

# Point of View

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## CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

### "AFRICAN STARVATION: SOMALIA'S CRY FOR HELP"

By Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

Seven years ago, the world community watched in utter horror at the sight of one million Ethiopians dying from hunger. World leaders were saying "never again" will that kind of human tragedy be allowed to occur. Certainly the remembrance of the 1985 Ethiopian famine bring back awful memories.

We recall that the United States led by President Reagan was slow to respond to the magnitude of the Ethiopian famine because at that time the U.S. was against the Ethiopian government because of geopolitical ideology.

Although now the case of Somalia, at least in terms of U.S. strategic interests is different, there appears to be a similar "slow response" to the Somali famine by the United States. Somalia, under the rule of recently ousted President Mohammed Siad Barre, had been an ally of the United States for decades on the "Horn of Africa".

The 1992 Somali famine is projected to exceed the death toll of the 1985 Ethiopian famine. Yet, there is no atmosphere of emergency at the U.S. State Department nor in the White House.

The International Committee of the Red Cross estimates that about one-third of Somalia's 6 million people will starve to death unless more food is rushed to Somalia by the international community. Of course, the civil war in Somalia since last year has complicated the delivery of emergency aid.

We are in full and complete support of the United Nation's efforts to help the peoples of Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina amidst their civil war in Europe. We support the quick response of President Bush to dispatch U.S. military airlifts of food, medicines, and other supplies to that war-torn area. But we question why President Bush has not even mentioned the tragic situation in Somalia?

Two million Africans are near death in Somalia. African Americans, in particular, must break the silence and demand emergency relief for our sisters and brothers in Somalia. All Americans who believe in justice and human fairness must respond through responsible action. Time is running out in Somalia.

Yes, starvation is also spreading in other parts of the world. Throughout the United States, in many cities, the lines of the hungry and homeless are growing. But, no where in the world today is the situation of the hungry and starving more critical than it is in Somalia. Just last month alone in the town of Baidoa, Somalia, more than 7,000 people perished as a result of the famine.

We call upon President Bush to take immediate action to increase the United States participation in the relief efforts of the United Nations and the Red Cross in Somalia. This is no time to play politics with the lives of two million persons.

No child of God in Europe or in Africa should be denied food and water. War is no excuse.

Geo-politics is no justification. The cry of Somalia for help must be answered and an adequate response must be given now. Contributions may be sent to the Somalia Relief Fund, American Red Cross, P.O. 37243, Washington, D.C. 20013.



BENJAMIN F. CHAVIS, JR.

## TO BE EQUAL

# THE ENTERPRISE ZONE SOLUTION

By John E. Jacob

The scramble to find new solutions to America's urban crisis will probably lead to passage of federal enterprise zone legislation — a package of tax incentives that encourage businesses to set up shop in designated distress areas.

The idea has been kicking around for years, but Congress never passed it in a form that Administrations backing the idea could accept. And those Administrations never really fought hard for it, either.

That the enterprise zone idea is still alive is a tribute to the tenacity of Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Jack Kemp, who has forged a bipartisan, biracial coalition behind the plan, and who has made it the centerpiece of the Bush

Administration's long awaited domestic policy initiative.

The states haven't waited for the federal government to act. Thirty-six states now have enterprise zones, so there is a significant body of experience to determine whether they do in fact encourage business activity and create jobs in poverty areas.

The results have been mixed. Some cities report their state zones are a plus; others that they have been disappointing.

Supporters of the plan say that overlaying federal tax breaks with existing state and local ones will make enterprise zones successful.

Others aren't so sure. They say few new jobs would be created; that most businesses moving into the zone would just

be shifting from other needy areas, and that it is not equitable to give tax breaks to businesses and workers in one place and deny them to others who may be just across the street.

Critics also say that while businesses may locate in the zones, the workers will come from outside the zones, leaving local people — the supposed beneficiaries — just as unemployed as before. All of those objections are valid.

But the problems of the inner cities are so serious that we probably should give the enterprise zone concept a try.

But there should be very strict regulations and enforcement oversight that mandates local employment, favors startup businesses over transfers, and requires job training programs that qualify unemployed poverty area residents for the new jobs.

Even if that is done, enterprise zones are unlikely to work unless they are part of a larger package of programs that revitalize distressed neighborhoods, such as skills training, housing, health, and education programs.

Framers of enterprise zone legislation should also be on guard against allowing the concept to turn into a pork-barrel of give-aways that drain resources from the most troubled areas.

Some of the Great Society programs like Model Cities and urban economic development aid were also intended to be targeted to the poorest areas. But after Congress got through with them they were all over the lot and even affluent neighborhoods got a piece of the pie.

The big danger in the enterprise zone concept is that it may be oversold.

Enterprise zones are not the answer to urban unemployment and economic hardship. They'll

never create as many jobs as are needed.

They won't create as many jobs as putting the same money into programs that provide workers with the skills needed in today's industry or into transportation programs that enable inner city residents to get jobs in the suburbs.

But until Washington mounts a massive public service job and training program to put every American who wants to work



JOHN E. JACOB

into a job, we might as well give the enterprise zone concept a try.

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor,

I read your article about how the U.S. Justice Department will not prosecute the officers that murdered Charles Bush. Unlike Rodney King, Charles Bush had not broken any laws; but yet, he is dead. Most of the police in Las Vegas are ex-military, so they have stood watch. So they have had to have been relieved from watch; that means waking their relief. The military tells you that you take care when waking your relief because the person that you wake is not responsible for their actions for the first few minutes after being awoken.

Therefore, I can not see how something like this would have to be put in the hands of the justice department. With the large number of Black people that don't live on the Westside or in Northtown, the court system didn't have a single Black person on the jury. The justice department must have had a white person handling their investigation.

Sam Lenon, Las Vegas

## THE NAACP AND YOU!



Rev. Jesse D. Scott  
President  
Las Vegas, NAACP



## THE CARNES NOMINATION - PART 1

The following is a letter and list of arguments that was sent to the Las Vegas Chapter of the NAACP from their national headquarters, regarding their opposition to the Senate confirmation of Attorney Edward Carnes to the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals.

Dear Jesse Scott:

The NAACP opposes Senate confirmation of Attorney Edward Carnes for a lifetime appointment to the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals.

We need you help with our campaign to "Stop the Ed Carnes Nomination" by asking your Senators to vote "NO" on this confirmation.

I urge you to call the NAACP Saction Hotline Today (1-800-641-1818 Hotline #9286) to authorize an operator to send Western Union Custom Letters directly to your two U.S. Senators urging them to vote against the appointment of Ed Carnes to the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals. Western Union already has the text of the letter to

(See The NAACP and You, Page 17)

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