

OUR VIEW

Bare Cabinet

Much is being made of the mass resignations from the Bush White House. Four of President Bush's cabinet secretaries officially resigned on Monday, bringing to six the number of leaders who've resigned since his Nov. 2 re-election. Gone are Secretary of State Colin Powell, Agriculture Secretary Ann Veneman, Education Secretary Rod Paige, Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham, Commerce Secretary Donald Evans and, most thankfully, Attorney General John Ashcroft.

In 2001, Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill and Mel Martinez, undersecretary for the Department of Housing and Urban Development called it quits. In all, eight significant departures, along with defections in various lower profile positions.

Had Americans who supported Bush known that the Cabinet they voted for isn't the one they're getting, mightn't they have switched their allegiance? Who knows.

But it's not so much the number of resignations that's surprising—Reagan, Carter and Clinton also experienced significant Cabinet changes in their second terms—the more telling story is what underpins the resignations. Save for Clinton, the Reagan and Carter administration overhauls were due to major controversies dogging their first terms. Sound familiar?

Many of Reagan's top-level officers left office stained with the Iran-Contra scandal, including Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, who was later charged with concealing 2,000 pages of related documents, and national security advisor John Poindexter, who approved the financing for the Iran-Contra fiasco and was convicted, then exonerated, on charges of obstructing Congress' investigation into the matter. Eight of Carter's Cabinet leaders left, as did Andrew Young, his ambassador to the United Nations, forced out because of unapproved meetings with officials in the Palestinian Liberation Organization. And the Whitewater scandal prompted the departures of various Clinton appointees such as Associate Attorney General Webster Hubbell.

Bush's Cabinet overhauls reek of political expediency of two sorts. By bringing in fresh blood, he can pay back the staunch conservatives who returned him to the White House by appointing someone of their ilk. At the same time, he can distance himself from the firestarters (Attorney General John Ashcroft) and nonstarters (Powell, who he repeatedly clashed with).

All of which leaves one question: If Bush is so concerned about being a "uniter, not a divider," then why's he letting Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld stay on?

Mall Blackout?

The Thanksgiving holiday season is universally acknowledged as the year's busiest shopping time. Retailers salivate over the throngs of Americans who'll shop their stores, order from their catalogs and surf their web sites, spending billions upon billions, and buffeting their bottom lines.

In visiting several local malls, one thing has been noticeably absent. Not toys, nor clothes. Not perfumes nor cologne, high-tech equipment or a myriad assortment other gifts. What's missing, at least in a cursory review, is a lot of Blacks. Maybe this is a mirage. Could it be that the economy, which is generally on rebound, hasn't improved enough for Blacks to do their customary overspending on the holidays? (To be fair, overspending is an American affliction, not an ethnic one). Blacks, and other minorities, especially those in the lower and middle classes stand to gain the least from President Bush's \$130 billion-plus tax cuts, while the richest Americans will enjoy a windfall of \$50,000-plus—with which they could holiday shop for more than 25 years. The least among us, economically, which includes many minorities, will get several hundred dollars—pocket change.

Then again, this could all be a mirage. Blacks could just be waiting to open their wallets. Time will tell. However one thing's undeniable: Blacks aren't represented among the seasonal holiday workers.

POINT OF VIEW

JULY
2003

"THERE ARE SOME WHO FEEL LIKE THAT THE CONDITIONS ARE SUCH THAT THEY CAN ATTACK US THERE. MY ANSWER IS BRING THEM ON, WE'VE GOT THE FORCE NECESSARY TO DEAL WITH THE SECURITY SITUATION."

- PRESIDENT BUSH

DEC.
2004

WE'RE BRINGING ON 12,000 MORE TROOPS TO DEAL WITH THE SECURITY SITUATION...



Data, division and delegation

By Louie Overstreet
Special to Sentinel-Voice

One prediction for 2005, which I failed to mention in my column a couple weeks ago, is whether or not an African-American summit would be held in Nevada. I predict one will be held before the end of 2005.

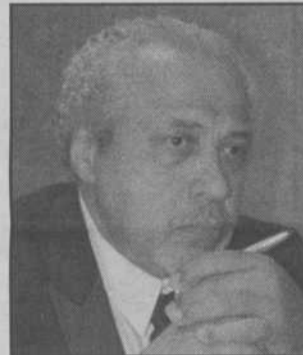
While I have made pleas in this column for such a summit to be held over the last several years, such pleas were not heeded. Now it appears that our needs are such that even the hard to convince are beginning to talk about issues that need to be addressed in a collective sense.

I think that more groups and individuals who have broad spheres of influence have come to recognize that the needs of their various constituencies are such that a summit is needed. Heretofore, "tuff" issues of groups and individuals have not been viewed as being as important as they are. There is a need to change the paradigm of how things get done in Las Vegas.

No one group or person is capable of addressing all the issues that primarily stem from crime and several other problems: a school system that is failing our students; the justice system; mega-mergers of gaming properties; the election process, and public officials' actions and accountability.

The only effective way to review topical data, divide up the topics and delegate the work among those who have the expertise to get the job done is by having a summit.

Admittedly, the timing is better now than it was several years ago for two reasons.



LOUIE OVERSTREET

The "go it alone" strategy has not made a difference in having the systems of government and commerce become more sensitive to our needs. And now, two new viable organizations have come on the scene.

The Caucus of African-American Nevadans (CAAN) was started in March of 2004. This group headed by Dr. Robert Fowler and Cordell Stokes has rapidly become a force in local politics. The group is modeled after the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) that was formed by Cordell's uncle, Congressman Louis Stokes, along with fewer than a dozen Blacks in 1971. Today, the CBC has 44 members of Congress numbered among its ranks. Thus, CAAN's early success is, in part, attributable to having a success model to follow. When CAAN demonstrated the ability to get out the vote and work with select candidates in the last election it opened a lot of eyes and caused elected officials to take note.

The legendary Jackie Shropshire was the driving force behind establishing an affiliate of the National Urban League in greater Las Vegas. This organization's

influence dates back to shortly after the turn of the 20th Century. Larry Mosley has been appointed interim president of this organization with national ties. Look for this group to make its presence felt in a very short period of time through the application of training programs that have proved to be successful in venues throughout the United States.

With these two new viable groups joining the efforts of church organizations, elected officials, sororities, fraternities, The Links, 100 Black Men, 100 Black Women, Concerned Women of Southern Nevada, the Las Vegas Branch of the NAACP and the Urban Chamber of Commerce, we should be able to produce better results for the 144,000 Black folks presently residing in Las Vegas and Clark County.

If each of these groups, along with our elected officials, commit to participate in a summit, then the issues surrounding poor education, crime, and the lack of equal

employment opportunity and equitable contracting opportunities in the state's number one industry — gaming — can be addressed in a systematic manner.

No longer will our students have to attend aging facilities and receive funding below the per student average allocated for schools elsewhere in the county.

No longer will low income neighborhoods suffer from inadequate police protection. No longer will persons of color do more time for committing the same crime as our majority counterparts.

No longer will public and private sector employers be able to make discriminatory hiring decisions with impunity.

No longer will gaming properties be able to disregard issues of fairness in the letting of contracts for goods and services.

I predict 2005 will be remembered as the year that, in a collective sense, we got serious about unity and our future.

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