

# Editorials & Comments

## Oil-The Moral Equivalent Of War

by Hoyle H. Martin, Sr.  
Post Editorial Writer

As the nation crosses the threshold of summer and the pending summer-travel season, Amtrak train travel is overloaded, the airlines are jammed with the additional problem of the FAA-ordered grounded DC-10s and motorists in many areas are finding exorbitant gas prices or simply no gas.

While the gasoline shortage appears to be moving around the country - California, the New England area, Washington, D.C.-U.S. Energy Secretary James R. Schlesinger has warned that things are going to get worse before they get better. He said the nation will have about 95 percent of the gasoline that was available last summer but with demands already up shortages may be as high as 7 percent. In spite of these warnings, the American people are skeptical. Many don't believe the government nor the oil companies' claims about shortages.

This skepticism appears justified since the oil barons contend that gasoline per gallon will need to go up to \$1.50 if research is to be undertaken to find new sources of oil. Ironically, the same claims were made in 1974 when gas prices were allowed to nearly double, yet few if any new oil sources were found.

It is ironic too, that just two years ago President Carter said after a long-awaited announcement concerning a comprehensive energy policy, "Our solutions must ask equal sacrifices from every region, every class of people, every interest group." Yet, even today, it is lower income, working people and independent truck drivers who appear to be carrying most of the burden of paying higher motor fuel prices.

In an apparent effort to offset some of the credibility lost by the government over the energy crisis, President Carter has said energy -

its access and conservation are the "moral equivalent of war." To be sure, the President's statement is a lot more than political rhetoric. The "war" theory arises from the determination of the technology-deprived and oppressed groups in the oil-rich areas of Africa and Arabia to either not sell or sell at a high price, crude oil, to the United States. The uncertainty of this loss of oil and the possible influence of the Russians with the oil-rich nations has moved the U.S. to the brink of or "moral equivalent of war."

One of the international implications of the gasoline crisis is evident in Nigeria's warning to both England and the U.S. not to lift economic sanctions against white-ruled Rhodesia for to do so, they would run the risk of losing Nigeria's expanding oil supplies.

On the domestic scene, thousands of gas stations - many owned or operated by blacks - have been forced to close or have reduced hours. People, especially moderate to low income people, who must depend on their automobiles to transport them to and from work are being severely jolted in the pocket-book.

From a domestic standpoint, our gasoline crisis is the moral equivalent of a national disaster because we have failed to develop a national energy policy that is workable and fair to all socio-economic groups. Such a policy is at least 10 years past due.

Therefore, it is time for the President, the Congress of the United States and the oil company executives to stop playing petty politics and price gouging with the American people and jointly develop a workable plan for conserving fuel and equally sharing the burden of the shortages and the benefits of what we have.

## Resuming The Draft

There exists a growing debate among political and civil rights leaders over the idea of resuming the military draft. The debate ranges from whether the U.S. should return to conscription to enable the armed forces to fill their manpower needs, to the presumed absence of middle-class America being represented in our military ranks, to allegations that with 29 percent of the Army's servicemen being black the Army's quality has somehow suffered.

Sen. Sam Nunn, Democrat of Georgia, and Chairman of the Armed Service Committee's Manpower and Personnel Subcommittee, feels there is a serious problem with the lack of more middle-class Americans in the Armed Forces. However, Army Secretary Clifford Alexander has a totally different viewpoint. As a black American,

Alexander has expressed concern about the strong racial nature of the criticism against the volunteer army. He's particularly concerned about the charges that the Army's quality has diminished in part because its troops are 29 percent black and most from lower income backgrounds. Alexander says, "No one ever mentions the other services." The Navy is 8 percent black and the Air Force is 12 to 15 percent black. Overall, the all-volunteer armed forces is about 17 percent black.

What is too often overlooked in such debates is that the basic reason for a disproportionate representation of blacks in the armed forces has historically been disproportionately high unemployment among blacks, particularly among draft age blacks where the jobless rates are nearly 40 percent.

**"DESPITE THE LACK OF DIRECTION OF SOME BLACK STUDENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE, WE NEED THESE YOUNG PEOPLE FOR THEIR IMAGINATION AND INVENTIVENESS, THEIR NEW IDEAS AND APPROACHES."**

ROY WILKINS



They Want To Be A Part Of The New Awareness

## Affirmative Action In Police

### Force Reduces Crime Rates

Special to the Post

WASHINGTON-The affirmative action program implemented by the Detroit Police Department has contributed significantly to declining crime rates in that city, said Mayor Coleman A. Young at a recent news conference held in conjunction with planning for the third annual conference of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE). "Crime is down 30 percent in the last two years, and there is some reason for this," the Detroit mayor said. "The only significant change that has happened during this period is the composition of the (Detroit) police force at the officer and command levels."

