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Bush Criticized on Social Security

Accused of playing race card

(AP) - Black leaders on Monday accused President Bush of "playing the race card" in his pitch to sell his proposed Social Security overhaul.

NAACP leaders Julian Bond and Dennis Courtland Hayes said Bush should focus on addressing the underlying health care reasons why blacks have a shorter life expectancy instead of citing it as a reason they should support his idea of private accounts.

"Rather than playing the race card to set Americans against Americans, we urge the adminis-

tration to address the long-term problems the system faces now," said Bond, the NAACP's chairman. "Recognizing the shorter life expectancy of people of color is commendable, but placing them further at risk is no solution."

Government statistics show that the average life span for a newborn black male is 69, compared with 75 for a newborn white male. Critics of Bush's plan say black mortality figures are skewed by higher death rates among infants and a higher exposure to violent crime. They cite statistics showing that by the common retirement age of 65, life expectancy for black males becomes 79.6 years, compared with 81.6 years for white males.

"Don't use the fact that African-Americans have a lower life expectancy as an excuse for privatization," said Rep. Elijah



Julian Bond

Cummings, D-Md., past chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus. "Deal with disparities, deal with making our lives longer, instead of putting more pressure on us when we're worrying about whether we'll get Social Security

when we're older."

Hayes, the NAACP's acting president and CEO, said the creation of private accounts could trigger changes or reductions in Social Security's survivor or disability programs, both of which are beneficial for blacks.

"Unfortunately for African-Americans, our experiences here in America are color-coded," Hayes said. "We have to be concerned about mutations, of changes that occur that we sometimes didn't foresee when we thought we were doing something good."

As examples, he said constitutional amendments on behalf of blacks after the Civil War led to Jim Crow laws curbing black voting rights, and court decisions outlawing segregated schools triggered white flight from cities and racial profiling in suburbs.

Olympic Bomber Admits Guilt

Also to confess other bombings

(AP)—Eric Rudolph has agreed to plead guilty and admit setting off a deadly bomb at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics and blasts at abortion clinics and a lesbian nightclub in a deal that allows him to escape the death penalty, Justice Department officials said Friday.

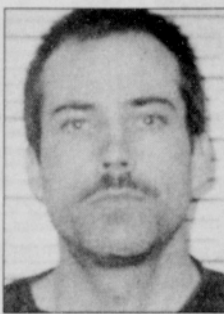
The plea deal calls for four consecutive life sentences without the possibility of parole. Rudolph had faced a possible death sentence.

Rudolph, 38, was charged with carrying out a series of blasts in

Georgia and Alabama in the late 1990s.

One woman was killed and more than 100 people were injured in the Olympic blast, caused by a bomb in a backpack. In the next two years, he allegedly set off bombs at a lesbian nightclub in Atlanta and at two abortion clinics - one in Alabama and one in Atlanta. The Alabama abortion clinic blast killed an off-duty police officer and critically injured a nurse.

Rudolph then slipped away into the mountains of western North Caro-



Eric Rudolph

lina, where the former soldier used survivalist techniques to live off the land for more than five years - all while being on the FBI's list of 10 Most Wanted fugitives. Then in May 2003, he was captured after being seen scavenging for food near a grocery store trash bin

in Murphy, N.C.

Word of the deal came amid reports that agents have confirmed the location of about 250 pounds of dynamite that Rudolph had hidden in the mountains of western North Carolina.

Name-Brand Prescriptions Prices Soar

(AP) - Wholesale prices for name-brand drugs jumped an average 7.1 percent in 2004 - the largest hike in five years and more than twice the rate of inflation, according to a study released Tuesday by AARP.

The hike follows a 7.0 percent jump just a year earlier and since the end of 1999, prices of more than 150 popular name-brand drugs have risen an average 35.1 percent, nearly three times the 13.5 percent inflation rate over that period, the report

said. In 2004, inflation was 2.7 percent.

By contrast, the price for 75 popular generic drugs hardly budged in 2004, rising 0.5 percent. In 2003, manufacturers' prices for generic drugs went up an average 13.3 percent.

Advertisement for Window World featuring 'Cold, Broken or Drafty Windows?' and 'One Day Installs'. Includes phone numbers for Oregon (503-289-2949) and Washington (360-891-2949), and website www.windowworldinc.com.

Advertisement for NEA's Read Across America event. Features a photo of Reg Weaver, President of the National Education Association, and text promoting reading to children. Includes NEA logo and website nea.org.

Large advertisement for The Portland Observer featuring 'diversity in Print & On Web'. Includes a screenshot of the website, a subscription form with fields for name, address, and telephone, and the phone number 503-288-0033.