

# OPINION

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## Disastrous Approach in Iraq

Need strategy to end bloodshed, contempt

BY U.S. REP. ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS

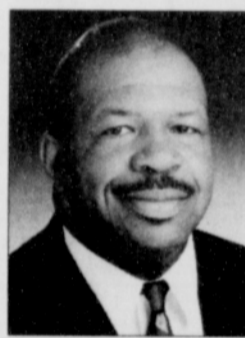
Instead of applauding Secretary Rumsfeld for his obvious failure in leadership, President Bush would have better served America and the world community by acknowledging that for the past year and three months his Administration has pursued a disastrous course in Iraq.

Furthermore, the President should have articulated that a new strategy must be adopted if America is to emerge from this war without more blood-

shed, deception and international contempt.

The horrific torture of Iraqi prisoners is more evidence that the war in Iraq is not creating peace, freedom or democracy, but is perpetuating a greater sense of hostility and mistrust toward America around the world.

During the President's state-



U.S. Rep. Elijah E. Cummings

ment at the Pentagon on evidence of abuse of Iraqi prisoners, he repeatedly invoked the word 'courage.'

There is no question that our soldiers on the battlefield are demonstrating extraordinary courage. However, I ask, when will politicians at the highest levels of our government show the same courage in taking responsibility for their failed leadership in Iraq?

I again renew the Congressional Black Caucus' call for Secretary Rumsfeld to offer his resignation for the good of the nation and as a demonstration of goodwill to the international community.

I also call on President Bush to exhibit courage and leadership in this situation by holding himself and his Administration accountable for these very real and unacceptable failures.

U.S. Rep. Elijah E. Cummings, D-Md., is chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus.

## Most of our Youth Excel

Negative images cast wrong assumptions

BY JUDGE GREG MATHIS

The U.S. Department of Education recently issued a positive report on African-American youth that was barely covered by the media. The report concluded that black youth were the only ethnic group to sustain an increase in engineering graduates in the last three decades.

African-American youth are often projected in the media as thugs, out, sex fiends. If you watch the evening news, you will no doubt see a troubled black youth being arrested for some crime or another before the broadcast ends. When you open your daily paper, you will no doubt read about the same. When you listen to music or watch music videos, you will hear and see some African-American youth degrading themselves and their women through their art. These are the negative and destructive images that are being projected most by the media as representative of black youth.

However, the truth is most of our youth are not thugs and sex addicts; indeed our youth are leaders, champions, and engineers too.

For decades, we have seen our youth excel in athletics, entertainment and culture. Indeed in recent years, we've seen a surge of young political leaders emerge from our community all throughout the coun-

try. Now comes word from the U.S. Department of Education that our youth are excelling in engineering, a curriculum that requires the mastering of math and science.

The study compared the high school graduates of 1972, 1982, and 1992, in determining how many of them attended college and graduated with an engineering degree. In 1972, only 1.7 percent of black high school graduates majored in engineering. By 1992 the percentage had

increased to 12.6 percent. The largest increase of any ethnic group. The reason this report is media worthy is because an engineering degree provides our youth a gateway and opportunity to enhance some of the world's most important industries. Out of this crop of engineers could come the next George Washington Carver or the next Bill Gates.

Congratulations is in order for all the organizations, parents and schools who have encouraged our youth to excel in engineering. We must continue to encourage our youth to excel in math and science so that they can determine the world's future, in addition to their own. In the meantime, we must demand a more balanced media portrayal of African-American youth.



Judge Greg Mathis

Judge Greg Mathis is chairman of the Rainbow PUSH-Excel Board and a national board member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

**AAHC African American Health Coalition, Inc.**  
Presents for your health,  
**Wellness Within REACH Activity Calendar**

**Aerobics**  
Mallory Ave. Christian Church  
Mon, Wed, Fri, 6-7am, Pierce • 5:30-6:20pm, Granville • 6:30-7:30pm, Nickerson

