

## C O M M E N T A R Y

**'Small,' 'minority' monikers dubious, hurt business**

By James Clingman  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

I have questioned the word "minority" and caused a few high-brow eyebrows to be raised at my exposure of the games they have been playing on Black businesses. Now they are conducting a stealth move away from one demeaning term to one that is more palatable. More and more they use the term "small" when it comes to slicing up the public contracting pie. I have no problem with that word, as opposed to the word, "minority," with which I have a tremendous problem. However, I do want those who use it to define it. And I do want those who are classified as "small" to know what it really means in their particular business circles.

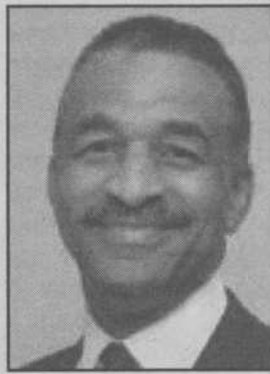
We have seen all sorts of terms used to describe Black businesses, i.e., minority, small, disadvantaged, underutilized, but there has been no confusion about the term used for White females; they call their businesses "women-owned." Unfortunately, we have seldom looked into the real meaning of those terms nor have we been advantaged by them. The latest okey-doke is the term "small." Black business owners will do themselves a favor by learning just what is considered "small" by local small business programs.

Where I live, a Small Business Enterprise Program was established as a solution to blatant discrimination found in our Croson study. The discrimination was race-based, but the solution was race-neutral. Go figure. When the definition of "small" was written

into the law, it stated, in so much bureaucratic gobbledygook, that the guidelines used to determine "small" would be taken from the Small Business Administration's (SBA) definition.

The city made one significant change in addition to those guidelines, however. It raised the level of net worth that one owner of a small business could have from \$325,000.00 to \$750,000.00, thus, enlarging the so-called playing field to include even larger "small business" owners. This criterion is in addition to the SBA's definition, which allows a small business to earn millions in annual revenue and employ hundreds of people.

With most Black business owners, especially those in construction trades, having far less in annual revenue, oftentimes no employees, and a much lower net worth, the chances of them competing and winning contracts just got slimmer. To make matters even worse, our Small Business Enterprise Program, which calls for 30 percent of the business to go to "small" (there's that word again) businesses, includes everyone. That's right. Even White males can participate in the Small Business Program now. Let's get this straight. White males get the 70 percent and then they can get in on the 30 percent as well. They can even start front companies for their wives and daughters and get even more of the 30 percent. What a deal! And guess what. We have



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Black city council persons who approved this silly program.

Charlotte, N.C. is struggling with the same kind of ridiculous system, according to an article in the Charlotte Post, "Minority firms lag on public projects — county contract goals missed, just like city's." The article discusses the race and gender neutral program adopted by Charlotte and the inequities in that program. For instance, of \$55.9 million in construction contracts awarded on a new uptown arena, 15 percent went to "small" businesses (which includes White males); but "minority-owned companies (which includes Hispanics, Asians, and every other ethnic group) received just 3 percent while women-owned companies (White women) got 8 percent."

Here's the kicker. Eddie Mobley, V.P. of the Metrolina Minority Contractors Association, said, "They're not even trying. They're always saying we are going to help women and Blacks. They shouldn't even say women. It's the Black businesses that are getting zero." He's right, but the first problem is the definition of "minority." If it's Black we are talking about, why not say that? Stop playing this "minority" charade and follow the lead of a group in Cleveland. Their name is the "Black Trades Council of Ohio, Inc." Is there any doubt or confusion about who they are and for whom they are fighting?

Missouri and Maryland are fighting similar issues as well. But another good example can be found in Harlem. According to an article in the San Francisco Bay View, "Harlem fights back for construction jobs and contracts," Jim Haughton, founder of Harlem Fightback, says, "Nepotism and cronyism are worse than I have seen it in 40 years."

Jim Heyliger, president of the Association of Minority Enterprises of New York, said of the \$500 million spent on the clean up of the World Trade Center site, "not one dime was given to a Black or Hispanic contractor."

Haughton also says that of \$9 billion per year in contracts, less than 1 percent goes to minority contractors, in a city "that has a 62 percent minority population." Herein lies another problem. How can 62 percent be a minority of anything? That must be some of that "fuzzy math" George Bush was talking about during his debates with Al Gore.

It's all in the definitions, folks. Until Black people decide who we are and stop being apologetic and ashamed of it, and stop being afraid to stand up for Black rights instead of "small" rights and "minority" rights and "women's" rights, we will always get the smallest portion of the proverbial economic pie. Stop playing in the minority and small business games. You cannot win. Can't you see that from looking at the past?