In 1967, Detroit suffered a race riot that had a traumatic effect on that city and its police force. At that time the police department was only 4.9 percent black; at the supervisory ranks, blacks accounted for only 2.6 percent of the sergeants and 1.3 percent of the lieutenants.

In 1974, under the leadership of the Young administration, the Detroit Police Department designed an aggressive affirmative action program to study the effects of previous discrimination. By late 1977, when a federal court ruled against the department's affirmative action program, blacks accounted for 32.5 percent of the total force and 15.1 percent of the sergeants were black. As Young noted at the news conference, the crime rate had decreased significantly.

According to Mayor Young,

"A police force that is 50 percent white in a city that is 50 percent black, or a police force that lives outside the city and has no common interest with the people that it serves, cannot get the same kind of results."

Young's remarks give support to the race-conscious affirmative action promotion system, instituted by the Detroit Police Department in 1974, that mandated a one-for-one racial quota. The program was found to be in violation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by a federal district court in 1977. The case, Detroit Police Officers Association v. Young, is now pending in the United States Circuit Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit.

"Where a dramatic racial imbalance exists within the police personnel of a department, that imbalance affects that department's ability to control crime, the two are inter-related. You cannot separate one from the other," said Hubert Williams, president of NOBLE and director of the Newark, New Jersey, Police Department. "Police agencies cannot function effectively without community support in producing evidence and testimony. By nature people will trust and support those with whom they share a common experience."

The issue of affirmative action in policing will be discussed at length at NOBLE's upcoming third annual conference at the Hotel Pontchartrain, Detroit, Michigan, June 20-24. Fred Days, assistant attorney general, Civil Rights

Division, U.S. Department of Justice, and Dr. Bernadine Denning, director of the U.S. Office of Revenue Sharing, will discuss the issue. Peggy Triplett, special assistant to the director, National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice of the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, will moderate a panel on the future of equal employment opportunity.

NOBLE is an organization of the nation's highest echelon of black law enforcement officials. Its 150 members include Dr. Lee P. Brown, public safety commissioner of Atlanta; Homer Broome, deputy administrator of the LEAA; Burtell Jefferson, police chief of Washington, D.C.; Bishop Robinson, deputy police commissioner, Baltimore; and William Hart, police chief of Detroit.

For more information, contact Tom Hart at (202) 633-1460.

### Where Can I Get A

### Checkup For Cancer?

Your family doctor or a doctor at a hospital or health center can help detect the presence of cancer through regular checkups. During your checkups, certain tests may be performed to check for different kinds of cancer. Common tests are the breast examination for breast cancer, the Pap test to detect cancer of the uterus, the prostate examination for prostate cancer, and the procto for cancer of the colon and rectum.

## John Lewis Says "To Be Older Is To Be Blessed"

Guest Editorial by  
John Lewis  
Special to the Post

(John Lewis, a long-time human rights advocate, now serves as director of the domestic programs of ACTION, the federal volunteer agency. He formerly served as Chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in the 1960s and directed the non-partisan Voter Education Project (VEP) for seven years in the 1970s.)

May was Older Americans Month. It is a time to pay tribute to older Americans, a time to consider the plight of the elderly in our society, and to examine our own attitudes toward older people and the process of aging.

It is said that you can judge the character of a society by the way it treats its elderly citizens. If so, then we as a nation stand to be indicted as a selfish, uncaring, and unappreciative society, for, in too many instances, we have turned our backs on older Americans.

As black people who have suffered the effects of racism, we must be careful that we do not discriminate, in attitudes or actions, against older people. The problem of ageism in America exists just as surely as racism and sexism. Ageism is that notion that

people are different, somehow inferior, just because they pass a certain age. Ageism is perpetuated by stereotypes, fear, and ignorance.

Our mothers and fathers who are black, old, and poor suffer from triple discrimination. Poverty increases with age and poverty rates in minority communities are three times higher than in white communities. It is difficult to imagine how older people, living on fixed incomes or no incomes, cope with skyrocketing costs of food, shelter, health care, and energy.

Too many older Americans experience the anguish of abandonment, feeling that family members and society itself has no further need of them. The result of such loneliness and despair is that illness is accelerated, infirmity is hastened, and lives are dramatically shortened.

Instead of a time of loneliness, older Americans should enjoy the support of a loving and appreciative community. Instead of despair, there should be a celebration of a lifetime of experience. Instead of wasting away, there should be an opportunity for giving to others. Instead of being poverty stricken, older Americans should be guaranteed the resources to meet their basic needs.

The Older American Programs of ACTION - Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), Foster grandparents, and Senior Companions - have enlisted the energy and experience of 270,000 older volunteers who are a model of inspiration for future generations.

Foster Grandparents bring love and attention to abused, retarded, handicapped and neglected children. Senior Companions provide the attention that families once gave to the frail elderly. RSVP volunteers attack a multitude of local community issues ranging from crime prevention to economic self-sufficiency.

