

BLACK-BASHING

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Kajiyama, made some disgusting statements comparing prostitutes in Tokyo's red-light district to African Americans who, he said ruin white neighborhoods by moving into them.

While the Minister was gratuitously insulting Black Americans, his country was benefiting from the presence of American troops, about a fifth of them black, sweltering in the Arabian desert to protect the oil that drives the Japanese economy.

That made it even harder to take, but there would have been an explosion of African American resentment, anyway, given

the long line of similar insults by Japanese politicians and the equally long line of apologies and promises that such incidents wouldn't happen again.

If Japan expects to build decent relations with its biggest market for made-in-Japan goods, its leaders better get serious about putting an end to this national sport of black-bashing.

U.S. leadership has to put this on the table as a major irritant between our countries. I'd like to see a top Administration official, preferable the President, publicly tell Japan's Prime Minister that we're going to find it

hard to do business with people who regularly insult our citizens.

and Congress ought to get into the act, too. Why should the Congressional Black Caucus be the only protesters against the Justice Minister's insulting statement?

Why aren't other congresspeople condemning yet another racist barb aimed at their

African American constituents and at our country?

And Japanese companies with U.S. operations ought to take the lead in convincing the politicians and their business peers at home that black-bashing will hurt Japan.

They have the experience and the understanding of the American scene to convey that

message, and their own economic interests demand that anti-black racism be stopped.

Some commentators say that racial discrimination has a high level of acceptance in Japan and therefore its politicians don't realize how serious such racial slurs are to other people.

If that's true, then we ought to insist on changes in their

education system to teach more about other cultures and about the evils of racism.

Japan's economic might makes it a world power, and it thereby incurs international responsibilities, such as the responsibility to reject racism in this multiracial interdependent world. The U.S. needs to help teach Japan that very important lesson.

THE HEART

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One of the tests of any society is how it cares for those unable to care for themselves. It now appears as if the costs of this current Middle East operation will be passed on to those least able to carry the burdens of increased taxes, bear the cuts in critical domestic programs, and survive the escalation of our long-term indebtedness which has grown nightmarish over the decade of the Eighties. Further, the costs of rescue in the failed savings and loan debacle ought to be paid by those responsible for that debacle. The cost of this rescue ought not to be passed on to our children, nor should we suffer for the failure of our regulators.

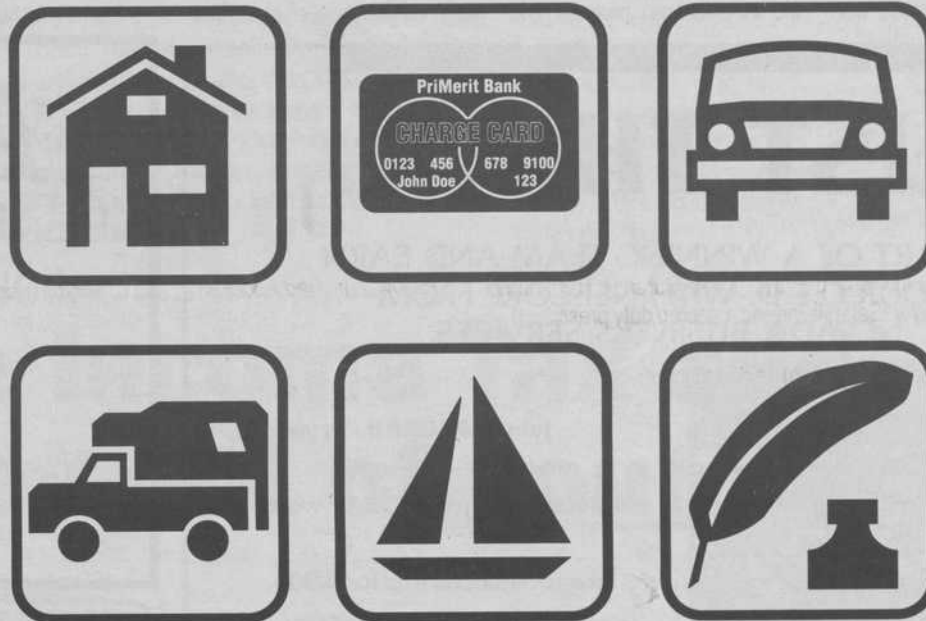
Health care for infants, families and our senior citizens should cover everyone and provide all benefits, instead of being used as a political football to "balance the budget." We must wonder what message the president will bring to the first World Summit For Children being held at the United Nations in New York, and whether he will commit the necessary resources to the goal of ensuring that the interests of our children are protected in our national, economic and social policies. Will our nation lead the effort to ratify and implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child being presented at this Summit? Will the president lead our nation in an effort to see that U.S. poverty, infant mortality and school achievement are no longer among the worst of all industrialized countries?

The time has come for the president and the congress to reiterate the ideals for which this nation stands: equality of opportunity, security and freedom for everyone. NOW...not next year or the year 2000...we should move forward to fully fund those domestic programs that will make us more productive and knowledgeable citizens. The federal budget should be balanced, not by inhumane cuts in vital domestic programs, but by generating increased revenue from a literate citizenry who are productive members of society. The Full Employment and Balanced Growth Act of 1978 laid out a plan to promote growth and a fully operating economy.

We are investing billions of dollars and thousands of our people in a costly buildup in the Middle East. Upon the return of our brave sons and daughters, regardless of their color, let it not be to a country we are in the process of losing. Let it be to a country that remains true to the principles of democracy, equal rights and freedom for all.

Let us not lose domestically that which we proclaim to be fighting for overseas.

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