition to the tragic loss of life, conflicts in nations such as the Burundi, Sierra Leone, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Sudan have seriously drained resources from and undermined neighboring countries as well. Zimbabwe and Liberia are notable examples. Thus, crisis prevention and early warning response systems are critical here. Violent conflict not only severely retards growth, but often wipes away past progress, making it impossible for a country simply to resume growth from where it was before the dispute began. After conflicts are resolved, it can take decades for development to rebuild the economy.

A Policy of Substance

Clearly, the Clinton administration, the U.S. Congress, and the community of non-governmental organizations have substantially advanced U.S. engagement in Africa and facilitated Africa's progress in the 1990s. But even with these successes, there have been shortcomings. Critics have pointed out that the emphasis on trade has left out the very poorest countries—those that are in the greatest need of help but cannot yet fully participate in trade. And Africa contains 21 of the world's 30 poorest countries. More significant has been the continuing decline in the overall amount of foreign aid. Since the 1960s, the amount of aid that the United States provides has steadily declined. It is now at an all-time low, at approximately one-half of one percent of GNP. Despite numerous polls that show that Americans are willing to help the world's poor and needy, and despite evidence that an expanding global community of democratic and prospering nations is universally beneficial, the United States ranks last among the 21 richest countries in the percentage of wealth contributed as development aid, and most of this returns to the United States.

Whether accelerated advancement is to take place in Africa in the next decade will depend in part on the extent to which the Bush administration reinforces past successes and restores deficiencies in the amount of aid provided by the United States. Further, policymakers must focus on a balanced strategy that deals with both the content and the means of implementing any policy toward Africa. There is substantial agreement among African experts that the

content of any successful policy must include the following essential elements.

HIV/AIDS. Any plans for Africa must take into account the shocking dimensions of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Along with its costs in human suffering, HIV/AIDS is draining scarce resources from all other sectors to care for the growing numbers of sick and dying. Because the disease strikes the young and healthy, it is destroying the most productive segment of the continent's workforce and reducing growth and economic productivity. Worse yet, the disease jeopardizes the future of Africa by turning its youth into a generation of orphans, lacking the social supports provided by parents and other family members.

Trade, aid, debt relief. The three-pronged strategy of providing trade, aid, and debt relief is needed to increase resources and stimulate growth. The proportions of aid, trade, and debt relief will vary according to the country-specific circumstances, but overall resources must draw from a much larger pool of public and private sector funds to have any significant impact.

Poverty reduction. Among the poorest African states, trade with the United States is unlikely to bring near-term relief, especially where much of the population is barely subsisting. For much of Africa's poor, substantial and well targeted foreign aid will be needed to ameliorate hunger, treat diseases, and help meet other current needs while laying the groundwork for food self-sufficiency and broad-based economic growth in the future.

Conflict resolution and reconciliation. Key to enabling economic development is paying attention to the continuum of crisis prevention, management, mediation, resolution, and, ultimately, reconciliation. Today, in Africa, some 120,000 boys and girls, as young as seven and eight, have been kidnapped and forced to join armies and guerrilla bands where they face constant brutality—beatings, intimidation, and rape. They are often forced to commit atrocities against others. Conflicts must be prevented or resolved such that the issues of all sides are addressed with justice and do not fester beneath the surface, threatening to disrupt economic and political progress and discourage private investment.

Investments in education and other social programs. Well-targeted investments, primarily in education, are the most important tool for advancement available to African states. Investments in other social programs—the empowerment of women, nurturing of youth, and prevention of environmental degradation—also have a multiplier effect. These investments pay both immediate and long-term benefits across all sectors of the society and lead to sustained economic and social advancement.

Democratization. Building democratic institutions, promoting good governance, and strengthening civil institutions are essential to economic improvement. Development cannot take place in the absence of stable, reliable institutions supported by the governed. All sustained development must rest on this assumption.

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Youth Crime Peaks Right After School

Most Juvenile Delinquency Takes Place When School Lets Out, But Intervention Programs Have Helped Address the Problem

A new report by Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, a Washington-based anti-crime group, found that youth crime spikes in the hours immediately after school is dismissed. But after-school programs can curb youth crime and prevent risky behaviors such as drug use and experimenting with sex and smoking. A summary of the report, "Prime Time for Juvenile Crime," follows.

