



National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice's testimony will be the White House's final public word on Bush's efforts to combat terrorism.

Rice likely to be grilled about 9-11

By Bob Kemper
CHICAGO TRIBUNE (KRT)

WASHINGTON

In defending the White House against accusations by a former aide that President Bush was not paying adequate attention to potential terrorist attacks prior to Sept. 11, 2001, National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice portrayed the accuser, Richard Clarke, as someone who couldn't keep his story straight.

But when she appears before the independent commission investigating the Sept. 11 attacks, possibly next week, Rice is expected to face a grilling from commissioners about inconsistencies in the way she and other members of the administration have portrayed events leading up to those attacks.

Commission members and Democrats have noted that over the past week, while Rice has been chastising Clarke for flip-flopping on his story, she has contradicted herself, contradicted other administration officials and been contradicted by others testifying on behalf of the White House.

Among the issues Rice will have to

clarify are whether administration officials were focused so intently on Iraq that they failed to pay enough attention to the threat of terrorism; when the administration put in place a plan to combat al-Qaida; and what the president knew about al-Qaida before Sept. 11.

"We've got to try and clear up those discrepancies as best we can," commission Chairman Thomas Kean said. "Some of those questions may be important to the fact-finding in our report. And obviously we will, in our hearing, go to those questions."

The stakes are particularly high for Rice because her testimony will be the White House's final public word in front of the high-profile commission on Bush's efforts to combat terrorism. The Sept. 11 commission, as part of its agreement to get Rice to testify, agreed not to call any other White House aides to testify publicly.

Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney have agreed to meet with the commission jointly but privately.

Democrats have been particularly gleeful that Rice will have to explain the administration's inconsistencies in public and that Bush

was forced by political pressures to reverse course on Tuesday and allow her to appear publicly and under oath.

The episode has given Democrats a way of challenging Bush's main argument for re-election, his leadership in the war on terror.

"The Democrats now have a competing narrative about 9/11 and the war on terrorism to that of the president," said Thomas Mann, a presidential scholar at the Brookings Institution.

"If that narrative -- Bush gave a low priority to terrorism before 9/11 and then unwisely diverted resources to the war against Iraq -- holds up in the weeks and months ahead, the major rationale for the president's re-election will have been damaged," Mann said.

White House spokesman Scott McClellan was dismissive of the impact that further probing by the Sept. 11 commission will have on the administration.

"Most Americans view Dick Clarke and his contradictions as yesterday's story."

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Hispanics giving new meaning to "The New South"

By Audra D.S. Burch
KNIGHT RIDDER NEWSPAPERS (KRT)

LYONS, Ga.

Juan Reyes spends his days in the dusty trenches of the vegetable fields that populate the tiny southeastern town of Lyons, Ga. He spends his nights in the commercially seductive aisles of the local Wal-Mart.

After plowing row after row of onions, cucumbers or tomatoes, Reyes goes shopping at the megastore -- window shopping, really, absorbing all the pieces of Americana stacked up and waiting to be taken home.

It has been just two years since Reyes moved to Lyons from Oaxaca, Mexico, with his girlfriend and their four children. The job in the field offered hard hours but a decent dollar, enough to pay for bills and a ticket back home.

But once winter came, and the crops and the field work were no more, Reyes didn't go back to Mexico last year. Instead, he stayed in Lyons for good.

"There is always work to do here, and it's a good place to raise my children," Reyes said through a translator. "I love this country. I love Wal-Mart."

Stories like Reyes' -- simple but telling -- are unfolding all over the South, changing the economic and social landscape as they do. Every day, driven by the New American dream, Central American and Mexican immigrants -- some legal, some not -- are unpacking their bags for good. They are retiring from nomadic existences, leading a different, lasting wave of immigration, the making of house into home.

Unlike some other regions, the South is rich with agricultural and industrial jobs, and migrant workers and other Hispanic immigrants are increasingly taking them. They are headed for decent-paying jobs at poultry processing plants in Shelbyville, Tenn.; carpet mills in Dalton, Ga.; sock factories in Fort Payne, Ala.

