



PERSPECTIVES

By Professor McKinley Burt

Desert Shield to Desert Storm, to Desert contracts

It seems to be 'business as usual' now that the U.N. Coalition has handily defeated the ENEMY OF ITS OWN CREATION, and the very weapons of mass destruction it sold to Iraq in the first place have been reduced to the worlds largest scrap yard.

However, it would be quite naive indeed to suppose that the facts I cited in last week's "History Lesson for President Bush" Will get any play in the postwar thinking of any of those involved. Already, financial lips are being licked from Wall Street in New York to Fleet Street in London (and even in Japan) as the contracts for billions for reconstruction of Kuwait and Iraq are savored like juicy sirloin steaks. Many are already let.

And irony of ironies, my "History Lesson" revealed that it was the British Colonialists, upon whose world-ravaging empire (including colonial america) the sun was boasted to "never set", who were primarily responsible for today's horrendous events in the Middle East. But, today we have british Prime Minister, John Majors, turning pious eyes toward heaven and solemnly declaring, that "We must be about resolving the long standing regional problems. ("Hear, Hear!" as they cry in the British Parliament).

The oracles have pronounced that the huge oil reserves have been rendered 'safe for the democracies', but we think that certain questions are in order. We may ask if American En-

ergy, auto and transportation companies are any less facetious and hypocritical in their protestations of commitment to the movement to REDUCE ATMOSPHERIC POLLUTION or to address other environmental crisis? The media does naught but 'beg the issue' when it smothers us 24 hours a day with its coverage of the burning oil wells in Kuwait, "set by ecological barbarians", they say. Is there a 'method in their madness'? The following should make our case as we conclude that they "doth protest too much".

In the late sixties and early seventies, media front-runners like the New York Times, Washington Post and Christian Science Monitor did run several 'bold' articles. These described how auto manufacturers, oil companies and tire makers had teamed up to buy and rip up the tracks of America's Urban electric railway systems, to be replaced by gas-guzzling, atmosphere polluting city busses. Only recently, a similar piece appeared in the 'Forum' section of a local daily. American taxpayers have picked up the tab for hundreds of billions of dollars, just as in the 'Savings and Loan Caper' (and their health?).

It was interesting that a number of readers, both black and other members of our community, were able to identify with our comments on the human vectors who carried diseases like tuberculosis, syphilis and AIDS to the shores of Africa and Asia (and later to the New World). All were startled by my documentation of the "Portuguese Cure for Syphilis" recommended in the 17th century; "Buy a virgin black girl and sleep with her if she has MALARIA. The fever will cure 'your' syphilis, but not hers." Other readers reminded me

of that famous article written in April 1989 by Tony Brown. The following is a relevant excerpt. "For example, for 40 years from 1932 until 1972 the U.S. Public Health Services, and later the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, conducted the most atrociously unethical and racist experiment in our history. black people with syphilis in Tuskegee, Ala., were intentionally not treated to test the destructive path of advanced syphilis. Even when penicillin was discovered as a treatment it was withheld. During those years, this experiment was reported in 13 major medical journals, read by over 100,000 doctors and discussed at conferences. It was an open secret."

It is the famed Dr. Peter Duesberg, the world's leading retrovirologist -- co-discoverer of onconfernes and professor of molecular biology (cancer) at the University of California at Berkeley -- who first advanced the claim that AIDS IS A BIOLOGICAL ETHNIC WEAPON directed at Black peoples. Given that Tuskegee experiment, Watergate and the Contra Caper, should we believe the governments' protestation of innocence?

We note that the Bush Administration just introduced its Civil Rights Legislation with a proposal to bar EMPLOYMENT TO ALL WORKERS unless they sign a binding statement waiving all rights to sue in employment discrimination cases. This at the very time so many are outraged at the ethnic makeup of our military due to racist employment practices. And then, this week on the ABC television special addressing this very issue, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Colin Powell, states to the world, "That's why I joined the army, TO GET A JOB!" Will Bush fire him?

Can African American Children Learn by Dr. A. Jacqueline Sheppard ("The minority child's first teacher is his/her mother".)

Ron Edmonds had indicated "We can, whenever and wherever we choose, successfully teach all children whose schooling is of interest to us." Education for African American children must become of interest to us. Therefore, the problem of minority educators in public schools is a very real problem to be addressed and to be addressed now, not later.

From experience we know the way a teacher interacts with pupils affects how pupils learn. The amount of time a teacher waits for a pupil to answer gives a clue to whether the teacher thinks a pupil knows the answer. The teacher's reinforcement of the correct response encourages a pupil to continue to respond. The classroom atmosphere should encourage students to attempt a difficult problem even if that student fails because trying and failing help students learn.