In the hour after the school bell rings, turning millions of children and teens out on the streets with neither constructive activities nor adult supervision, violent juvenile crime suddenly triples and the prime time for juvenile crime begins. On school days, the prime time for violent juvenile crime is from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm. The crimes that occur then are serious and violent, including murders, rapes, robberies, and aggravated assaults.

These are also the hours when kids are most likely to become victims of violent crime; to be in or to cause a car crash (for 16- or 17-year-olds), which is the leading cause of death for teens; to get hooked on cigarettes; and to experiment with dangerous drugs. The list goes on. Many experts believe, for example, that these are the hours when teens are most likely to engage in sexual intercourse and when girls are most likely to become pregnant.

The good news is that after-school programs have now been proven to greatly reduce the prospect that children and teens will be caught up in behaviors that can ruin their lives and devastate their families. Good after-school programs really work, keeping kids safe and out of trouble, and helping them learn to get along with others and succeed in school and in life. Rigorous studies show that after-school programs can actually reduce juvenile crime and violence, reduce drug use and addiction, help prevent other risky behaviors, and boost school success and high school graduation.

In one study, high school freshmen were randomly selected from welfare households to participate in the Opportunities Industrialization Center's Quantum Opportunities after-school enrichment and incentives program for high school students. The program combined academics, personal development, community service, and monetary incentives to keep at-risk youngsters on a path to high school graduation and adult productivity. The outcomes showed that compared with youths in the program, boys left out of the program were six times more likely to be convicted of a crime, and both boys and girls left out of the program were 50 percent more likely to bear (or to father) children during their high school years. By contrast, boys and girls in the program were half as likely to drop out of high school and two and one half times more likely to go on to further education after graduation.

If we can provide the quality after-school programs and other constructive supports that help youngsters make it through this period without becoming involved in crime, chances are good that they will stay out of serious trouble the rest of their lives. Thus, after-school programs ultimately reduce not only juvenile crime but adult crime as well.

Over the last three years, the federal government and a few states have taken important first steps toward meeting families' need for after-school programs. The Department of Education's 21st Century Community Learning Centers grants program is the principal federal source of direct support for after-school programs. Since 1997, each of President Clinton's budgets has called for expanding 21st Century after-school grants. With bipartisan support in Congress and among the public, the program now has \$450 million in funding, estimated to serve 650,000 children and teens.

Despite this progress, the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program this year could fund only one out of seven of the grant requests it received from communities. This program is so under-funded it can serve only one in ten of the young people who are eligible. Over four million children ages 6 to 12 (including more than one in three ages 10 to 12) and four million children ages 13 and 14, as well as millions of older teens, are left without adult supervision after school on a regular basis. In total, the number of children and teens who are not participating in after-school programs exceeds 11 million.

While millions of kids go unserved because of lack of after-school program funding, studies show that government's failure to invest in these youngsters is actually squandering taxpayer dollars. Investment in after-school programs returns dividends, not only in lives saved, but in money saved. For instance, for every dollar spent on the Quantum Opportunities after-school program, benefits to participants and the public amounted to \$3.40, not to mention a six-fold drop in crime among participating boys. For each high-risk youth prevented from adopting a life of crime, experts estimate the country saves between \$1.7 and \$2.3 million.

When they were asked in a poll which of several strategies they thought would be "most effective" in reducing youth violence, police chiefs chose expanding access to after-school programs and good childcare programs by a margin of four to one over alternatives such as trying more juveniles as adults and installing metal detectors in schools. The 1,000 police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors, and victims of violence who are members of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids have called on elected officials to lay out plans to make after-school programs available for all families who need them. *For full report and citations for this brief, log on to www.fightcrime.org.* ■

Africa

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Partnership, Development, and Respect

As important as the content of the Bush administration's policy toward Africa is likely to be, the means and methods employed to implement that policy may be even more crucial. To be successful, the policy must integrate all the elements of the U.S. relationship with Africa into one coherent and sustained strategy by which, for example, the departments of State, Commerce, Treasury, Agriculture, the U.S. Agency for International Development (U.S.A.I.D.), and the National Security Council are coordinated in their efforts. Of paramount importance also is that whatever policies are developed, they must bear the stamp of local country ownership and development. If not, they will fail. Too often, assistance to Africa has been shaped to fit Western values, with little respect for the culture and participation of the recipients. A general lesson now learned by many international donors and lending organizations is that agreements reached and policies made through a mutually respectful partnership are more likely to succeed. This requires that Americans and Africans sit down at the table as equal partners.