**Low Impact Aerobics**  
Daniel's Memorial Church  
Tue, 7:15-8:15pm, Granville

**Water Aerobics** (Contact AAHC)  
Columbia Pool, Matt Dishman, Salvation Army

**African Dance**  
Matt Dishman  
Sat, 10-11am, Addo

**Body Conditioning**  
Wild Oats Market  
Sat, 9:30-10:30am, Nickerson

**Chicago Step**  
Matt Dishman  
Fri, 6:30pm, Kendrick

**Kickboxing**  
Humboldt Elementary  
Tue, Thu, 6-7pm, Keller

**Pilates** (Contact AAHC)  
Matt Dishman  
Tue, 8-9pm

**Stretching/Body Sculpting**  
(Class courtesy of Matt Dishman)  
Matt Dishman  
Tue, Thu, 7-8am, Lois

**Tai Chi** (Contact AAHC)  
St. John's Community Center  
Tue, 6:30-7:30pm

**Walking Group**  
Peninsula Park  
Sat, 12:30pm, Woods

**Weight Mgmt./Conditioning**  
U. of Portland Indoor Track  
Tue, Thu, 9-10am, Hasan

**Yoga**  
Wild Oats Market - Tue, Thu, 7:30-8:30pm, O'Rourke

Columbia Pool, 7701 N Chautauqua  
Daniel's Memorial Church, 1234 NE Killingsworth  
Humboldt Elementary, 4915 N Gantenbein  
Mallory Ave Christian Church (Gym), 126 NE Alberta  
Matt Dishman, 77 NE Knott

Peninsula Park, 700 N Portland  
Salvation Army, 5325 N Williams  
St. John's Community Center, 8427 N. Central  
U. of Portland Indoor Track, 500 N Willamette  
Wild Oats Market, 3535 NE 15th

**REACH** Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health  
A Program of the African American Health Coalition, Inc.  
Sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

Contact AAHC at 503-413-1850 or visit our web site at [www.aahc-portland.org](http://www.aahc-portland.org)

## Fast-Food Chains Can Fight Obesity

Discontinuing 'Supersize' option is a good start

BY DR. MEL KOHN

"Oh, and 'Supersize' that, please."

If you haven't used those words yourself, then you've been behind someone in line who did.

The concept, pioneered by McDonald's, allows a fast-food customer to order a larger portion for a



Dr. Mel Kohn

weight in a year.

only make this problem worse. Consider that a larger portion of fries and larger soda can add 380 calories. Although that doesn't sound like much, consuming those calories only once a week can add five and a half pounds to your

weight in a year.

those numbers on the menu to help people make informed choices. Likewise, most fast-food meals come with fries and high calorie sodas. These restaurants could help make it easier for us to keep our caloric intake down by making the default accompaniment to our meals lower calorie items such as a small salad, piece of fruit, a low-fat milk or bottle of water. Fries and sugared sodas would still be available, but we'd

*Increasing the share of advertising that promotes healthier foods, especially for children, would contribute greatly to our long-term health.*

relatively modest additional cost.

Make no mistake: I'm not about to attack the Golden Arches. Indeed, because of its convenience my family and I find ourselves pulling into fast-food establishments from time to time.

But the distressing fact is, fast food can be very high in calories, and increasing caloric intake is a major contributor to the nation's growing obesity problem. And obesity was only recently identified as approaching tobacco's place as the premiere cause of premature death among Americans.

Eaten regularly, fast food contributes to obesity because it's so energy dense that most of our bodies don't get enough exercise to burn up the excess calories. Large portion sizes

The good news is this is a problem with a solution. McDonald's, by announcing that it will discontinue the "supersize" option, already has taken a step in the right direction. More can be done.

For example, how many people know that a 1/3-pound burger has 740 calories, but the 2/3-pound burger weighs in at 1,200 calories? By now, most consumers instinctively know that fast-food meals are high in calories.

But, unlike highly accessible nutrition labels on packages at the grocery store, fast-food outlets often don't make it easy. Granted, some chains have posters or brochures in their stores, but often that information is inconvenient and hard to use. If restaurants want to make the healthy choice the easy choice, they can put

have to ask for them specifically to get them.

Advertising heavily influences what we consume, including uncounted burgers, fries and sodas. However, only about 2 percent of that was for fruits, vegetables, grains and beans. Increasing the share of advertising that promotes healthier foods, especially for children, would contribute greatly to our long-term health.

So, McDonald's, thank you for making it a little easier for my family, and millions of others, to eat more healthfully. Here's hoping it's only the start of an industry trend to help us make wise choices when we eat out.

Dr. Mel Kohn is the state epidemiologist in the Oregon Department of Human Services.