"Jobs, jobs, jobs. That is the story of migration in the South, plain and simple," said Ferrel Guillory, director of the Program on Southern Politics, Media and Public Life at the University of North Carolina. "The South has grown by leaps and bounds economically, and many of those jobs are held by immigrants."

The New South, once rigidly defined in black and white, is changing in cultural, political and economic ways. Census figures tracked an 87 percent increase in the Southern Hispanic population from 1990 to 2002. And unlike places such as South Florida or California, where Hispanic roots extend through three generations or more, Deep South states are new to this kind of diversity -- and the language issue that it raises.

In the 1980s, 2 million immigrants entered the South. Four million came in the 1990s, swelling the total number to 8.6 million -- or about 9 percent of the population. Almost two-thirds are from Latin America.

The South is now home to one-third of U.S. Hispanics, second only to the West and more than the Northeast and the Midwest combined.

North Carolina, Arkansas, Georgia and Tennessee have the fastest-growing Hispanic populations in the

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CDC worker Polycarp Omaset, right, brings AIDS drugs for Christine Athieno to her Ugandan village. Athieno is raising six children, two of her own and four from her brother and his wife who died of AIDS.

Nations, businesses, volunteers battle AIDS epidemic in Africa

By Marilyn Marchione
MILWAUKEE JOURNAL SENTINEL

KAMPALA, Uganda

Goats and chickens scatter as a dirt bike pings down rutted roads, past banana trees and sugar cane, to a village deep in the African bush.

Its driver is delivering some of the world's most advanced drugs to people in mud-and-thatch huts. Once a week he visits them, making sure they are following the complicated pill schedule.

He brings something just as precious as the medicine in his backpack.

He brings hope that Africa's horrific AIDS epidemic can be turned back.

Every day on the continent, 6,000 people die because they don't get drugs that make AIDS survivable elsewhere.

But that is changing.

An unprecedented amount of money and effort is flowing into Africa as powerful people, businesses and nations try to end this calamity.

President Bush is promising billions; Microsoft's Bill Gates is giving millions; former President Clinton is negotiating cheaper drugs; and the World Health Organization is aiming to get them to 3 million people by the end of 2005.

News of the epidemic in Africa dominated a recent U.S. AIDS conference normally devoted to domestic concerns.

Africa also is doing more to help itself. South Africa's government just pledged to get drugs to all who need them -- a stunning reversal by leaders who for years had denied that a virus, HIV, even causes the disease.

As a result of all these efforts, limited quantities of life-saving AIDS drugs are slowly becoming more available across the continent

in what amounts to the biggest public health experiment in history. The drugs must be taken exactly as prescribed -- no sharing, splitting or selling doses -- or resistance can develop in as little as two weeks. If that happens, new viral strains will emerge, making things worse.

Yet the dirt bike program and other pilot projects show success is possible.

AIDS originated in Africa and has long had its worst impact there.

Nearly 30 million Africans have HIV -- the population of Wisconsin, New York and Massachusetts combined. Infection rates are as high as 40 percent in some African countries. Nearly 20 million Africans have died of AIDS, and more than 11 million children have lost one or both parents to it.

But Africa and its problems seemed remote, and it was hard to see how to solve them. There's no vaccine to defeat AIDS, and no cure, only expensive drugs that must be taken for a lifetime.

However, a new attitude seems to have taken hold: Do what we can in Africa because we no longer can do nothing.

In all of Africa, 4.4 million critically need AIDS drugs but fewer than 100,000 get them now. There are three main ways: from an employer, from medical studies like the dirt bike project, or by paying \$25 to \$30 a month for the cheapest generic drugs available, sold from treatment centers like this one.

Now a fourth way is emerging -- programs that give the drugs to the public for free or with a small co-pay. The humanitarian group Doctors Without Borders is doing this in scattered sites around the continent, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Merck Foundation have donated \$50 million each to expand a program in Botswana.

But these are limited efforts. Doctors Without Borders has about 6,000 people in

treatment; the Merck-Gates program aims to treat 100,000, all in one country.