Free of the stigma of having been a former colonial power on the continent, it makes sense for the United States to take a leadership role in Africa. Much of the U.S. population is also of African descent and maintains

an emotional and practical connection to the continent. That connection has manifested itself through the actions of millions of individual African Americans and through organizations headed by blacks that have influenced U.S. policy toward Africa over the years.

Finally, public education must improve to change Americans' perception of what Africa is. While we have noted increased news coverage of Africa during the 1990s, it was focused on the continent's problems and created the general perception that Africa is rife with unresolvable problems and remote from American interests. How Africa is viewed by the American public greatly affects its prospects for development. The public perception influences the willingness of the private sector to invest in the region and affects the priority that the U.S. Congress places on legislation and appropriations toward Africa.

The inauguration of a new president, regardless of the political party he represents, offers new opportunities. The Bush administration should be encouraged to move the United States and Africa toward a fuller and mutually beneficial partnership. The countries of Africa have a wealth of undeveloped human and natural resources that offer tremendous potential for growth. We have the opportunity to contribute significantly to shaping the future of a continent with 800 million people by helping to reduce poverty, resolve ethnic conflicts, eliminate diseases, alleviate hunger and suffering, and strengthen democratic institutions. Moving forward is good for Africa. It is also good for the United States. ■

Tutu and Franklin: A Journey Towards Peace

Tutu and Franklin: A Journey Towards Peace History was made on historic Goree Island, Senegal, in December 1998. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize and head of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and Dr. John Hope Franklin, renowned American historian, Medal of Freedom recipient, and chair of the U.S. President's Advisory Board on Race, held a week-long series of conversations there with 21 students from the United States, South Africa, and Senegal to discuss race and reconciliation in the 21st century. The result is *Tutu and Franklin: A Journey Towards Peace*, a powerful documentary scheduled to air on PBS on February 9, 2001. Wisdom Works, Renee Poussaint's not-for-profit media company that, arranged the historic meeting and has joined with the Joint Center's NABRE initiative (Network of Alliances Bridging Race and Ethnicity) in a national effort to encourage individuals, organizations, and communities to use the film to explore the many dilemmas of racial healing. For more information on how you can do this, check the Joint Center's web site at www.jointcenter.org.

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1090 Vermont Ave., NW, Suite 1100
Washington, D.C. 20005-4928
202-789-3500

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TRENDLETTER

POLITICAL REPORT

by Mary K. Garber

Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson Chairs CBC

As Texas Governor George W. Bush moves into the White House, another Texan will be taking the reins of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC). Now in her fifth term representing Texas's 30th district, Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson, a Democrat from Dallas, has moved up from vice chair to chair of the CBC in the 107th Congress. She also served as Democratic deputy whip in the previous Congress.

In her speech to the members of the CBC, Johnson emphasized the need to count every vote, referring to the recent debacle in Florida that led to a disproportionate number of minority votes being discarded. She expressed her hope that the Congress will pass legislation to help states get rid of outdated and defective voting machines in poor and minority districts. Johnson's speech touched on the other issues that she has supported in the past: bridging the digital divide, enacting fair labor standards, providing access to capital for minority-owned businesses, ensuring adequate health care, creating a just policy toward Africa, restoring the vote to disenfranchised ex-felons, and extend-

ing full representation in Congress for residents of the District of Columbia. She warned against squandering the federal budget surpluses on "unnecessary and unfair income redistribution schemes," urging instead that legislators seize the opportunity "to use our phenomenal prosperity to ensure, once and for all, that America works for everyone."

Most of her colleagues in the CBC share Johnson's commitment to these issues, but they realize that the present power configuration in Washington is less than favorable for any forward movement. Aside from Rep. J.C. Watts of Oklahoma, the lone black Republican member of the House, black representatives on Capitol Hill must contend with at least two more years of minority status. Although the GOP holds only a slim majority in the House, the Republicans will set the agenda and call the shots on the House floor and in the various committees. Furthermore, it is clear that the new administration led by George W. Bush will be far less responsive to the concerns of African Americans than President Clinton was.

