



Congressional Black Caucus Reports to the People

The recent controversy over the impact of energy policy on blacks and the poor should serve to remind all of us that, although the severe implications of the energy crisis are clear, the proper responses to the crisis are far less obvious.

As co-chair of the Congressional Black Caucus Energy Subcommittee, I am well aware that historically, energy abundance has gone hand in hand with economic expansion. We have only to look at the effects of this winter's coal strike and blizzards to realize that our economy depends on an assured supply of energy.

Yet it is a mistake to assume that an emphasis on controlled prices and conservation automatically will have a disastrous effect on black unemployment and energy supplies.

The national energy plan stresses conservation and controls but it also stresses development of alternative energy sources which can increase supplies, provide jobs and shield the poor from economic harm.

Sometimes it is overlooked that our present energy policies are having a disastrous economic effect. We are forced to import nearly half of all the crude oil we use, representing a cash drain on our economy of \$45 billion per year. As the cost of imported energy rises, the burden of high prices falls disproportionately on blacks and the poor.

This is why it makes sense to choose conservation and the development of alternative energy sources as a way out of the energy maze. Instead of trying to pump increasing amounts of oil and gas out of the ground, we must face the fact that sooner or later they will be depleted.

Solar energy, wind energy and other natural renewable sources do exist. Using new technologies, the development of non-conventional energy sources can provide much of the nation's needs at only a fraction of the huge capital outlays necessary for oil exploration. By creating jobs in new fields, the labor market will be opened to new groups of workers.

Similarly, energy conservation is not automatically linked to slower economic growth. Conservation means eliminating waste and recognizing that our resources are limited. As an example, consider the fact that three-fourths of the poor have no storm windows or doors and half have no insulation. An effective weatherization program has the potential to provide jobs as well as save energy.

This is typical of the way in which conservation programs would benefit the economy. According to the American Institute of Architects, for instance, a comprehensive program for new and existing buildings could create 565 thousand to 1.3 million jobs per year for each of the next 12 years.

The need for jobs and the need for energy can be reconciled, if we are pragmatic and flexible. This means that we cannot sacrifice growth for fossil energy, of jobs for OPEC oil.

If it is true that our national energy policy is "the moral equivalent of war," unfortunately it also is true that until now black and low-income families have been major casualties, their participation limited to bearing the burdens of energy prices. It is time for their interests and concerns to be reflected in the formation of energy policy, and not just on the front lines of the battlefields.

UN Column By Laura Parks

Southern Africa is moving inexorably towards war and civil war. At this moment the Prime Minister of white Rhodesia, Ian Smith, has apparently succeeded in reaching an agreement with Chief Jeremiah Chirau, Bishop Abel Muzorewa and the Rev. Ndabaningi Sithole for

the transfer of majority rule to six million black Rhodesians.

The agreements exclude the powerful Patriotic Front and its equally powerful guerrilla armies operating in 60% of the country and in control of at least 40%. Patriotic Front leaders Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe have denounced the tentative agreements and have called for the intensification of the guerrilla war.

The Front Line states and the powerful Organization of African Unity have denounced the Ian Smith maneuvers. They regard the settlements as a tactical device whereby the white establishment will be permitted to retreat into the political and social background while retaining its powerful economic interests.

The net result of the maneuver will be to put one group of black Rhodesians against another; in this instance Ian Smith plans to use the Chirau-Muzorewa-Sithole group to battle the Patriotic Front of Mugabe and Nkomo.

The United States and Britain, until last week, recognized crucial importance of including the Patriotic Front in any settlement. Now, the two powers have visibly retreated in the face of the Smith offensive, and are hoping that Smith can succeed in holding elections, in which three million blacks will participate and demonstrate that majority rule is a fact.

The fact will be that the blacks voting will be voting for a system of government that will guarantee the presence and the property of the white minority, which will be in control of all the important executive offices of government.

