

RICE, from page 9

McClellan said. "This is about the war on terrorism and the important role that the 9/11 commission plays in helping us move forward in the war on terrorism."

Despite White House efforts to discredit Clarke, who was a top adviser on terrorism to Bush and President Clinton, Kean, the commission's Republican chairman, gave Clarke's high marks as a witness.

Kean, appearing Wednesday on CBS' "Early Show," said Clarke was "a good witness and a very, very important witness because he went over both administrations."

While Republicans claim Clarke's public testimony last week contradicted statements he made privately to those investigating the attacks, Kean said there was "not that great a difference, a difference of emphasis" in Clarke's retellings of events privately and publicly.

Rice, in an op-ed article published in The Washington Post on March 22, claimed that Bush had a plan to take military action against al-Qaida before Sept. 11. But Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, under questioning by the commission, said Rice's claim was not true and that a military plan was not put in place until "after the horror of 9/11."

Rice also claimed that Bush was engaged so deeply on the issue of terrorism that he had personally requested a CIA briefing on the threat posed by al-Qaida, which he received in August 2001 at his ranch in Crawford, Texas. The CIA, however, later said that it had acted on its own in preparing that report.

Rice has given several accounts of Clarke's role in developing a plan to combat terrorism.

In her Washington Post article, Rice said Clarke did not turn over a plan to the new administration when it first took office. She later said publicly that

Clarke did turn over a plan but that it consisted of ideas that "had been already tried or rejected in the Clinton administration."

Her description changed again in an interview with NBC, during which she said that Clarke had not only turned over a plan but that the Bush administration "acted on those ideas very quickly."

Rice also contradicted Cheney, who claimed in a radio interview that Clarke had been "out of the loop" on terrorism issues in the Bush White House even though he was supposed to be Bush's top adviser on such issues.

"I would not use the word 'out of the loop,'" Rice later told reporters. "He was in every meeting about terrorism."

Rice has already had to correct at least one substantive claim she made about Sept. 11, commission member Richard Ben-Veniste has said.

Rice once defended Bush by saying, "I don't think anybody could have predicted that those people could have taken an airplane and slam it into the World Trade Center ... that they would try to use an airplane as a missile." But the commission has been told that Clarke and intelligence officials talked about terrorists using airplanes in an attack.

Ben-Veniste, a Democrat, said Rice told the commission in private that she had misspoken in claiming that the possibility was never discussed before Sept. 11.

Karen Hughes, one of Bush's closest advisers and one who urged him to let Rice testify publicly, suggested Wednesday that any corrections that need to be made involve comments made by others to the commission, not Rice.

"We've seen a number of misrepresentations made before the 9/11 commission," Hughes said on ABC's "Good Morning America." "It's important for the public to hear the facts and to hear from her directly."

The key question, according to Mann of the Brookings Institution, is: "Who will prove the more credible witness: Clarke or Rice? We shall see."

HISPANIC, from page 9

nation, with four- to six-fold increases since 1990. Hispanic populations have tripled in Alabama, South Carolina and Kentucky.

The change is being felt on the front lines of public health, social services and educational and cultural institutions.

In Lawrenceville, Tenn., police and other city employees are taking crash courses in survival Spanish. In Lexington, Ky., police take five weeks of Spanish, then head for Michoacan, Mexico, for immersion courses. And in Raleigh, N.C., the diocese has hired a Hispanic priest to serve God in Spanish.

In Reyes' new home of tiny Toombs County, Ga., and nearby Vidalia, the signs of this new life are everywhere — a Spanish-language newspaper, radio programs, dance clubs and dozens of restaurants and grocery stores, the things that turn strangers into communities.

"Stuff like that makes you feel like you have a little bit of home here," Reyes said.

At the Taco King in Lyons, a vibrant Mexican tapestry hangs in the window. It's huge, so huge

that it blocks the view out of a diner crowded with Hispanics who are ordering in their native language from their native menu.

At the tiny Teaming Corp Migrant Workers, an employment and training agency, the walls are covered with notes in Spanish. Some are for English-speaking workers to learn the language; others are for Spanish speakers learning to navigate the office.

Most days, the waiting room is filled with Hispanic families looking to stay. Folks in the industry call it "settling out," and this nondescript office is ground zero.

For years, Rogerio Hinojosa, a field crew leader, worked the migrant circuit — by the crop, by the month, by the seasons of nature. It began with oranges in the fall, then onions in the spring and pickles and tobacco in the summer. With a wife and three children, Hinojosa decided he needed to plant his own roots. Not necessarily settling out as much as settling in — still working the migrant fields but building a home in Lyons.

It was a move that allowed his children to know the meaning of community.

"I am never leaving here," Rogerio Jr. said between bounces of his basketball. "This is home."

HIV 101, from page 8

and other sexually transmitted diseases at disproportionately higher rates. State health officials asked college students to help plan the conference, which is designed to get student leaders educated about HIV and motivated to lead prevention programs on their campuses.

The program has been in the works since before the jump in campus HIV cases was discovered, said Phyllis Gray, project manager for the state's HIV and sexually transmitted disease prevention branch.

In Charlotte and elsewhere across the state, church and civic groups are quietly attacking risky behavior.

Pastor Johnny Brown of the Rhema Covenant Worship Center in northeast Charlotte has beefed up his outreach to Smith students and uses Bible studies and fellowship times to talk about sex and HIV.

Brown lost a brother to AIDS. When he read of the epidemic among black college males, he got involved. "I preach abstinence: don't have sex until you're married," Brown said.

"As churches, we haven't done enough. We have to step up our game and let them know, 'We don't want to bury you.'"

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