

# No Jobs and No Shame, Part III

BY PROFESSOR MCKINLEY BURT

"Bush Speech Sends Stock Market to Worst Performance in Almost Six Months--Bethlehem Steel to Lay Off Thousands--Congress calls President's Economic Goals Short Term and Self-Serving"; those were the headlines following his Tuesday night speech.

The very next day, equally apprehensive television commentators reported the interview by David Frost, "I'm willing to do whatever it takes to get elected." Are you nervous? I am. Has he found another "Willie Horton"? On January 22, 1992, I made the distressing suggestion that, in the mode of many embattled leaders through the ages, this man might launch a dangerous MILITARY ADVENTURE! And, sure enough on last Wednesday's "Forum" page of the *Portland Oregonian* (1/29/92) we find a relevant article by Ruth Rosen, a columnist for *The Los Angeles Times*. The headline is, "Setting Stage for War in Iraq Campaign Ploy" (see insert).

Writer Rosen observes that "such a high-risk gamble may back fire," and that "Bush's attempt to blame General Colin Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, for ending the war too soon has failed; the public still holds the President responsible." Like I say, "No shame." Are you thinking what I am? That Mr. Powell has forgotten *who* he is and *where* he is? It could have been that internationally-distributed photo of the General dancing the night away, cheek-to-cheek with Mrs. Bush. He may have become confused, but certainly not the millions of jobless minorities--nor any others. This time, "everybody goes when the wagon comes," sure enough.

But, let us return to more immediate concerns, such as the nationwide phenomenon typified by General Motors plant to close 21 plants and lay off

174,000 workers, or the increasing impact on Oregon's economy occasioned by the "spotted owl." While the reader may never have seen one, do not think for a moment that the financial situation of you or your children--present and future--is not as equally threatened as that of the loggers still being laid off by the tens of thousands.

The economy of the state is inte-

grated, global. Just as surely as the small towns in the rural areas are closed down, and their populations driven first to unemployment compensation--and then to welfare--we find that the consequences of economic disturbances anywhere in the system are quickly reflected in the financial health of Portland, the precarious hub. Here, too, the result is increasing unemployment and

need for already overburdened services such as welfare.

And as we have just been reminded by the National Urban League's annual report on the "State of the Race," not only are blacks suffering right along with whites from the general economic malaise, but a black worker earns \$62 for every \$100 earned by a white. So it is that we again question the prepared-

ness or commitment of Portland's minority population to deal with a crisis situation; individuals or organizations. Certainly, there has been presented in these pages in recent years, by myself and other columnists, a number of proven, documented and successful economic enterprises carried out by both minority individuals and/or organizations. Have we lost our drive,

resourcefulness and ability to invent and innovate? Of course not, but we have some negative constraints within our own group.

Let us look at a case in point, that of McKinley Williams, a black newspaperman from Los Angeles. Arriving in Portland in 1948, he was soon to perceive a golden opportunity. In February, 1949, Portland's second daily, *The Oregon Journal*, went on strike, one which lasted 25 days and placed scores of white reporters and advertising salesmen in the street. Mr. Williams, a sharp and energetic immigrant from California, a region a hundred years ahead of complacent Portland in its commercial perspective, moved into the vacuum like white on rice.

I was a public accountant at the time, going to law school at night and busy setting up a finance company for my car dealer clients ("Union Avenue Finance Co."). I was not too busy to answer Mr. Williams' request to come down to his ghetto office on North Williams Avenue and set up an accounting system for his new enterprise. Imagine my surprise when entering his facilities--a sea of white faces, a full dozen of laid off "Journal" employees busy at typewriters, teletypes and art layouts, phone banks.

Williams had conceived and launched a small group of REGIONAL NEWSPAPERS of a similar format; "St. Johns, Beaverton, Milwaukie, etc." but each with a news content specific to that neighborhood's ongoing activities and urban problems. The idea sold like hotcakes because merchants saw a golden opportunity to tailor their advertising to the customers in their specific neighborhood. So who killed the venture? Uncle Tom? The establishment newspapers? The answer next week. Is it happening again in other fields?

## Setting Stage for War in Iraq Campaign Ploy

BY RUTH ROSEN, FORUM, 1/29/92

You don't have to be Oliver Stone to see through George Bush's cynical military preparations to oust Saddam Hussein. The polls have demonstrated Bush's political weakness, and the economy, he admits, has gone into free fall. Bush's star-crossed trip to Japan humiliated the United States as well as him. The country is demoralized, its people edgy. Meanwhile, Bush's greatest glory, the Persian Gulf war, has faded. Saddam Hussein shadows Bush's re-election campaign.

When all else fails, start a war. Absent the "vision thing," and the political will to face America's mounting economic and social crises, Bush has apparently decided to take a gamble and play the military card.