But, if the classroom teacher does not believe Johnny can learn, she does not do the things which encourage him to try. Many of you are familiar with the Garibaldi study of 1988 which showed that 67 of 10 teachers did not expect their African American students to go to college. How much encouragement and wait time do you think they gave those youngsters to succeed?

Every day we see and hear our children singing rap songs. If you listen to the rap litany, you know the child who can memorize that wording, can certainly learn what is taught in the classroom. The problem is that what is taught in the classroom is of little or no interest to him. We know that fourth grade is the critical grade for boys.

While I do not agree African American boys cannot be taught by female teachers, I do support the theory that boys tend to drop out of school mentally during the fourth grade.

What is needed is a teacher who truly believes minority youngsters can learn and produces a stimulating classroom environment that helps youngsters remain involved in the learning process. Research by Rattersay tells us youth must have social and educational skills before reaching adolescence. It is during third to sixth grade that children are the most desirous of learning. Becoming an adolescent changes this desire. Kunjufu has termed the devastation many African American boys experience as "the fourth grade failure syndrome." These young men mentally drop out of school in the fourth grade even though they continue to go to classes until high school.

The child with no skill is ripe for crime. Many prisoners have several things in common. They are African American, come from broken homes, poor neighborhoods, and read on a fourth-grade level. There are fewer ways to be productive for people with less than a high school education; therefore, their criminal behavior goes down as their educational attainment goes up.

The Parents Part
Do parents have a part in the learning process? Absolutely! Children model themselves after their parents. If parents do not read, then children will not read. If parents have no quality time to talk to their children, then children have few things of quality to share with their parents. The minority child's

teacher is a minority teacher. The minority child's first teacher is his/her mother.

Parents must remain involved in education if their children are to remain involved in learning. The parents' attention is always on what is important. If the education of the child is important, then the parents' presence sends that signal to the child. Parental presence at school functions sends a signal of empowerment to the child. The child receives an increased sense of control over his own destiny and a greater sense of his own self-worth when he sees his parents actively engaged in decision making his school.

African American children, can learn. They need the same care and understanding that other children have. They need the same nurturing environment in their homes. They need to see their parents in power positions and they need teachers who want to teach all children including them.

We must supply an environment that supports the learning of African American students. The challenge today is to move the agenda from rhetoric to action. We have talked long enough. If we are truly to educate all African-Americans, we must begin the task of working with teachers who care about teaching minority students now, today. The problem is too severe to wait. Our prisons are too full to wait. We need our young people to be educated and if we do not educate them, then who will?

Dr. A. Jacqueline Sheppard is Associate Professor of Education and Director of Early Childhood Education at Spelman College.

Tony Brown To keynote Portland Conference

Nationally known African-American columnist and commentator Tony Brown will be the keynote speaker at the Portland Association of Black Journalists' (PABJ) conference from April 3 to 7 at the Oregon Convention Center. Brown will speak on the conference theme, "Shaping our Future," at a banquet on Saturday April 6th.

Opening the conference workshops will be Johnathan Rodgers, the highest-ranking African-American in the television networks. He is the President of the CBS News Television Stations in New York. He will speaking on management and the prospects for advance-

ment in management. Rodger's speech will be open to convention participants only.

Also, speaking at the conference at a luncheon at the Convention Center will be Stephanie Stokes-Oliver, the editor of Essence magazine. She is a native of Seattle, Washington and has been with Essence magazine for 13 years.

About 100 minority journalists from the Western region and throughout the nation are expected to attend the conference.

Money raised from the conference will go towards scholarships to be given

to African-American journalism students in Oregon. People wishing to donate to PARJ's scholarship fund can do so by sending checks made out to the Portland Association of Black Journalists, P.O. Box 11118, Portland, Oregon 97211.

Conference activities open to the public include a boat cruise on Saturday night after Tony Brown's speech, and a Gospel Breakfast on Sunday morning featuring the Martin Luther King Choir. These events are open to the public as well as the luncheon featuring Stephanie-Stokes Oliver and the banquet featuring Tony Brown.

Alcohol And Other Drug Abuse Prevention Begins At Home

Our children are vulnerable in today's world. Poverty, gangs and peer pressure often lead to the ever-growing problem of alcohol and other drug abuse. The participation of concerned families, as well as communities in the fight against this abuse is critical if our nation's youth are to grow up in a healthy, drug-free environment.

During the week of March 3-9, 1991 National PTA's Alcohol and Other Drug Awareness Week, the PTA examines what concerned parents and communities can do through the theme "Prevention Begins at Home."

