

African-Americans operate at an economic trade deficit

By James Clingman
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The more I see the statistics relating to the so-called Black economy and Black buying power, the more desperate my message becomes and the more insulted I feel.

How can we get so excited about having an annual aggregate income of more than \$700 billion while we are at the bottom of every economic category in this country? Do you feel insulted, maybe embarrassed, about the fact that Black Americans create vast wealth for others at the expense of creating and retaining wealth for ourselves? Can we look our children in their eyes and assure them that we, as a collective body, will leave a strong economic foundation upon which they can stand?

Black America is operating at a huge deficit. We must change that.

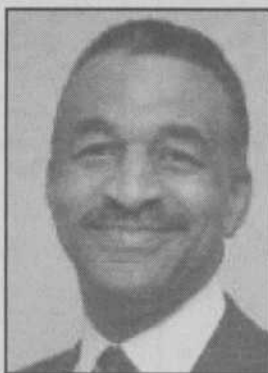
Just as the government gets a bit antsy when the U.S. trade deficit goes askew, Black folks in the United States should feel the same about ours, and we should finally do some-

thing about it. Our trade deficit is horrendously out of kilter, and it's getting worse everyday.

Oh yes, I almost forgot, we are currently enthralled with who will be our next president, and it's difficult to draw our attention away from that circus, isn't it? But, can't we walk and chew gum at the same time?

Black Americans cannot afford to neglect our trade deficit, and continue to allow it to spiral out of control, while we discuss politics as usual and prepare to cast our votes for two guys who either don't care about us or take us for granted. What a choice, huh?

Well, we have another choice, brothers and sisters. We can choose to redirect more of our \$700 billion toward our own businesses; we can choose to start and grow more businesses; we can choose to create more jobs for our children; we can choose to teach our children how to be entrepreneurs; and we can



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choose economic freedom over economic enslavement and modern-day sharecropping.

I read an article by the so-called Black conservative, Larry Elder, in which he stated, "...despite slavery, Jim Crow and racism, the progress of American Blacks is simply astounding. Black America, if divided into a separate country, ranks No. 16 in Gross Domestic Product, ahead of Australia, Turkey, Thailand, Argentina, the Netherlands, Taiwan and South Africa."

A little Economics lesson is in order here. The broad components of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) are: consumption, investment, net exports, government purchases, and inventories. Consumption is by far the largest component, totaling roughly two-thirds of GDP.

Let's see now, Blacks save and invest very little, as evidenced by our median net worth per family, which is one-tenth that of White families. Exports? Not much going on there either, although our brothers and sisters in Africa and the Caribbean eagerly await the day when get our act together and start taking care of business. Government purchases? Well, we have a lot of government jobs, if that counts.

And finally, our inventories are not much to speak of either as we don't seem to care much for ownership of distribution channels, e.g., The MATAH Network.

Now let's look at consumption. As the definition of GDP tells us, consumption is the largest of its components, totaling roughly two-thirds of GDP.

Now we're talking, right? Now Blacks folks really make the grade. We have that consumption thing down pat. Two-thirds of GDP? Nah, we can do much better than a measly 66 percent.

Our consumption is as high as 95 percent — and our consumption is from businesses

other than our own!

No, Mr. Elder, I don't think we can use Black GDP to show how far we've come in America.

Quite frankly, it's embarrassing. I'd be willing to bet that Taiwan and Thailand export a whole lot more than they import; we can look around our homes at labels and tags and see that. Comparing our GDP to that of the Taiwanese, and the rest of those 14 countries, is a real joke, even if we do earn more money than they earn. We may rank 16th, but we'd have a huge trade deficit.

Yes, it feels and looks good when we use that line about Blacks being the 10th, 12th, or the 16th richest "country" in the world. It's balm for our injuries, consolation for our wounded psyches, and ammunition for those who say, "We've come a long way, baby!" But what good is it doing us if we consume everything someone else makes, fail to save a minimum of 10 percent of what we earn, have no import/export relationships with brothers and sisters who live in Africa, the richest land in the world, and fail to support the one distribution channel we have in this country?

What good does it do us to have \$700 billion if we are in a constant trade deficit with the other groups in this country, i.e. Koreans, Indians, Vietnamese, Lebanese, et al?

What good does it do for us to brag about how far we have come when, relatively speaking, we are no further than our grandparents were two generations ago when it comes to business and land ownership?

