

# OPINION

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Winston-Salem Greensboro High Point

## THE CHRONICLE

The Voice of the African American Community

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## A politician in need...

All of us have a friend or family member that years go by without hearing from them. And when we do hear from that person, it is only because he/she wants something - money, a ride, a job, etc. As the general election quickly approaches, a lot of politicians are beginning to take on the persona of that distant friend or relative.

As the late Frank Sinatra eloquently put it, these politicians have done it their way for the past several years, with little or no regard for the people who put them where they are in the first place. But one of the beauties of living in a free democracy is that the time to pay the piper is only two, four or six years away. You can always tell when an election is around the corner. Politicians are out and about, restarting conversations about issues and promises they made last election.

Members of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School Board can certainly relate to this scenario. After implicitly saying "to hell with you" to the black community for years, board members must now look African Americans in the eye. Why? Because they want something.

The community is finally getting the respect it's due. Unfortunately it is only because of a \$150 million bond referendum that the system desperately wants passed. Granted, it will benefit children, but a very legitimate argument can be made about which children it will benefit most.

Some in the community cannot help but to feel that the board's sudden buddy-buddy relationship with the black community is disingenuous. After all, where were they three months ago or last year? We had issues and concerns then. And will they still love us tomorrow, after the bond issue is over and the lovefest has subsided?

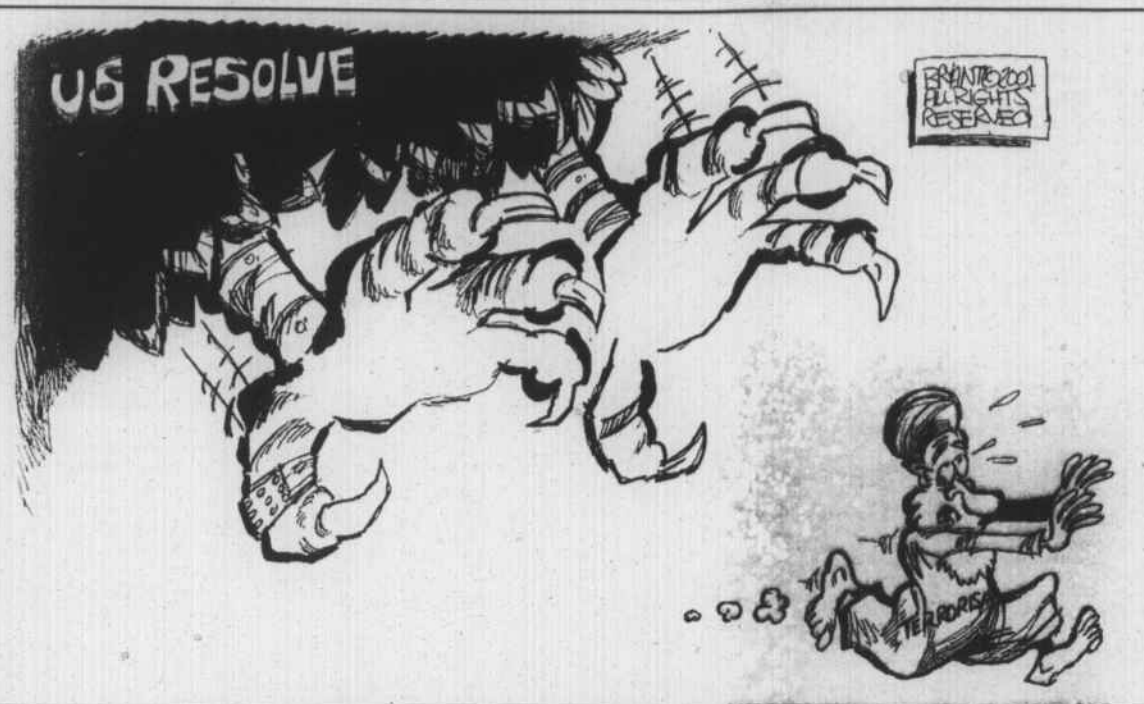
The school bond issue is a Pandora's box of "what ifs" made worse by a rocky past between blacks and the system and a history of half-truths told to the community, not only by school officials but government in general. This issue has so many layers that the community is finally getting some division among key leaders. Just as a monopoly in the business world limits choices of consumers, thought monopolies have kept us easily tamable and pegged as naive to outsiders.

The Black Leadership Roundtable says the bonds can only help schools, including inner-city schools. Members of the group are excited about the economic and cultural benefits a new high school in East Winston would bring. The group is also pleased that Carver High School, a 50-year-old gruff-looking structure, will see new life with bond money.

