

Point of View

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CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

U.S. MILITARY SPYING ON AFRICAN AMERICANS

by Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

Truth always comes eventually into the light. This is a true saying and in particular in regard to the facts now being exposed to the disgraceful, immoral and illegal spying on the

African American community by elite spy units of the U.S. military. Notwithstanding the historic fact that African Americans have disproportionately fought and died as loyal soldiers in the U.S. military since the American

Revolutionary War, it has now been revealed that the U.S. military has spied on the African American community for more than seventy five years.

The public outcries in response to the disclosures out-

lined in a report issued by The Commercial Appeal newspaper in Memphis, Tennessee has been tremendous. The Commercial Appeal report was the result of a 16-month investigation by the newspaper. Thus, another

sad and tragic chapter in the history of American racism has been revealed.

There are some that are arguing that the past should be left to the past, and the nation should avoid looking into its past on issues that may cause racial polarization. We take exception to that view. It is important to tell the truth about the past in order to avoid repeating past misdeeds in the future.

Martin Luther King, Jr. and his family were targets of U.S. military action and spying. The Commercial Appeal investigation confirmed that the illegal spying was directed in general at African American congregations in the South that were involved in challenging racial injustice.

As one reads this new investigative report on U.S. military spying, there is a sense of being reminded of how dangerous it is for any nation or society not to have effective control over the military apparatus. Yet, the U.S. Army's Intelligence Division did not act to spying on the African American community without first having received "orders" to do the illegal assignment.

In other words, along with the military system, the political system and high government officials over a long period of time actually ordered and sanctioned domestic military, covert action against law abiding citizens of the United States who were of African descent. All American's should be outraged.

African American members of Congress of the United States should demand an immediate Congressional investigation into the details that have been brought to light in the report re-



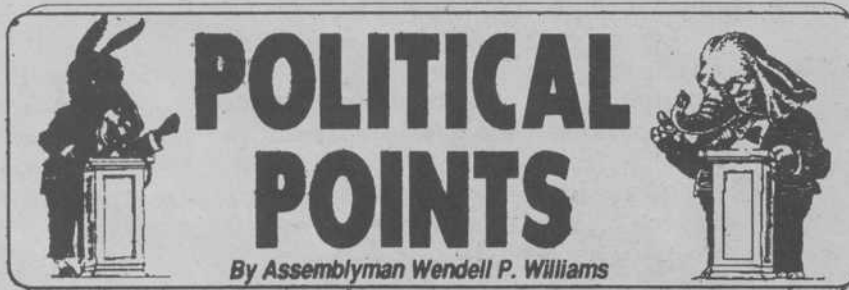
BENJAMIN F. CHAVIS, JR
leased by The Commercial Appeal.

Did the U.S. Army participate in the assassination of Dr. King? Why were Army agents from the 111th Military Intelligence Group in Memphis at the time of Dr. King's assassination? Why did it take until 1993 for these facts to be revealed?

If the Army went to such an extent to collect intelligence by using highly sophisticated electronic surveillance and other methods of secret spying, including the use of U2 supersonic spy planes, to collect information on African American leaders and no evidence of wrong doing was found, why did these illegal acts continue for decades?

Racism does cause a type of unjustified paranoia. The problem is that when agents of racial paranoia have the unchecked access to military power the dangers to social stability are increased immeasurably. The Civil Rights Movement should not have been viewed by military authorities as a threat to national security.

The truth is that the sacrifices of Martin Luther King, Jr. and thousands of others in the Civil Rights and Freedom Movements have done more to ensure democracy and equal justice in the United States than any military operation in the nation or throughout the world. Let us all work together to prevent a repeat of this type of miscarriage of justice.