To go beyond that, many are looking to Bush and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria -- an international fund created by private and public donors that's affiliated with the United Nations, heavily financed by the United States, and headed by health secretary Thompson.

When Bush pledged a jaw-dropping \$15 billion during his State of the Union speech in 2003, the Kampala clinic's director, Peter Mugenyi, stood near him, full of hope.

Uganda is Africa's fairy tale story, having slashed HIV infection rates from 20 percent to 5 percent in a decade, largely because its leaders talked frankly about the disease and pushed testing and prevention. Mugenyi hoped Bush's money would let them do more.

But in the year since then, more than 3 million Africans became newly infected with HIV, more than 2 million died, and not a penny of the money has arrived, though Congress recently approved the first \$2.4 billion.

Mugenyi is disappointed. "When a genuine emergency comes, we need a quick response. If you commit yourself to helping the problem, you need to commit yourself to making the money available very quickly," he said.

He sees the anguish of the current situation. Walking through his clinic one day, he saw a mother with a 4-year-old child who had advanced AIDS. The mother was getting treatment through a medical study, but there were no drugs for family members.

"I thought to myself, 'Is there a woman, a mother, who can take treatment by a child?'" Mugenyi said.

He ordered the staff to treat the child. He would find the money somewhere.

Half of U.S. will be 'minority' in 2050, Census estimate says

By Elizabeth Llorente
THE RECORD (BERGEN COUNTY, N.J.) (KRT)

HACKENSACK, N.J.

Fast forward to 2050.

Imagine an America where the concept of minority no longer applies to the same ethnic or racial groups as today. Imagine an America where whites are no longer far and away the majority.

That is the picture of America drawn by population projections released by the U.S. Census Bureau.

The bureau projects that nationwide, Hispanic and Asian populations will triple over the next half-century, and non-Hispanic whites will represent one-half of the total population by 2050. The

report does not contain state data.

By 2050, the bureau projects, non-Hispanic whites will total 210.3 million, making them 50.1 percent of the overall population, which is expected to rise to 419.9 million. In the 2000 census, this group accounted for 69.4 percent of the U.S. population.

Hispanics, on the other hand, are expected to soar to 102.6 million from 35.6 million. If that should occur, they would make up nearly a quarter of all Americans, or double what they do now.

The Asian population will see the sharpest increase, Census says, climbing to 33.4 million from 10.7 million in the 2000 count. Their share of the overall population would, like that of Hispanics, double -- if the prediction becomes reality.

Blacks would also see a gain. The bureau projects they would rise to 61.4 million by 2050. But their share of the general population would grow slightly, to 14.6 percent from the current 12.7.

The projections came as no surprise to demographers and leaders of these racial and ethnic groups. For some time, demographers have spoken about a future America that would be less non-Hispanic white and dramatically more multicultural.

"This should be embedded in our minds as the conventional wisdom," said demographer James Hughes of Rutgers University in New Brunswick (NJ).

But Hughes, like other demographic experts as well as minority group leaders, warned that projections often have been wrong.

Projections long held that Hispanics would surpass blacks to become the nation's largest minority group by 2005. In fact, it happened last year. The post-World War II baby boom and the great waves of Latin American and Asian immigrants after new immigration laws in 1965 also blindsided the nation, Hughes noted.

"The only thing we can predict for certain," he said, "is that 12 months from now, baby boomers will be one year older."

Factors such as rates of mortality, childbirth and immigration, as well as the economy, could derail the changes that Census believes lie ahead.

If the economy tanked and stayed weak, Hughes said, there may be far less incentive for people to migrate here.

Another important variable is how people will classify themselves in a country where many Americans increasingly claim multiple ethnic origins and races.

Hispanics and Asians, for instance, have a high rate of marrying outside their groups, usually non-Hispanic whites. In New Jersey, weddings in which a family on one side of the aisle speaks Spanish and the one on the other side speaks Italian, for example, are becoming routine. How the children and grandchildren from these intermarriages will identify themselves is anyone's guess, demographers say. In fact, many demographers believe that the mainstream concept of "white" will expand to include Hispanics.

"We may have very different race and ethnicity categories than we do now," Hughes said.