Johnson is known for her strong support for guaranteeing health care for children and preserving reproductive choice for women. Her involvement in these issues stems from a lifelong personal and professional interest in health care. Johnson, who is a registered nurse, holds a B.A. in Nursing from Texas Christian University and once worked as a chief psychiatric nurse for the Veteran's

Administration in Dallas. She has participated in a number of Congressional task forces on health care issues.

In 1992, Johnson's election to the then newly created majority-black 30th district made her the first African American and the first woman to represent Dallas in the Congress. She had been instrumental in the drawing of this new district during her tenure in the Texas legislature, where her legislative career began when she was elected to the state's House of Representatives in 1972. In 1977, President Jimmy Carter appointed Johnson as regional director of the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, based on her strong advocacy for children and families. She was elected to the Texas Senate in 1986, where she served until her 1992 election to Congress.

Feds Accused of Initiating Racial Profiling Policy

States that are being sued for discrimination because of racial profiling by the police are pointing to the federal government as the source of the policy. According to John Farmer, attorney general for the State of New Jersey, the policy was started by the federal Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) with the 1986 launch of the "War on Drugs." Farmer's remarks accompanied the release of 91,000 pages of public documents by the state of New Jersey that showed racial profiling was a routine part of police procedures for a decade. Operation Pipeline, as the

Drug Enforcement Administration initiative was termed, urged state and local law enforcement agencies across the country to assist in efforts to reduce drug trafficking by considering persons with certain profiles as suspicious. These profiles identified specific racial and ethnic characteristics that stemmed from the DEA perception that Latinos and West Indians dominated the drug trade and therefore warranted extra scrutiny. One tip advanced by the DEA was to look for persons with dreadlocks and Latino males traveling together. Since then, a number of training programs taught and sponsored by the DEA and U.S. Department of Transportation have continued to promote the idea that police can locate potential drug traffickers by focusing on certain ethnic and racial minorities. And over the years, the profiles have become self-fulfilling, as police officials have justified the policy by citing the high volume of arrests of black and Latino citizens.

Spokespersons from the federal government however are denying that any agency ever advocated profiling. In 1997, the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division reviewed DEA procedures and programs to determine if they had indeed advocated profiling. According to federal officials, the review absolved the agency from blame. However, civil rights organizations and victims of the policy are not convinced. The American Civil Liberties Union has charged that the DEA bears responsibility for spreading the practice across the nation. David Harris, a law professor at the University of Toledo who has written on the subject, has concluded that the Operation Pipeline training resulted in discriminatory racial profiling in a number of states, including Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, New Jersey, New Mexico, and Texas.

While New Jersey Attorney General John Farmer gave the state's Republican governor, Christine Todd Whitman, credit for putting an end to the practice of racial profiling, civil rights organizations have charged that she only responded after a national outcry over the shooting of three unarmed young black men by state troopers on the New Jersey Turnpike in 1998. In 1999, in an effort to track arrest patterns and investigate profiling abuses, President Clinton issued an executive order requiring police forces that receive federal funds for drug interdiction to keep records of the race of anyone stopped, searched, or arrested by officers. Nevertheless, profiling remains a serious and pervasive problem. And civil rights groups will urge the new administration to take more aggressive measures to address the problem.

Julian Dixon, Civil Rights Champion and Former Joint Center Board Member, Dies

Julian Dixon, longstanding champion of civil rights and member of the Congressional Black Caucus, died of a heart attack on December 8 at the age of 66. For the past 22 years, Dixon had represented California's 32nd Congressional District, which includes west Los Angeles. He was the highest ranking Democrat on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and the fifth ranking Democrat on the powerful House Appropriations Committee, which has jurisdiction over federal spending. He was assigned to Appropriations subcommittees on Defense; Commerce, Justice, State, and Judiciary; and the District of Columbia.

Dixon will be remembered for his lifelong advocacy of civil rights. During his tenure in the Congress, he

cosponsored every major civil rights initiative. In the 1980s, he fought to protect the independence of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission when it was under attack by Reagan administration officials. In recent years, he helped pass legislation to establish a national memorial to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. A native of Washington D.C., Dixon was an ardent defender of home rule for the District and he served throughout his congressional career on panels overseeing the city's federal funding.