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**Bush hoping to ride foreign exploits to redemption**

By Jesse Jackson, Jr.  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

The humanitarian crisis in the Darfur Province of Sudan gives President Bush a chance to begin a reversal of his negative image in the United Nations and around the world. The Administration should be congratulated for brokering a peace framework agreement between the Khartoum government in northern Sudan and the Black Sudanese in the South, ending a 21-year civil war that has taken 2 million lives. The agreement could not have been reached had the Bush Administration not used its political and economic leverage.

But now it must do more — and immediately! Many of the arguments that President Bush wrongly used to engage in a war of choice in Iraq should now affirmatively be used, of necessity, to end genocide in the Sudan. Bush should say: "If the rest of the world will not lead to end genocide in the Sudan, America will."

If the UN is to remain relevant in the world, now is the time for it to mobilize the world community and come to the rescue of the millions of Sudanese who are starving, being ravaged with disease, raped and killed — and the U.S. will be a leading player in that effort. And if the UN will not do it, America will! And yes, the U.S. will use all means at its disposal to stop genocide — moral persuasion, and its economic, political and military power!"

After Hitler and the Nazis exterminated six million Jews in Germany and Eastern Europe, that community vowed, "Never again!"

Half a century later, however, it *did* hap-

pen again — in Rwanda, in a war between the Tutsis and the Hutus. In 1994, this country, along with the rest of the world, stood by and watched as 800,000 men, women and children were slaughtered. Two months ago, the world community marked the 10th anniversary of Rwanda's modern-day genocide, vowing once more, "Never again!"

Let's hope that the U.S., the world community and media will not again stand by and watch as millions of men, women and children are at risk of death in the Sudan's western province of Darfur at the hands of an Arab-run Khartoum government, as its military and paramilitary *Janjaweed* forces exterminate Black Sudanese.

By conservative estimates, in the last year, 10,000 Darfurians were killed. The U.S. government estimates that the number could reach 350,000 by December. Between 160,000 and 200,000 Darfurians are refugees in Chad, more than one million Sudanese have been forced from their homes by the Sudanese military and the government-backed militias, and as many as 2.2 million Darfurians are at risk.

Conditions are harsh and bleak in Darfur, and the lack of food and water during the rainy season will surely wreak havoc on the lives of these people. Even as \$95 million have been appropriated by the U.S. House for relief in the Sudan, in addition to the \$285 million already available for disbursement from the Administration, the U.S. has little detailed information on the exact scope of the problem and the resources needed to solve it.

What should the U.S. do?

First, Sudan must command the attention of the President and the Secretaries of State

and Defense. It cannot be left to well-meaning and motivated deputy policy makers and administrators.

Second, we should be willing to propose a UN Security Council Resolution sanctioning a multinational interventionist and peace-keeping military presence — U.S. led if necessary — in Sudan. The UN, the U.S. and Americans must join together to lead the world in not allowing another genocide to take place in Sudan.

Third, the Administration should also encourage the Arab League and its member governments to explicitly chastise the actions of Khartoum and be willing to join in the intervention.

**Overstreet**

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nine votes, on the 15-nation Security Council, to renew a measure that would give U.S. troops immunity from the new International Criminal Court.

Currently no member of the Security Council is expected to veto the resolution, but a number of abstentions would kill the measure. In order to save us from what will be an international embarrassment, we must get at least two of the following eight countries to change their stated intention to abstain from the vote: Benin, Brazil, Chile, China, France, Germany, Spain or Romania.

Ironically, while all this conflict is taking place in the Middle East — and let me repeat — which has nothing to do with exporting democracy and everything to do

Fourth, the U.S. must bring its full power to bear on Sudan, working with the UN to draft a resolution condemning the Sudanese government and proposing an investigation of war crimes.

Finally, once there's a peace in effect, we must move immediately to solve the underlying political causes of the crisis in Sudan.

Humanitarian actions, while desperately needed, are only a temporary solution to the more difficult problems. Only by dealing, longer-term, with the underlying political injustices can a just and lasting peace be established and another genocide prevented.

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with protecting vested economic interests — our country steadfastly refuses to examine other options for meeting our oil consumption needs. Of the top-10 countries in the world that produce more oil than they consume, only three of these countries are located in the Middle East.

If you guessed those countries to be Saudi Arabia, Iran and Iraq, then you do not have to be a genius to understand why we are concentrating lives and dollars in this region of the world and in particular these hotbeds of anti-American sentiment.

Understanding what we are really trying to protect, and it "ain't" human rights, then you will come to understand what's motivating our country to maintain a presence in this region of the world in spite of the fact other options are available to us.