"THE INSIDE SCOOP"

It is often said that politics "makes strange bedfellows" and "in politics, there are no permanent friends and no permanent enemies." Well lately it seems as if some very interesting developments are beginning to unfold. Here's the inside scoop:

Word has it that the hush-hush meeting that took place on last Tuesday evening at City Hall between Dr. Jim Tate and outgoing sheriff John Moran created a very surprising agreement. All the details were not finalized, however Tate and the sheriff did agree on some form of a police control board, headed up by Tate by the way, and the majority of the board's membership will be citizens.

Another deal that these two men struck was to create a "real" community policing plan before the sheriff leaves office. Two future meetings for these two are planned next week.

Some people are saying that part of the sheriff's recent change of heart about "good policing" is not really about understanding Dr. Tate's point of view but rather it's a political move to help Councilman Frank Hawkins who has already started two different polls testing the waters for his unannounced run of mayor the next time around.

Speaking of City Hall, names are already floating around of hopefuls who have expressed an interest in the Ward 1 Council seat once

Hawkins makes his bid for mayor. Some of those who have expressed interest include firefighter Sam Smith, school district employee Larry Weekly, Rev. Billy McCurdy, West Las Vegas Library employee Linda Porter, Rev. Willie Davis and a well-known Fay Duncan-Daniel. It also seems that Porter is very upset that Weekly has shown interest in this race. The two, who are long time friends are at odds because supposedly Weekly had given his word to Porter to support her.

On another front, it seems that US Congressman Jim Bilbray's aide, Franklin Simpson, now working in Washington D.C. has help win approval from the FCC to grant four former KCEP Radio personalities and Las Vegas businessman John Edmond a license to operate a new radio station in Las Vegas featuring an African-American format designed to educate and entertain with a talk show hosted by Chuck D of Public Enemy. This new deal has scored big points for Simpson from his boss in the nations capital.

Also, expect a big fight to start soon at the Clark County School District by local basketball coaches who are uncomfortable with the preliminary zoning for a high school that is on the drawing board to be built next year in West Las Vegas. It seems as if West Las Vegas students will have the same option that is being offered to Prime 6 elementary children. The thought of a high school basketball team in West Las Vegas has

future opponents already complaining. It will be interesting to see how many African-American principals and teachers opt to work "in the community." Another note on schools, it seems that WAAK-UP has decided that their organization can be more effective in making changes in the educational of children if they began fielding their own candidates. So far the group is looking at Marzette Lewis to seek the seat held by board member Howard Hollingsworth, and a name that they refuse to reveal to unseat Judy Witt.

At the County level, expect the possible return of Doc Dearson in county politics as current County Commissioner Yvonne Gates has put together a very impressive exploratory committee to consider a run for the US senate.

It looks like the state of Nevada has finally realized, that with gaming being the number one industry in the state, it cannot continue to move toward the year 2000 without allowing African Americans the opportunity to become players. In an effort to change the negative perceptions created by the disaster of Main Street Station, particularly funded with taxpayer dollars, the city is working out an agreement to turn the property over to local African American business executives to re-open and operate, creating several hundred jobs and opportunities for job training. After decades of being locked out this is a chance to really do something other than



**Assemblyman
Wendell P. Williams**

still another task force or commission. Expect the deal to close April 14 with a highly publicized press conference. The new casino is expected to draw an increase in tourism from a market that Las Vegas has never attempted to attract or wanted. However the expected income has finally caused city fathers to see the financial light.

And finally, over at the NAACP, Rev. Scott has a very tough decision to make. After just going through two campaigns for re-election, he has now been contacted by the national office of the NAACP to be considered to fill the post of national president being vacated due to the retirement of Dr. Benjamin Hooks.

What really complicates Rev. Scott's decision move is that the First Vice President Rev. S.P. Parks is not willing to fill the post because North Las Vegas residents have just about convinced the popular minister to run in the North Las Vegas council race in two years and the 2nd vice president Marcia Washington is planning for a run at the Clark County School Board.

With all of this going on, it just goes to prove that politics is not a spectator sport. If you believed any or all of these "inside scoops," you've been sitting on the sidelines much to long.

HAPPY APRIL FOOLS DAY.

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