Dixon was often a healer, who salvaged the wounds of a community broken by social strife and natural disaster. He was instrumental in getting emergency funds for businesses damaged in the 1992 riots in Los Angeles, and led efforts to secure help for that city after the 1994 Northridge earthquake. An advocate of public transportation, he is credited with making commuter rail service for Los Angeles a reality.

Dixon had begun his political career as a legislator with election to the California Assembly in 1972. He was first elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1978, and at each election since, his constituents sent him back to Washington. In the last election, he received 84 percent of the vote. He chaired the CBC during the 98th Congress. From 1986 to 1990, he served as president of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation and was a member of the organization's board of directors at the time of his death.

Julian Dixon served on the Joint Center Board of Governors from 1991 to 1997. JCPES President Eddie N. Williams hailed Congressman Dixon as a wise counselor, respected as a conciliator among his colleagues in both political parties, and as "a friend and a true gentleman." ■

ECONOMIC REPORT

by Andrew F. Brimmer and Margaret C. Simms

Economic Prospects for African Americans Under the Bush Administration

In the United States, the overall economic environment and the public policies of the federal government are very important to the African American population because of its own economic vulnerability. With the coming change in the executive branch of government in Washington, it is crucial to review the implications of a new presidential administration for the well-being of African Americans. The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies initiated such a review prior to the November election.

With the assistance of outside experts, we examined how of candidates Al Gore and George W. Bush proposed to use projected budget surpluses. As we look ahead to the inauguration of President-elect Bush as the 43rd President of the United States on January 20, 2001, we take this opportunity to offer our assessment of his campaign proposals in three of the areas with major implications for African Americans.

Much has changed since the campaign began in earnest during the summer of 2000. The aftermath of uncertainty following the conclusion of the November 7th balloting and the narrow Republican margins in the Congress are likely to have an effect on the priority given to new programs, how

Dr. Brimmer is the president of Brimmer and Company, Inc., and chair of the Joint Center board of governors. Dr. Simms is the Vice President for Research at the Joint Center.

programs will be structured, and how they will be received on Capitol Hill. If the recent slowdown in economic growth develops into a recession, it may also have an impact on the size of budget surpluses over the next few years. Nevertheless, a look at candidate Bush's economic proposals can provide an early indication of the type of programs that are likely to be a part of his first two years in office.

Tax Proposals

During the campaign, candidate Bush, like his Democratic counterpart Al Gore, projected that the budget surplus would cover the cost of many new initiatives. (See the September Economic Report for a detailed discussion of the surplus.) Both candidates campaigned on using approximately one-half of the surplus to strengthen Social Security. The next largest program in the Bush plan was an across-the-board tax cut. Bush's goal was to give every taxpayer an actual tax cut, thus leaving decisions on how to spend a quarter of the projected surplus entirely to individuals and families, rather than to the federal government.

Bush proposed a significant widening of income brackets, a cut in the lowest tax rate (from 15.0 to 10.0 percent), a merging of several separate rates (instead of three rates in the middle there would be two), and a significant scaling back of the highest marginal tax rate (from 39.6 to 33.0 percent). The net result would be to render the tax rate schedule less progressive, tilting more of the tax burden toward middle- and lower-income taxpayers while lightening, somewhat, the impact on those in the highest segment of the income distribution. Since African Americans are more concentrated in the lower income brackets, they would receive fewer benefits. For example, a family of four with an income of \$30,000 (the income of the typical African American

family) would receive a net tax saving of \$718. On the other hand, a similar family at the \$50,000 income level (the typical white family) would have its taxes reduced by \$1,900.

To be sure, the difference is the byproduct of a tax cut that would give back more to those who pay more, and it is not necessarily designed to have a differential effect by race. The impact is primarily due to the concentration of African Americans at the lower ends of the income distribution. In some ways, the more important impact will be shrinkage of the pool of public funds caused by using the surplus to fund a tax cut rather than to support important social and economic programs. Some of these funds could be instrumental in providing low-income African Americans (and other populations groups as well) with the skills and other services necessary to improve their economic condition. The prospect that a tax cut will crowd out these programs is greater if the economy slows down. If that happens, more people are likely to be in need of support from government social programs. These programs will not be sufficiently funded if revenues have been drained from them by a large tax cut for higher income groups.