ACTION's older American volunteers accomplish the miracle of turning despair and anguish to hope and new ambition. While renewing their own lives, they give their most precious gift - themselves - to those who need love and attention most. They demonstrate that older people are not a problem, but a resource.

There are millions of older Americans who want to make a greater contribution to society. According to pollster Louis Harris, 53 percent of retired older Americans are desperately sorry that they retired. Eighty-six percent of all Americans want to be

allowed to work as long as they want with no restriction to age.

As we shatter the negative stereotypes of aging, we must find new and creative ways to utilize the tremendous untapped

## USDA Tightens Controls Over Donated Foods

WASHINGTON - The knowing misuse of food which the U.S. Department of Agriculture donates to child nutrition programs is a federal offense, under regulations announced last week.

"This action will help us to correct serious problems that exist in accounting for the receipt and use of donated foods," said Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Carol Tucker Foreman.

The department will provide about \$600 million worth of food this year to states for child nutrition programs. States may distribute the food directly to schools or to commercial firms that process the foods for use in schools. Previously, the federal government could not ordinarily prosecute for the illegal use of donated food once title had passed to state or local government.

The regulations carry out a provision of the child nutrition amendments enacted in November. Under that provision, both those who administer child nutrition programs and those who receive benefits are

By VERNON E. JORDAN, JR.

## TO BE EQUAL



### Welfare Reform's Uncertain Fate

When it comes to welfare, the wheels of reform grind slowly. For almost two decades, there has been a national debate about reforming the welfare system.

The announcement of a new Administration welfare reform plan has reopened the issue. The President asked for a fairly broad welfare reform package in 1977. That never got anywhere with Congress. So he has come back with a scaled-down plan that might pass the Congress.

The Administration's persistence is commendable. Back in 1969 the Nixon Administration came up with a major welfare reform plan it made only a half-hearted effort to pass. When that failed, Nixon just dropped the issue, in effect killing welfare reform's chances for a decade.

The present Administration's commitment to progressive domestic programs can be seen by its pattern of returning with alternative plans after its original proposals fail to pass Congress. We see this not only in welfare reform but in its health proposals, urban policies, and other key reforms.

But the Administration's persistence is often negated by the tactical mistake of building compromises and cutbacks into its proposals. Often what it sends to Congress is the irreducible minimum, leaving little room for the inevitable weakening changes Congress will make.

The welfare reform package is a case in point. The original 1977 plan was deeply flawed. After its defeat, it was apparently decided that only a very narrow reform plan could pass. But the present plan is now so weak that even small changes in Congress could effectively kill the limited advance it makes over the present system.

The welfare reform plan would set a national minimum of only two-thirds of the poverty level, provide incentives to states to boost payments above that amount, expand tax credits for the working poor, extend benefits to needy two-parent families, and earmark 600,000 public service jobs for welfare recipients.

That package falls far short of comprehensive reform of the present degrading welfare system. It is also far short of the ill-fated 1977 plan.

The work requirement is especially troublesome. Stressing that aspect plays into the hands of those who stigmatize welfare recipients as shirkers who won't take jobs. But few recipients are able to work - most are too young, too old, too sick, or too burdened with home responsibilities.

Those capable of work find the private sector job market closed to them. The jobs just aren't there for relatively unskilled and less educated workers. Just look at the unemployment rates.

Recognizing this, the Administration stresses job creation in the CETA public jobs system. But that introduces a serious negative element - it threatens to turn CETA into a welfare job program, at least in the public's view. And as state and local employment officers scramble to get welfare recipients onto public jobs they may well displace non-welfare CETA workers.

The most likely result would be a kind of revolving door system in which people move from welfare to CETA and then, since CETA jobs are temporary, back to welfare again.

Month, we should rededicate ourselves to the task of removing the stigma of age. We must create a climate of understanding and build a society where we are able to proclaim, "To be older is to be blessed."

subject to federal law. Fines and prison terms are spelled out according to the amount of loss to the program in food or property. The child nutrition programs include school lunch

and breakfast; summer and child care food, and food service equipment assistance.

The regulations, scheduled to be published in the June 5 Federal Register, become effective on that date.

### Eye Injuries Becoming More Common

As you stroll onto the court, racket in hand, do you ever stop to think how dangerous a high-speed ball can be to your eyes? Eye injuries, some resulting in blindness, are becoming more and more common in racket sports.

In a recent article published in Family Health, two ophthalmologists who surveyed athletes' eye injuries in 1976 found that 3,220 eye injuries were caused by racket-related activities.

Ironically, the majority of eye injuries occur among people with good eyesight because they rarely think of protecting their eyes (or glasses, since they don't wear any) from potentially dangerous objects such as balls or



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