The Ministers Conference of Winston-Salem and Vicinity and the NAACP Education Caucus say that while a school is being promised in East Winston, more is being promised in suburban areas, which will surely add to the resegregation of the school system. The groups see the bonds as a way for non-inner-city residents to continue to keep their kids away from their minority counterparts.

The arguments on both sides are compelling and all the groups involved are doing a great job of expressing their views. Voters should listen and digest it all before they go into the voting booth Nov. 6.

While we are pondering the future of local schools, let's also make a pact to keep the feet of our elected officials closer to the fire. Don't let the School Board members hibernate until they need us again. We will never be taken seriously as long as we let them believe that we are content with their coming to the black side of town only every four years.



## The enemy within



**Armstrong Williams**  
 Guest Columnist

All signs indicate that the recent anthrax attacks came from within.

Considering the random method of the attacks and the limited damage incurred, the recent media attacks do not fit the M.O. of Islamic extremist groups and likely were the work of a domestic hate group.

Whereas Islamic extremists have traditionally sought to use the media as a conduit to convey their message, domestic hate groups often target media outlets. Furthermore, biological warfare seems to be the weapon du jour for fundamentalist groups. Indeed, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control have confirmed 300 previously unreported cases of anthrax poisoning.

So while the government dedicates itself to eviscerating terrorism abroad, a new threat metastasizes within our own little corner of the hemisphere.

Driven by motives ranging from fanatical mistrust of the government, to racism, to religious extremism, these groups are likely using the Sept. 11 attacks as cover for their own violent agendas.

Over the past decade, such groups have been replicating across the United States like a disease. In 1994, the Anti-Defamation League reported that armed or racist militias maintained a presence in 13 states. Just two years later, the Southern Poverty Law Center reported that the number of active militias had mushroomed to 441 groups spread out through all 50 states.

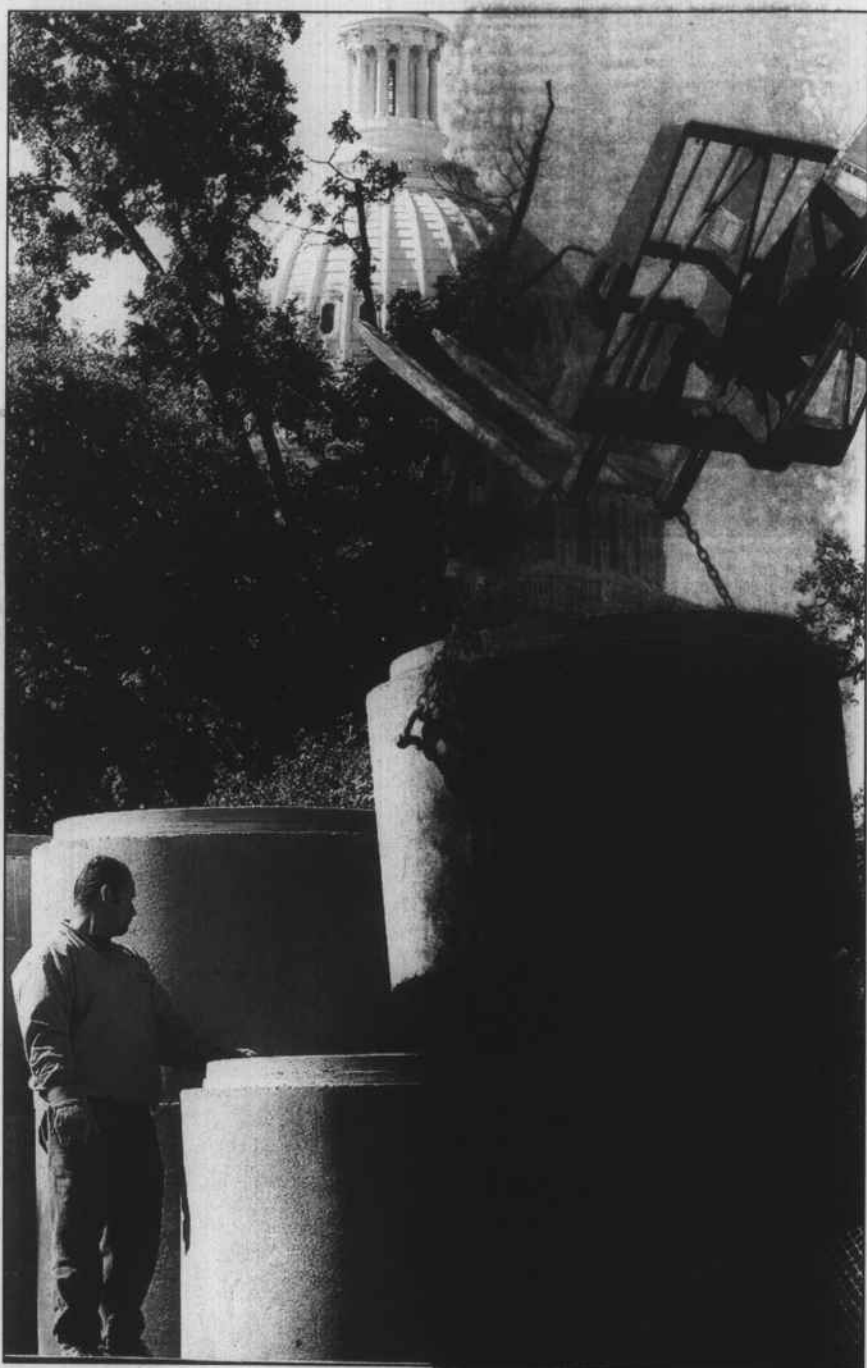
This trend was not lost on President Clinton, who issued an executive order in 1996 warning federal agencies to prepare for chemical attacks from domestic, not foreign, terrorist groups. That same year, four militant extremists in Minnesota and one survivalist in Arkansas were prosecuted by the FBI for possession of ricin, a deadly toxin. An additional man belonging to the Aryan Nation in Ohio was prosecuted for mail-ordering bubonic plague from a lab.