Bush's "covert" action--publicized weeks or months before it begins--is an overt political offensive to redress criticism that he ended the 1991 war prematurely.

The scenario seems carefully scripted. First comes the predictable Saudi "request" to thwart Saddam Hussein. Loyal to its allies, the Bush administration gallantly complies. The U.S. government then arms Kurds and Shiite Muslims who, after last spring's betrayal, are now to trust the United States and rise up against Saddam.

Naturally, the United States provides air cover, giving Americans another splendid view of military technology while avoiding the politically risky business of deploying ground combat forces. A quick war, perhaps begun in April and over by the summer, diverts public attention from domestic issues, giving Bush the popularity he needs to sail through the November election.

The administration claims that intelligence reports of growing dissension among Iraq's ruling families and clans has spurred this new round of military planning. A better justification would be Saddam's persistent efforts to skirt U.N. surveillance to build a nuclear bomb. But if nuclear weapons are the

threat, then a multinational effort should be made to enforce the non-proliferation treaty. The United States should not act alone.

Perhaps Bush is simply trying to rattle Saddam's nerves. A more likely cause, however, is the New Hampshire primary. Bush is a desperate candidate. As conservative columnist William Safire put it, Bush needs an "April surprise" to help his re-election because October would be just too transparent.

Bush said he would do anything to get re-elected. And he meant it. Leaking the preparations is a trial balloon, his first major campaign offensive. Even if he decides to ignore the Saudi "initiative" and forego the glory (and risks) of war, Bush is trying to change the game to one he can win--reminding the nation that he is the commander in chief whose shoes cannot possibly be filled.

Democrats who opposed the Gulf War last year, as well as those who oppose an American covert operation this spring, will find themselves torn between anti-war opposition and their efforts to speak to America's domestic problems. It is always easier for an incumbent to set the terms of debate. Recently, Bush lost that initiative. Now, the scenario goes, he can switch pub attention to the gulf once more.

But Bush's high risk gamble may well backfire. A military campaign to remove Saddam will only underscore the fact that Bush failed to neutralize him in the first place. Bush's attempt to blame Gen. Colin Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, for ending the war too soon has failed. The public still holds the president responsible.

The media and the public, moreover, has had a year to scrutinize the questionable origins and accomplishments of the Persian Gulf War. One year later, more people know how carefully Bush plotted to wage war, how much the government censored the war's bad news, how many "dumb" weapons didn't work and how many "smart" missiles missed their targets.

In the midst of the worsening recession Americans feel isolated by their individual vulnerability to pink slips, mortgage foreclosures and health crises. The Persian Gulf War gave Americans a temporary respite from these domestic problems, a sense of national purpose. But it won't necessarily work again. You can fool some of the people some of the time, but probably not again until next year.

## The Black United Fund of Oregon Receives Grants

The Black United Fund of Oregon, Inc., under the auspices of the Family Services Committee, one of the seven committees of the North/Northeast Economic Development Alliance, has been awarded three grants totalling \$186,894 to develop and implement a comprehensive Infant Mortality Reduction Program in N/NE Portland.

The Infant Mortality Reduction Program is designed to improve birth outcomes by increasing public awareness about the damaging effects of inadequate care during pregnancy, identifying women at risk, linking them to appropriate services, and providing case management to move families towards self sufficiency.

The Infant Mortality Reduction Program grew out of a report by the Family Services Committee entitled, "Infant Mortality Among Low-Income Northeast Portland Residents: Recommendations For Reduction" released in April of 1990. The report outlines recommendations for reducing infant mortality in N/NE Portland, where the rate of inadequate prenatal care is nearly double that of the state.

To address the recommendations in the report, The Family Services Committee established the Committee on Health, a coalition representing public and private health care providers, community based organizations and concerned residents. The Committee on Health is comprised of Multnomah County, the State of Oregon, Red Cross, March of Dimes, Emanuel Hospital, Kaiser Permanente, Tri-Met, United Way of the Columbia-Willamette, NE Neighborhood Health Clinic, Boys and Girls Aid Society, the Albina Ministerial Alliance, Project For Community Recovery, Imani Women's Support Project, YWCA, Give Us This Day, Insights Teen Parent Program, and many others. They are currently analyzing key issues and developing programs to address the factors that contribute to the high rates of infant mortality in North/Northeast Portland.

The March of Dimes awarded \$4,000 to support the Infant Mortality Reduction Program of the Family Services Committee. The March of Dimes was established in 1938 with a goal to prevent low birth weight and reduce the incidence of birth defects and infant mortality. The Lewis and Clark Chapter, March of Dimes' Campaign for Healthier Babies provides funds in the areas of medical services, public health education and professional education with a mission to ensure the birth of healthy children.

The Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA) of the Federal Office of Acquisition and Grants contracted with the Black United Fund for \$49,960 to develop model outreach materials which will educate Medicaid eligible families about available health care resources for pregnant women and children. The Health Care Financing Administrator was created by the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare in 1977 to administer the Medicare program and related quality assurance activities.

The WK Kellogg Foundation awarded a \$132,934 grant allowing the Family Services Committee to implement a prenatal care demonstration project, to reduce inadequate prenatal care and empower women to become self-reliant and better prepared to care for themselves and their families. The Kellogg Foundation was established in 1983 to "help people help themselves." As a private grantmaking foundation, it provides seed money to organizations and institutions that have identified problems and have designed constructive action programs aimed at solutions. A majority of the Foundation's grantmaking is focused on the areas of youth; volunteerism in philanthropy; community-based; problem-focused health services; and higher education. Programming priorities concentrate grants in the United States, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Southern Africa.

## Nordstrom Awards Major Contract to Minority-Owned Firm

D.C.'s Smoot Corporation to Complete \$5.5 Million Addition to Nordstrom's Maryland Distribution Center

Nordstrom has announced that it has awarded a \$5.5 million contract to the Sherman R. Smoot Corporation of Washington, D.C., a subsidiary of the Smoot Corporation, for construction of a 170,000 square foot addition at Nordstrom's Maryland Distribution Center in Upper Marlboro, Maryland.

The contract with the Smoot Corporation, a 100 percent minority-owned firm, is the largest Nordstrom has signed through its minority vendor program. The program, which was established in 1989 to promote and support business with minority firms, has awarded more than \$13 million in contracts to minority businesses since its inception.

"It is a tremendous honor for our firm to be associated with an industry leader like Nordstrom," said Smoot Corporation President Lewis R. Smoot, Sr. "We applaud the determination and commitment Nordstrom exhibits through its minority vendor program, and we look forward to completing the project to their well-known high standards for

quality and customer satisfaction."

"The Smoot Corporation exemplifies the type of company we enjoy working with," said Dave Lindsey, Nordstrom's vice president of store planning. "They stress integrity, quality, and good service, and we're looking forward to the project."

Under the contract, Smoot's work will double the size of Nordstrom's existing distribution center in Upper Marlboro's Collington Center. Ground breaking for the project is anticipated this month. The distribution center addition is a critical element in Nordstrom's expansion efforts in Maryland, where the retailer will be building stores in Towson Town Center in 1992 and Annapolis Mall in 1993.

The nation's largest fashion specialty retailer, Seattle-based Nordstrom currently maintains 68 stores in nine states. The Smoot Corporation is one of the largest 100 percent minority-owned construction companies in the country.

## Host Sells Its First Two Homes in Northeast Portland

The new year looks promising for the non-profit group HOST! Home Ownership a Street at a Time (HOST) has sold its first two homes on their project street in Northeast Portland--4006 N.E. 9th and 910 N.E. Shaver. As a private, non-profit organization, HOST has been working to create affordable home ownership opportunities for low to moderate income families. The selling of these two homes marks the success HOST hopes will continue throughout the year.

The first home, located at 4006 N.E. 9th, was sold to Ann J. (Jude) Cornwell. Her new 1,458 sq.ft. home has three bedrooms, one bath with features such as leaded glass detail, refinished hardwood floors, a newly remodeled kitchen, and a full basement.

Raised in Northeast Portland, Cornwell is excited about being able to own a home. "It's been a great opportunity to be able to buy a house," she said. "It's wonderful to see the neighborhood being restored. Neighbors have told me they like hearing the sounds of rebuilding (from the work on other HOST projects)," she said. "It has brought a sense of rejuvenation to the area."

The second HOST home sold is located on 910 N.E. Shaver, just across the street from 4006 N.E. 9th. Sold to Barbara Dumas, the 1,120 sq.ft. home has two bedrooms, one bath, with fea-

tures that include stained glass cabinet fronts, top-of-the-line bath and kitchen fixtures, built-in range/oven and dishwasher, and a washer/dryer in a separate laundry room. This was HOST's very first remodeled house and was donated by the Oregon Remodelers Association.

Dumas has been a longtime resident of the area and it's her first time owning a home. "My kids were born around the corner from here more than twenty years ago," said Dumas. "I like the house, but I'm still adjusting to the move."

According to Jerry Mason, owner of Westland Property and HOST board member, "Host's strategy is to rehabilitate houses on both sides of a street, one block long and establish a supportive environment for homeowners. Homes are priced affordably (most at \$49,000 or less) and come with attractive financing plans for low monthly payments."

HOST's plan has been generated by professionals from the housing industry--realtors, builders, and lenders--who believe that home ownership is the foundation upon which strong neighborhoods are built and sustained. The goal is to set an example for private industry and begin a momentum to revitalize depressed neighborhoods through responsible private investment and redevelopment.



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