Social Security

A major issue for President Bush will be maintaining the solvency of the Social Security System while guaranteeing income security for America's retired and disabled workers. Historically, Social Security has been a "pay-as-you-go" system. In the past, this has worked because of the high ratio of workers to beneficiaries. However, as the population has aged, the ratio of workers to beneficiaries has fallen. Bush indicated that he would provide some hedge against this declining ratio by setting aside a substantial portion of the budget surplus.

But Bush also proposes a radical change in the structure of contributions

through his plan to allow taxpayers, particularly young workers, to divert two percentage points of their FICA obligations to personal retirement accounts (PRAs). These contributions would be voluntary.

Whether or not individual workers would earn higher retirement incomes with this plan than with Social Security would depend on the success of their investments. Moreover, while the details are not clear, it appears that investors in PRAs might be able to realize full traditional benefits—although they would have contributed only four percentage points of their Social Security taxes to support the defined benefit program.

The traditionally defined benefit program would continue to provide retirement incomes to workers who chose not to participate in the private accounts and would offer a safety net for workers who chose to participate. (Bush's proposal was not explicit about how the Social Security benefit formula might change under this program.) The diversion of payroll taxes to private retirement accounts would reduce the money available to pay current benefits. Bush would earmark part of the surplus to make up this revenue loss. However, there is also likely to be a gap between need and revenue on the disability side of the Social Security ledger. Bush promised to maintain the disability insurance portion of the program but this would require some infusion of additional cash.

The answers to questions regarding the benefit formula and disability coverage are of great concern to African Americans who heavily rely on Social Security for their retirement income. For 40 percent of African Americans age 65 and older, Social Security is the only source of retirement income. In addition, African Americans, who represent 12 percent of the general population, accounted for 23 percent of all children receiving Social Security

survivor benefits and 18 percent of workers receiving disability insurance benefits in 1999.

Education

Education is also an important issue to be addressed by the next administration. The most significant difference between Bush's education plans and those of his opponent was Bush's proposal to institute a federal voucher program structured around the federal Title I compensatory education program for low-income students. In Bush's plan, states would be given three years to improve "low-performing" Title I schools. If the schools made no significant headway in closing achievement gaps, parents would be given the option of transferring their child to another public school or receiving an amount equivalent to the pro-rata share of Title I funds and an equal amount of state or local funds to enroll their child in a private or parochial school.

A recent report from the U.S. Department of Education suggests that these programs would favor African American students. Not only do African American parents favor school choice in the abstract, they are more likely to enroll their children in a "chosen" school (either public or private) than are white or Hispanic parents. Increased options for exercising choice may disproportionately benefit African American students, since their parents give assigned or neighborhood schools lower ratings than do white parents. However, survey responses indicate that satisfaction with chosen schools has tended to decline over time (1993 to 1999), just as the number of students enrolled in them has risen. This would suggest that expanding the number of charter and other school options may result in some decline in quality (or at least perceived quality).

The Bush voucher proposal does not call for new federal funds. It merely reassigns funds from an existing pro-

gram currently providing additional resources to low-income children. As such, it takes supplemental resources and converts them into the base amount that parents may use to shop for an education for their children. At an average value of \$1,500, the voucher would not cover private school tuition at either the elementary or secondary education levels, where the average tuition over five years ago was \$2,138 and \$4,578, respectively. Unless the states and localities were required to match this amount (which Bush's proposal implies would be the case), parents would have to make up the entire shortfall. That would put a heavy burden on low-income parents. In particular, the parents' options would still be quite limited beyond the elementary grades. Moreover, if a large number of parents try to take advantage of the option, private school capacity is likely to be saturated, resulting in higher prices or lower admission rates.

Looking Forward

President-elect Bush has indicated that he plans to move forward on his campaign agenda. He has also indicated a willingness to listen to the views of others on the best ways to improve major programs such as Social Security and education. African Americans should take both statements seriously, pay careful attention to the details of proposals as they are put forth, and indicate to their elected representatives where they believe the proposals would help and where they would hinder African Americans progress.

The detailed papers underlying this analysis can be found at www.jointcenter.org/2000_election. ■