In his 1997 book "Fighting Terrorism: How Democracies Can Defeat Domestic and International Terrorists," former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu suggests that Western democracies emulate the Israeli model and peel back civil rights. He also suggests forceful retaliation on terrorists.

After the Sept. 11 attacks that claimed the lives of more than 5,000 people (mostly civilians), Netanyahu's suggestions are receiving serious reconsideration.

While this sort of forceful response is a necessary last resort for Israel, which is surrounded by significant military threats, it would prove disastrous for America, a far more pluralistic - and geo-politically stable - society that is grounded in the Bill of Rights.

Consider that all terrorism is a trap. Lacking ability to defeat an enemy outright, terrorists focus on destabilizing the enemy through fear tactics.



Workers add security barriers around the U.S. Capitol.

They make no distinction between military and civilians in an attempt to erode popular support for a military endeavor. In order to be successful in this war of attrition, terrorists must make the enemy seem as brutal and arbitrary as possible. Often, they use an act of terrorism to goad their enemies into violent retaliation. An example: by crashing airliners into the World Trade Center and The Pentagon, bin Laden can goad the United States into bombing various Middle East targets. These attacks can give the populace, which previously had been making strides toward emulating the West, a common enemy and thus prepare them for a sustained religious war against the West.

Another example: the brutal and indiscriminate crackdowns at Ruby Ridge in 1992 and Waco, Texas, in 1993 gave a confluence of hate groups a common enemy - and cause - and led directly to the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995.

There is no doubt that terrorism must be dealt with forcibly and immediately.

However, if the response seems arbitrarily violent, as was the case at Ruby Ridge, it will likely only inflame virulent anti-government ideologies and thus exacerbate domestic terrorism down the road.

So, what should the government do to overcome these virulent anti-government ideologies? A good place to begin is with drafting new legislation for disseminating useful information among varying domestic intelligence agencies.

Currently, the major intelligence agencies in this country - CIA, FBI, DOD, etc. - exist largely as separate fiefdoms. The inability, or unwillingness, of these agencies to share information was a major cause of our lack of preparedness for the Sept. 11 attacks.

With the goal of facilitating cooperation among these varying agencies, Bush created the Office of Homeland Security and appointed Gov. Ridge to head the new group. Given that Ridge has been endowed with few statutory or budgetary powers, he will need the forceful backing of the

intelligence community in order to compel these agencies to cooperate.

Without it, his office just adds another layer to the bureaucracy. Additional consideration should be given to the extent to which extremists and hate groups are recruiting military personnel. Testimony from a 1986 military trial revealed that a cadre of soldiers at Fort Bragg had smuggled weapons to a local hate group and helped train its members in military tactics. The Office of Homeland Security should work with the military to help screen out recruits with extremist views and to actively discourage association with extremist organizations by military personnel.

The battle with domestic terrorism must be won, first and foremost, on the intelligence front.

And while an overwhelmingly brutal response of the Netanyahu variety might make us feel empowered in the short term, it will likely unite our enemies and exacerbate the problem down the road.

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