

Powell: Failure to save children will mean more prison construction

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HOT SPRINGS, Va. (AP) — Fundamental values, or prison.

Americans must provide one to avoid the other for millions of children, especially those in decaying inner cities, retired Gen. Colin L. Powell told the annual meeting of the Southern Governors Association on Monday.

He urged restoration of the same values he was taught growing up in the Bronx in the 1940s and 1950s: Knowing the difference between right and wrong, hard work and education, belief in God, belief in oneself.

"That is the system we're trying to put back in balance today," Powell said of his "America's Promise — The Alliance for Youth," a nationwide effort to imbue 2 million children with such values. But Powell said there are about 15 million who need intervention.

Failure will only result in construction of more and more prisons, he said.

"All we will be doing is creating farm teams for our jails," said the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and architect of the victory in the Persian Gulf War.

Powell told those attending the conference at the posh Homestead resort that all Americans must get involved in his save-the-

children campaign.

"Each of us enjoying the wealth and promise of this country" should play a role, he said.

"America's Promise" goals are to:

- Ensure that at-risk children have a responsible, loving adult in their lives.
- Provide a safe place for children to go and play.
- Give children marketable skills.
- Provide good prenatal care, immunizations and access to family doctors and hospitals.
- Find ways for young people to serve their communities.

"I see nothing wrong with the virtue of service being put into the heart and mind of young people," Powell said.

Powell spoke in conjunction with a year-long focus by the Southern Governors Association on urban revitalization.

"Increasingly, the South's vitality and well-being is linked to its cities," said Virginia Gov. George Allen, chairman of the association.

He said the best ideas have come from the people who live in blighted areas, not from the federal government or even the state capitals.

"People innately have a desire to lead a self-reliant and independent life," Allen said.

He cited numerous success stories in



(AP Photo/Steve Helber)
Retired General Colin Powell shakes hands with Puerto Rican Gov. Pedro Rossello, right, as host for the Southern Governor's Association meeting, Virginia Gov. George Allen, applauds, left, at the Homestead in Hot Springs, Va., Monday, Sept. 8. Powell delivered the keynote address for the three-day meeting.

Southern cities, all produced by grass-roots initiatives.

"They weren't doing it because any government told them to do it. They were doing it because it was the right thing to do," Allen said.

Oklahoma Gov. Frank Keating told the governors that Southern cities have focused so much on growth that they have dropped behind northern cities in improving the quality of life, including environmental cleanup and expansion of cultural activities.

"We have to develop a sensitive ... inter-

est in the quality of life," Keating said.

Powell also told the governors the South has made great strides in racial relations.

"The states represented here would not have allowed me in a restaurant 35 years ago," he said. "This shows how far we've come." The Southern Governors Association, established 63 years ago to discuss the repeal of discriminatory rates for transporting goods by rail, coordinates regional initiatives and advocates Southern governors' policy agenda to Congress and the president.

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Grammy nomination for his song, "Never Can Say Goodbye," which was performed by The Jackson Five.

Seminars on affirmative action, strategic technology, outsourcing, purchasing and discussions between CEOs and the Minority Business Enterprise Committee were offered earlier in the week, and National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC) president Harriet R. Michel provided the conference luncheon with a keynote address on Wednesday. Michel, the former president and CEO of the New York Urban League, is also a writer, lecturer and minority advocate.

The NMSDC network has matched more than 15,000 certified minority businesses with their 3,500-plus corporate members, many of which are Fortune 500 companies. In 1995, NMSDC member corporations purchases from minority businesses and contractors added up to almost \$30 billion.

Both the NMSDC and CMSDC are private nonprofit business organizations. Five affiliate councils from North and South Carolina comprise the local organization, which is based in Charlotte, N.C.; 44 regional minority purchasing councils make up the NMSDC.

Over 200 exhibitors and more than 2,000 business owners and purchasing officials are expected to attend the Trade Expo.

Black Mayors name Welton E.W. Webb head of Africa Task Force

The National Conference of Black Mayors Inc. (NCBM) this weekend named Mayor Welton E.W. Webb of Denver, Colo., to head a new task force to explore economic and trade opportunities between businesses in America's cities and the nations of Sub-Saharan Africa. The NCBM held

its quarterly boards of directors' meeting this past weekend in Mt. Ponocono, Pa.

"This is an historic opportunity and a challenge I gladly accept," Webb said. "I believe this effort will help to support congressional efforts to open up the doors of trade to Sub-Saharan Africa. It is

clear that there is much incentive not only in economic benefits to American business but in helping the countries of Africa to become economically self-sufficient and socially stable."

Webb hosted a successful National Town Hall Meeting on Africa in Denver this past June. The

meeting was co-hosted by the Constituency for Africa and several other groups. That meeting led to a statement which called for emphasis on market access, capital availability, technology transfer, capacity building and continued support for economic aid. The statement was presented to world leaders at the

Denver Summit of the Eight one week later.

Headquartered in Atlanta, NCBM is a nonprofit, nonpartisan service organization that provides management and technical assistance to 420 members nationwide, who represent over 20 million people.



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