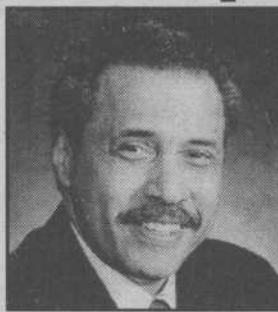


COMMENTARY

Planning needed for black family survival, progression

By Louie Overstreet
Special to Sentinel-Voice

Famed actor and civil rights activist, Ossie Davis, in a keynote address at the first Annual Congressional Black Caucus Dinner on June 18, 1971, stated: "It's not the man, it's the plan; it's not the rap, it's the map. Give us a plan of action- a Ten Black



LOUIE OVERSTREET

Commandments; simple, strong, that we can carry in our hearts and in our memories no matter where we are, and reach out and touch and feel reassurance that there, is behind everything we do, a simple, moral, intelligent plan."

While these words were delivered over 30 years ago, unfortunately they were not heeded, therefore nothing has changed for African-Americans during the intervening three decades. If anything, challenges to survival of the black nuclear family are more acute now than during the time when most Americans held an enlightened and benign attitude about civil rights.

Many of the hard-fought civil rights gains realized in the 1960s and 1970s have been eroded by rulings of a far-right-leaning U.S. Supreme Court. Thus, there can be no doubt that our highest priority must be the development of a plan to assure our survival and progress. If not, there is a real possibil-

ity that our history in America will also be our future in America.

There are at least four basic elements of any planning process, namely: the plan must be capable of describing the situation; must identify opposing forces and supporters, must define the mission and outline a set of specific actions.

The situation is that historic subjugation has resulted in a bequest of miens and exploits ineradicably rooted in America's institutions and social fabric that have had an adverse impact on persons of color.

The forces opposing equal opportunity are racists that have assumed leadership roles in conservative public policy think tanks, far-right religious organizations, and the right wing of the Republican Party as typified by representatives from the South in Congress who changed their political affiliation within the last decade. Supporters are progressive Whites- primarily of the Jewish faith- liberal Democrats and human rights groups.

The mission is to, again, place our nation on the path to racial justice and equality. Specific actions that we need to take include, but are not limited to the following.

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Afghanistan's suffering from Vietnam dilemma

By Kwaku Person-Lynn
Special to Sentinel-Voice

My thoughts are haunted. Vietnam. Afghanistan.

I was on the front lines in Vietnam as a medic with the U.S. Navy/Marines. I saw in 1968 the big attack on U.S. soldiers known as the Tet offensive. I saw how the American press reported that decisive battle. It would make anyone skeptical of American war reports today.

Back then, with the media reporting "U.S. casualties light, fatalities moderate" in Vietnam, those of us in the trenches got angry because we knew the horror was just the opposite. We wondered how the military and the media could lie to the American people so blatantly.

As the Afghanistan campaign extends into weeks, we are constantly hearing reports of how long the military campaign will take and for Americans to be patient. At least we know the administration has learned a lesson, but to what end?

America went to Vietnam

with the best and latest technology imaginable for human destruction. Everything outside of nuclear warfare was used against the Vietnamese people, who did not have a quarter of the technology America enjoyed.

The Vietnamese fighter fought back by digging pits with bamboo spears pointed upwards, then camouflaging the pit beyond detection-anyone who fell into it was killed. The American press would quote, "They do not fight fairly." When a Vietnamese boy would causally walk up to a group of American military personnel and detonate himself, killing everyone around him, the American press would say, "They fight like barbarians."

What the American press, the military, the politicians and most of the public did not realize is the Vietnamese had hearts large as Mount Kilimanjaro, an unyielding determination and a resolve to fight no matter what it took or how long. These were human factors the American

military strategists did not calculate.

The film "The Godfather" gave us a glimpse of that, when the Don went to Cuba (before Castro) and saw a revolutionary jumping in a military vehicle killing a Cuban officer, and himself. This gave the Don doubt that the business he intended to conduct there would succeed, because people that determined are very hard to defeat. His caution turned out to be correct in the film, and in real life.

Ironically, we are witnessing the same kind of resolve in Afghanistan.