Although the PTA believes there is no single solution to the problem of alcohol and othe drug abuse, the key to success is through prevention. Research shows that parents are the primary influence in children's decisions about

alcohol and other drugs. It also suggests that it is easiest to influence children's decision about alcohol and other drug use if parents start when children are very young.

Strong communication is the basis for building ties to family, which many experts believe is a factor in drug prevention. Clear rules and responsibilities should be set and enforced. Strict standards may alienate teens temporarily, but they also can help keep them alcohol and drug free. Building bonds to school is another key factor because when education is important to children, they are less likely to want to destroy their ability to learn with alcohol and other drugs.

But parents can't do it alone. The key, says our nation's largest parent-teacher group, is through partnerships

of parents, schools, businesses, governments and communities. Grassroot efforts have been shown by corporations like GTE, who in partnership with the national PTA, developed a unique alcohol and drug abuse prevention program called "Common Sense: Strategies for Raising Alcohol and Drug-Free Children", now being used in schools around the United States.

Alcohol and Other Drug Awareness Week is a reminder that alcohol and other drug problems require our attention every single day of the year. Drug abuse affects us all. Everyone must get involved.

Please contact your local PTA for more information on how you can become part of the support system to help children avoid alcohol and other drugs.

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Reinvestments in the Community

Drugs Don't Work In Portland

Working with the Regional Drug Initiative (RDI), Marx/Knoll, Denight & Dodge advertising created its largest public service campaign in the agency's 38-year history. Already post-campaign research has revealed increased public awareness.

The M/KD&D campaign for RDI focused on reducing drug usage in the work place. It was themed, "Drugs Don't work." according to M/KD&D creative director Ray Dodge, the campaign relied on all media and all Portland-area media came through with support. Equally important, many Portland production vendors offered their help. Thanks to this support from the communications industry, there was almost no expenditure of cash for either production or media.

In fact, many businesses support RDI, a citizens-based Portland organization to combat drugs. Separate committees tackle drugs on different fronts. The "Drugs in the Workplace Committee," chaired by Fred A. Stickel, pub-

lisher of The Oregonian, wants to eliminate drug usage in or affecting the work environment.

"We didn't want to repeat the many advertisements which use shock to raise awareness of the drug problem," said Dodge. "We wanted to make people feel drugs were a problem for them specifically in the workplace and secondly, we wanted employers and employees to call an 800 number-we wanted action."

The 800 number gave access to a state agency that could refer callers to any of many sources of help, depending on the caller and the problem.

According to a before and after survey volunteered by market Trends Research, the percentage of Portlanders who thought drug usage by fellow employees would be a problem for them at work rose from 50% in the pre-campaign survey (5/89) to 73% post-campaign (12/90).

This success has encouraged M/KD&D to plan a new phase

to the campaign for this year.

M/KD&D has created public service campaigns in the past few years for other organizations. Among them: Oregon Public Broadcasting, the Portland Youth Phi-harmonic, and the Downtown Rotary Club's Camp Enterprise.

The creative team on the RDI campaign included Ray Dodge, Rick Dalbey, Associate Creative Director; Darrell Williams, Writer/Producer; Barry Cadish, writer; and Bruce Eckols and John Bailer, designers.

Among the contributors to the production of the RDI campaign were: MIRA Film & Video, Spectrum Studios, Fred Meyer, Tektronix, General Camera West, Teknifilm, Telemation, Pete Stone, photographer; Henry Ngan, photographer; Schiegel Typesetting, Portland Fire Bureau, Eastman Kodak Company, Talent Management, Zellerbach Paper, Color Express, A-1 Silkscreen and Riddle

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PCC Offers Course On International Business

A new 10-week Portland Community College program for international business people, "Cultural Impact on World Trade," is scheduled to begin March 25, 1991 at PCC's Ross Island Center, 049 S.W. Porter Street. The course is presented through PCC's Institute for Management and Professional Development (IMPD).

The three-credit course is offered as part of the IMPD's World Trade and Transportation certificate program. The workshop/seminar-style course has been designed to promote intercultural awareness and international skill building in the new global market place. Participants will develop high performance communication strategies to capitalize on international markets. Improving cross-cultural awareness and mastering global business protocol are key objectives of the course.

For further information, please contact PCC's Institute for Management and Professional Development at (503) 273-2818.

Teens In Action Surviving The 90's

Teens In Action presents a full-day "Surviving the 90's: Friends helping Friends" workshop/dance for metro-area teens on Saturday, March 9 at Whitaker Middle School. Workshops include sessions on self-esteem, stress management, how to help a friend, laughter and relaxation and a performance by Teens & Company. Cost is \$5 for workshop, dance and 2 meals. For more information, please call the Portland Council of Camp Fire at 224-7800.

"Reinvestments in the Community" is a weekly column appearing in API publications throughout the USA.