Blame for permitting Smith to conclude agreements excluding the Patriotic Front must rest with the United States and Britain and their unwillingness or inability to learn the lessons of recent African history, involving guerrilla movements.

Britain and the U. S. are willfully ignoring the warnings about the explosive situation in southern Africa coming from the Front Line states, the Organization of African Unity and other interested powers.

In all of this old colonial and neocolonial attitudes are discernible. Britain and the United States are unwilling to discard the regimes of Smith of Rhodesia and Vorster of South Africa. They prefer to follow a policy of appeasement, opportunism and calculated risks whereby the white establishment is forever being given life sustaining transfusions of hope and the dangerous tools of divide and rule.

In addition, recent African history shows that the super powers will not be indifferent to events in southern Africa. Civil war in Rhodesia, against the Smith backed black Africans, will surely invoke cries of help from the Front Line states and the Organization of African Unity to help the Patriotic Front against Smith.

Should the Chinese, Russians, and Cubans get involved against Smith, will South Africa's Vorster remain neutral? And if not will arms from certain foreign powers be dropped to South Africa's rebellious black population? In any event a protracted civil war in Rhodesia would become a prime threat to world peace.

Some cynics have suggested that a war in southern Africa may in fact be the secret desire of certain powers as the means with which to revive the world economy and prevent it from slipping into a major economic decline in 1979.

Kaiser Konsumer's Korner

By Inez Kaiser



Hopefully you will not need their services too often, but when you do, finding a reliable lawyer can be a chore. So many factors are involved in engaging lawyers that the average consumer could run into many headaches. And, he still may not be satisfied!

First of all, decide if you really do need a lawyer. Check with religious, government and other civil groups and organizations which might handle your complaint. The cost to you could be nothing or very little depending on your income. But, start looking early. Usually, time wasted is valuable in court proceedings.

Ask other people who have had dealings with lawyers. But, remember that their problem may not have been the same as yours. If you check with a lawyer referral service and do not explain your specific problem, you will not be getting your money's worth.

Plus, these referral agencies charge a fee, which you pay along with your lawyer's costs. Check with a business person or any lawyers who work for the same company you do. They could lead you to a good lawyer trained to handle your complaint.

Be aware of contingent fees, hourly rate fees, bonuses, costs and expenses and what is now outlawed - the minimum fee. These are terms of lawyer apyment. Some lawyers prefer contingent fees, which is a certain percentage of your money gained from the suit.

The most common fee arrangement is the "hourly rate" method, where lawyers get paid by the hour. Some lawyers bill you for any expenses had to pay while preparing your case along with the fixed price for his work.

If a lawyer quotes you a straight fee from the beginning - watch out! This is minimum fee pricing and has been outlawed since 1973. If you have a difficult case and your lawyer feels he deserves it, you may be charged a bonus fee.

The best arrangement is called the "reasonable fee" or what you and your lawyer agree is the best sum for the job done. This should be in writing prior to the beginning of the work. You should take into consideration many things in deciding this: time and difficulty involved in your case, experience of our lawyer and any time limitation involved. Also, remember that by accepting your case, your lawyer is giving up other jobs which could come in.

Please remember that court dealings often use uncommon terms that you are not familiar with. Make sure you understand exactly what is going on. Do not be afraid to ask for clarification. Make sure you have copies of anything the lawyer prepares on your behalf. And before paying him, ask for and receive a complete itemized bill.

The lawyer-client relationship should be beneficial to both parties because as a consumer you need a service he's trained to give. But, this doesn't occur all the time. If you're ever dissatisfied about your lawyer's conduct, figure out exactly what the problem is. After discussing it with your lawyer and if you're still not satisfied, discharge him and seek another lawyer.

Anytime you have received unsatisfactory service from a lawyer, write the nearest state bar association. Your association may have a disciplinary board to deal with the negligent lawyer. If nothing is done, complain to your friends and the public by newspaper, radio letter, etc. People should be told about inefficient lawyers, and if everyone tries, more and more lawyers will begin to deal fairly and honestly with consumers.

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