The tone of the news reports is very slowly becoming less optimistic. Just like in Vietnam. Hearing the Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, saying that they "may not be able to catch Osama bin Laden," is very discouraging for those expecting quick results, as in the Gulf War. If this proves true, how would America justify the massive destruct-

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Letter to the Editor

The truth about raising GPA requirements at UNLV, UNR

People are insulting our children. Some people are insinuating things about black students that are outrageous—things about their capabilities, their drive, and their likelihood to succeed. But perhaps the most outrageous thing of all is that these insinuations are coming from black people, from supposed leaders in the black community. I'm referring to the response of people such as Assemblyman Wendell Williams and University Regent Linda Howard to the proposal to raise the grade point average (GPA) for entrance to UNLV and UNR from 2.5 to 3.0 over a number of years. The GPA would be raised to 2.75 for the fall of 2003 and to 3.0 for the fall of 2005.

The first thing these opponents charged was that the proposal was racist and was automatically discriminatory to black students. But what are they implying about black students when they make this charge? Why is it automatically discriminatory? It seems to me that Williams and Howard must feel that black students aren't smart enough to meet this very reasonable standard. Well, unlike these two community leaders I believe in black students. As the director of the Afro-American Studies Program at UNLV the last thing I want to see is an appreciable drop in the number of black students at my university. I support the raised standards because they would be good for UNLV and because they will not harm black enrollments.

When the idea of raising the GPA was first suggested more than one year ago, the first

thing UNLV President Carol Harter said was that we could only raise the entrance requirements if there would be no harm to minority enrollments. I want people to know that Dr. Harter has done more for faculty, staff, and student diversity at UNLV than any other president in the institution's 44-year history. It's unfair and uninformed for people to accuse her of wanting to limit the number of black students at UNLV.

People need to know that the loudest voices opposing the 3.0 GPA are distorting the proposal with misinformation. The fact is that the percentage of minority students admitted to UNLV under the 3.0 GPA would be roughly equal to the percentage of minority students admitted in the fall of 2000 (the actual difference is a mere 1.1%). Furthermore this effect is across the board (the same for white students) so there is no disproportionate impact. And let's not forget that the students who would eventually have to meet the 3.0 standard are currently in middle school. What are the opponents of this proposal saying about these students when they imply that they won't be able to achieve a 3.0 average by 2005? I refuse to give up on our students that way.

As a professor of black history I have a hard time imagining W.E.B. DuBois arguing that black students aren't capable of competing, and that the entrance requirements to a major university should remain set at an artificially low level in order to accommo-

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Blacks reluctant to follow president's war initiative

By Dr. Ron Walters
Special to Sentinel-Voice

There continues to be a great deal of interest in the extent to which African Americans support George Bush politically, since they have been reticent to bless his administration after the Florida debacle. Recently it has been suggested Blacks now support Bush's war policy by 90 percent in the aftermath of the attack on Sept. 11.

One of the sources of this widespread rumor is lodged in a recent public opinion poll by Zogby International, which found that 91 percent of Americans supported Bush's response to the attack and 90 percent of Blacks also now give Bush a favorable rating.

This far from the truth.

As a political analyst, I usually give considerable credit to polls, but there is a technical problem with this one. For many years, others and I have attempted to tell journalists that they cannot take a national poll of the American population (that contains 12 percent of Black respondents) and report the Black findings as if they represented the national view of all Black Americans. A composite poll of all Americans should be just that—a finding that 90 percent of Americans support Bush. Then, in order to report what Black Americans think, they would have to "over-sample" (double or triple) Blacks, since the 12 percent is too small to make generalizations about all Blacks.

Keep this in mind, because the Zogby Poll sampled 350 people each night for 3 nights, in order to reach 1,000 in a three-day period. Twelve percent of this number means that about 37 Blacks were sampled each night, amounting to a total of 111 people. I would argue—with a lot of support—that 111 is a number too small to say anything about the national attitudes of Black people.

So the Zogby poll has problems. In an interview with Zogby by Joe Madison, well-known talk show host of the Radio One network, he began to back off of the 90 percent figure, saying Black attitudes were actually unstable on this issue. Nevertheless, the damage was done and many people reported the 90 percent figure.

Meanwhile, there is growing non-scientific evidence that Blacks are having serious trouble with George Bush's war policy. To begin with, a Sept. 29 "Town Hall" meeting organized by Rep. Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., of the Congressional Black Caucus, drew a sterling panel as previously reported here and the response of the more than 2,000 people clearly ranged from cautious to in opposition to the Bush War policy.

An Oct. 16 "Town Hall" meeting on the war, organized by Damu Smith in Washington, attracted more than 500 people who came out to listen to a panel express deep misgivings about the direction of

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