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The Pres

To the Editor:

I agree with N ("A Slap in the Face") that the news highly proactive of the American suggested solutions and

Media ownership thing else, has caused state of affairs by pers and broadcast centers.

This has meant journalistic emphasis on entertainment willingness to un that might offend vertisers; and a t to simplistic think the political aisle.

This has given t that is at once bland sational. It is little feeling hungry.

To restore publ news, we need r view their proprie trust and who inve ate, professional tors and provide a that rewards accu tellectual curiosity pursuit of stories t debate, not trivializ

Franklin, M

To the Editor:

Nicholas D. Kris to the need for new hire ombudsmen.

The increased budsmen in America a recognition that creasingly pessin function of mass m

While the preser man is not an aut of better journalis tion that a news or pared to take its sen tion more serious tion to shareholder:

As the appointr budsmen is on the i ly among North An pean newspapers c casters, commerc the United States unmoved and unav for greater public a

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Washing
 The writer is Natio ombudsman and pr ganization of News

To the Editor:

While Nicholas D

Germany Steps Up to the Plate

As the date rapidly approaches for a big meeting where the leaders of the rich world are supposed to come up with a plan to help lift Africa's poor, tired and huddled masses out of poverty, things are starting to get interesting. Last week, Japan announced that it would double its aid to Africa. Granted, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi is doing so to better Japan's chances of getting a seat on the United Nations Security Council, according to Yomiuri Shimbun, a Japanese newspaper, but so what? Money is money.

And after weeks of hinting, Germany publicly announced that it would meet the United Nations target of increasing foreign assistance to poor countries to 0.7 percent of the gross national product by 2015; indeed, the Germans said they could meet the goal by 2014. Germany's United Nations envoy, Gunter Pleuger, said last Thursday that Germany would increase development assistance to 0.35 percent in 2006, 0.5 percent in 2010 and 0.7 percent in 2014.

The German announcement makes it clear that Europe is backing the British prime minister, Tony Blair, in his quest to pry money out of rich countries for Africa when the leaders of Group of 7 industrialized nations meet in Gleneagles, Scotland, in July. Mr. Blair has staked his chairmanship of the G-7 this year on a Marshall Plan for Africa, and we are hard-pressed to think of a more worthy goal.

The continent is at a crossroads right now, with Africans, after long years of accepting the rule of brutal and corrupt dictators, finally dragging themselves to their feet to stand up and say, "Enough." But there are two paths they can take.

With help from the rich world, countries like Ethiopia, Mozambique and Liberia can take the route of development and progress, and finally join the rest of the world in enjoying the things that our generation has come to expect: life, liberty and the ability to get from one day to the next with shoes on your feet and food in your stomach. Without that help, those same countries can take the path that cycles back into civil war, poverty and life expectancies so low that 13-year-old girls are considered old women.

Britain announced long ago that it would meet the 0.7 percent target by 2013. France is more than halfway there, at 0.41, and has announced a timetable to get to 0.5 percent by 2007 and 0.7 percent by 2012. From America — the stingiest of all, compared with the rest of the G-7, donating just 0.18 percent of its gross national product to foreign aid — there has not been a word about getting to 0.7 percent by any date in this century. We sincerely hope that President Bush plans to come up with something before July — even if he does it only because his most loyal ally has asked it of him.

Brain-Dead From Sports Drinks

For years now, we've been hearing about the importance of hydration to avoid heat stroke during prolonged exercise in hot weather. Now, it turns out, too much hydration can kill you.

A study published today in The New England Journal of Medicine should give weekend warriors reason to rethink the wisdom of stuffing

and administer yet more liquid, making the problem worse. The best treatment is a small volume of a concentrated salt solution, given intravenously, to increase blood sodium concentrations. Sports drinks containing electrolytes may not help much as they are mostly liquid themselves.