

# Point of View

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## TO BE EQUAL

# UN STUDY FINDS TWO AMERICAS

By John E. Jacob

The United Nations just issued a study, Human Development Report 1993, that ought to shock Americans who complacently think our high living standards make us number one in the world.

The Report ranks the nations

of the world as calculated by a Human Development Index, which factors in such basic indicators of the quality of life as income, education, and life expectancy.

The United States ranked sixth in the world in that Human Development Index, behind

Japan, Canada, Norway, Switzerland, and Sweden.

But the Report also calculated rankings for white Americans and for minorities, and that changes the picture considerably. White America ranks Number One.

But Black Americans, meas-

ured by the Index as if they constituted a separate country, ranked 31; Hispanic America came in 35th.

That puts minority Americans on par with Third World countries and new states emerging from the remnants of the Soviet Empire — a shameful situation.

The UN report is important because it dramatizes the huge gap between white and minority Americans in a way that everyone can understand.

The report points out that black disadvantage starts at birth, with infant mortality rates over double those for whites. It continues with lower educational attainment levels. And it is capped by income disparities that leave black per capita income at only 60 percent that for whites.

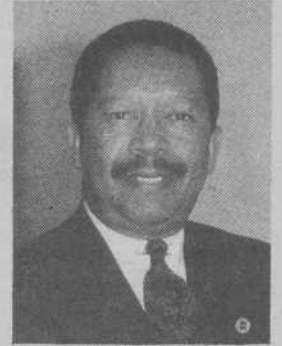
The UN study should serve as a wakeup call to America, but how many of those calls do we need? We've already had dozens of reports saying the same thing, and last spring's riots in Los Angeles should have been enough of a wake-up alarm.

So will one more study spur any action? Maybe. The U.S. has always prided itself as the world's leader, and it is sensitive to comparisons that suggest it lags behind other countries.

But more important, government and business leaders looking at the UN results may wonder how this nation can compete in the 21st century if, in effect, it is divided into two countries — a white America with world leadership living standards, and a huge and growing minority America living on Third World levels.

If simple shame isn't enough to spur action, then perhaps self-interest will.

With the industrial nations of the world engaged in tough



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economic competition, the winners will be those countries that educate and train all their people to be productive and to share fully in their societies.

Those that don't will fail — and the U.S. is a prime candidate for failure unless it moves fast to bring its minorities up to the standards enjoyed by the majority.

Seen in that light, the conflict in Washington over spending an extra billion or so to create jobs or to beef up training programs looks unrealistic.

In a six-trillion dollar economy and a trillion-plus federal budget such sums are peanuts, nowhere near enough to do the job that needs to be done as quickly as it can be done.

Instead of picking apart the Administration's modest stimulus package, Congress ought to be considering the Urban League's Marshall Plan for America, which would invest in developing all of our people to become productive.

If we continue to ignore the development needs of our minorities, the U.S. will sink lower on the scale of nations.

But if we invest in the education, training, and job creation that put minorities on par with the white population, then all Americans will be Number One.



## POLITICAL POINTS

By Assemblyman Wendell P. Williams



### CLINTON DISSES ANOTHER SISTER

I think the first time it happened most individuals viewed Bill Clinton's dissing of Sister Souljah during the last presidential campaign as a common blunder and sensitivity ignorance, plus most political astute voters who undoubtedly took offense to the incident but figured it would be safer to put Clinton in check than to keep George Bush and his crew. Now eight months later, many are seriously beginning to question if Clinton's little blunders aren't in fact a true state of heart or selective amnesia at best.

On the 29th of April Clinton nominated Lani Guinier to be the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights in the Justice Department. Now he has flipped and withdrew her nomination, only saying that he could not defend her appointment because he did not agree with her views. He told reporters that he made a little mistake. Said he was good friends with and respected Guinier, but he never actually read any of her writings. Those remarks are slightly more sophisticated than the version of one of my 6th grade students that claimed "the dog ate my homework."

Once the choice was made, wisely or not, Clinton had a duty to stand behind it, even at some political cost.

His haste to escape the political heat only deepens the suspicion that his positions are more a matter of political convenience than personal conviction, subject to revision or surrender at any sign of trouble. Clinton has done himself and the American people no favor by letting his critics win a game of partisan "gotcha" without a fight.

Also, Clinton is taking considerable heat following his first 100 days in the White House. The head of the Congressional Black Caucus, Congressman Kweisi Mfume, said on last Sunday that he was putting off a meeting sought by Clinton to mend fences broken by dissembling Guinier. Mfume also said that he would drive a hard bargain with Clinton on further domestic cuts having sought to offset any tax increases lost to a Senate budget compromise.

In addition to Clinton killing the Guinier nomination, it seems that African-American members of Congress are angry over the president's reversal of campaign pledges to lift the ban on immigration of Haitians and the collapse of his proposed job-creating stimulus package in April that would have provided economic aid for inner cities.

On last Friday I received a call from Jesse Jackson Jr., Field Director for Rebuild America's office seeking support for the Rainbow Coalitions position on

what they feel about President Clinton and his pattern of race conscious politics." I agreed to help promote a press statement from Rev. Jesse Jackson which indicates Rainbow's position of outrage and discontent. Obviously, in Nevada there is absolutely no better voice than the Las Vegas Sentinel Voice, so here it is:

#### "DEMOCRATIC PROCESS HAS FAILED LANI GUINIER"

Statement By Rev. Jesse L. Jackson

On April 29th, President Bill Clinton nominated Professor Lani Guinier to be Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights in the U.S. Department of Justice. On June 3, 1993, he withdrew her nomination, saying that he could not defend her appointment because he did not agree with her views.

Lani Guinier has the character, the intelligence, the experience and the legal background to have served with distinction at the Justice Department. She has an outstanding record of successful litigation on civil rights and voting rights cases, arguing before a Rehnquist Court. Her proposed remedies to civil rights and voting rights violations were adopted and used by the Reagan and Bush Justice Departments. When President Clinton says that he disagrees with Lani Guinier, is he saying that the Clinton Justice Department will



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do less than the Reagan and Bush Justice Departments in fulfilling America's laws on civil rights?

Guinier is committed to democracy and to "one person, one vote" which is the essence of the Voting Rights Act of 1964. She would have worked to reverse the Reagan-Bush Justice Departments hostility towards the nation's civil rights and voting rights protections. She would have upheld and enforced the law! She would have represented the Justice Department and the Administration's commitment to the rights of all Americans, and to a rejection of the politics of distortion and racial divisiveness. Democracy, equal rights, the right to vote — aren't these values at the heart of American political life? Or at least at the heart of our nation's democratic promise?

Professor Guinier expressed her disappointment and her disagreement with the President's decision to withdraw her nomination. We stand here today to echo that disappointment and that disagreement.

Professor Guinier was the victim of a campaign of distortion and slander. She was de-

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