The Black trade deficit is way out of balance, and we had better get busy fixing it before we become totally dependent on "foreigners" to supply our sustenance. No one can take care of us better than we can take care of ourselves. We proved it once upon a time; we can do it once again.

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Cheney slip sends surfers surfing

WASHINGTON (AP) - All he wanted were the facts. But Dick Cheney ended up generating confusion — and lots of it.

A slip of the tongue by the vice president during Tuesday night's debate with Sen. John Edwards led Web surfers to a site run by George Soros, a billionaire who makes no secret of his opposition to the Bush administration.

In answering a question about his involvement with Halliburton, Cheney meant to direct people to FactCheck.org, a nonpartisan site run by the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg Public Policy Center. He urged people watching the debate to go to the site for facts countering Edwards' statements about the corporation Cheney used to run.

But Cheney cited FactCheck.com, a for-profit advertising site based in the

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Cayman Islands.

The company decided to redirect traffic to the Soros site after it became inundated with hits — about 100 a second after the debate, John Berryhill, a Philadelphia lawyer for FactCheck.com, said Wednesday.

"This was to relieve stress on the service and to express a political point of view," said Berryhill, who spoke with the site's administrators shortly after the debate ended.

They picked Soros not only for his political views, Berryhill said, but because the billionaire could afford

the costly deluge of hits the site would receive in the wake of the debate. Plus, the site administrators didn't want to point surfers to a candidate's site that was asking for money.

Website operators typically pay fees to the companies that host their sites. The more hits a site receives, the more its operator pays.

Soros was not advised of the switch and did not know it had taken place until Wednesday, said a spokesman, Jeremy Ben-Ami.

"We are as surprised as anyone by this turn of events but certainly encourage voters to visit both of these valuable sites," Michael Vachon, a senior aide to Soros, said in a statement.

An unprecedented number of visitors to FactCheck.org caused the site to crash several times Wednesday, said Brooks Jackson, the site's director.

Waters

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His handlers are able to convince the American people that they have a credible reason for the things they have done to assuage their fear of the future, to protect them from the bogeyman of terrorism.

This strategy is supported by intellectuals in the conservative movement whose comparative vision of the use of American power envisions a kind of global objective that extends the paradigm of leadership developed in this country abroad. In this sense, the intellectual vision of the political ideologues of the movement is compatible with the objective of achieving economic hegemony in a number of sectors, beginning with oil. And it is also abided by the media which fails to hold Bush to the same standards they ask of Kerry, fail to correct the

errors and downright lies of his detractors and join in the feast of doubting Kerry's credibility.

As I observed at the outset, in ordinary times, the powerful forces that are faced by Bush would sink a Democrat. This is the surest indication that what supports this deep thirst for power in the political culture now is not policy in the strictest sense, but ideology — he's my guy, right or wrong, because he shares my world view. That is the key to the Teflon coating that George Bush wears that enables him to shed conflicts, tell lies, hide a vulgar past, and engage in the outright economic rape of the nation with relative ease.

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80 years, would rank 19th and White men (74.5 years) would rank 20th. Men in Hong Kong live an average of 77.4 years, longer than males anywhere else. They are followed by Japan (77.2), Sweden (76) and Switzerland (76.3). Women live longest in Japan (84 years), followed by Hong Kong (83 years).

As a country, Blacks would rank 36th in infant mortality deaths (14.6 per 1,000 births). In life expectancy, Black men would rank 34th if measured against other men in the world (67.6 years). Black women would rank 35th among females (74.8 years).

"The subjective experience of discrimination is a neglected but important source of stress," Williams points out. "Research indicates that acute and chronic experiences of discrimination are stressful incidents that are adversely related to physical and mental health."

He adds, "A small but growing body of research indicates the health of African-Americans is adversely affected when they buy into the larger society's negative characterization of Blacks."

Even with the clear health disparities, Williams argues that race is less of a health

factor than education and economic status.

"The differences in life expectancy by education, within each race and gender group (with the exception of White women) are larger than the racial differences," he states.

However, that does not mean race can be ignored.

"The most disadvantaged White group (women who have not completed high school) has a lower infant mortality rate than the most advantaged Black group (college graduates)," he observes.

Because income, education and even where one lives help determine a person's life expectancy, Williams argues that in order to eliminate these disparities, efforts should be made to end housing discrimination, racism and unequal access to health care.

He observes, "Investments to improve the social conditions and the health of African-Americans can improve the health of the entire U.S. population and have long-term positive consequences for non-Blacks as well."

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