



Partnership with Africa through Public Diplomacy and Development Assistance

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Good afternoon. I want to welcome you to Washington, and specifically to the chance to discuss Africa. I also want to thank you for this opportunity. Coming from all over the country and from many walks of life, your points of view are for me refreshing and energizing.

In my formal remarks, I want to discuss briefly the President's upcoming trip to Africa and its policy context. I then will talk about public diplomacy and the important role that you, the National Council of International Visitors, play. That should leave us with ample time for a discussion.

PRESIDENT BUSH'S TRIP TO AFRICA

A. Where and Why

Tomorrow President George W. Bush departs for a visit to five African countries – Liberia, Benin, Ghana, Rwanda, and Tanzania. This will be the President's second trip to Africa; and an opportunity to showcase a part of the continent that is doing very well.

What these countries have in common is commitment to policies that work. They have each worked hard to build democratic institutions and have conducted free and fair elections to select new leadership. They have put into place sound economic policies, and are enjoying sustained growth. Above, they represent positive examples of American policy at work.

We consider these countries, and many more in Africa, partners. Let me stop for a moment on this concept of partnership, for it lies at the very heart of U.S. policy in Africa.

B. The Vision of Partnership

Secretary of State Rice has called on us to establish "strategic partnerships". The goal is to develop a network of well-governed states capable through responsible sovereignty of protecting themselves and contributing to regional security.

In this context, this Administration has elevated Africa's place in American foreign policy, a change of historic proportions. We are developing important new strategic relationships with key partners in the region, especially South Africa and Nigeria. In other words, we support African leadership to find African solutions to African problems.

We consider the African Union a force for continent-wide conflict resolution and support for the rule of law. Today AU peacekeepers are in place in Somalia and Darfur, trained and supported by the United States.

Likewise, we have supported sub-regional organizations like ECOWAS (the Economic Community of West African States) as they expand their leadership roles in promoting and maintaining African security. It was ECOWAS forces, led by Nigeria, who did so much to stabilize Liberia and pave the way to ending the violence and setting the stage for successful elections. In addition to Liberia, the U.S. has applied this same formula to help end conflicts in Sierra Leone, Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, and the north-South conflict in Sudan.

This vision dovetails with Africa's own growing emphasis on the values of freedom, the rule of law, and collective security, as embedded in the African Union's New Partnership for African Development. The New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) Peer Review mechanism reinforces African leaders' own efforts to promote democracy and good governance among their peers.

C. Non-State Actors

Africa is ever more important today because we are living in a world where non-state actors and illegal trans-border activity, can pose essential threats to even the most powerful of countries. What happens there affects all of us here. This became clear nine years ago when Al Qaeda bombed American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania and Africa became a front in the fight against terrorism.

D. Specific Countries

The countries President Bush will visit are very different from each other, and have different paths to where they are today.

Liberia: Liberia, where I had the good fortune of studying before I became a diplomat, has a relationship with the United States that goes back to its founding. It has emerged from years of gruesome civil war to select Africa's first elected female head of state, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. It did so with strong, effective American as well as African support. Today, President Johnson and her government are reforming their security forces, strengthening their democratic institutions, rebuilding their infrastructure, and connecting their people to the global economy.

Ghana: Ghana has enjoyed a series of free and fair elections with successful leadership transitions. Its pro-growth policies have moved the country to prosperity and an expanding though still modest middle class. The Millennium Challenge Corporation will help increase the production of high-cash crops in some of Ghana's poorest regions, and then help bring these products to regional and international markets. Ghana has also taken a regional leadership role, notably with President John Kufuor as head of the African Union during the past year.

Benin: Benin suffered from poor governance for decades until it performed a dramatic turnaround in the 1990s. Today, it stands as an example of the possibility of democratization, stability, and prosperity. The Millennium Challenge Corporation there is helping to reform national policy on microfinance and helps small farmers.

Rwanda: Rwanda, as we know, is still not far removed from the genocide of 1994. What has taken place since then, however, is remarkable. President Paul Kagame has ambitiously called for Rwanda to become an African Singapore. To this end, strong pro-trade and pro-business policies have resulted in a high growth rate. Primary education has become a priority.

Tanzania: Tanzania has enjoyed stability and an emphasis on mass education since its independence, a tribute to its liberation leader and first president, Julius Nyerere. Since Nyerere retired, making himself an important example of voluntary departure from power, Tanzania has undergone a series of democratic transitions. In recent years, it has also implemented successful pro-growth economic policies. The country will receive a \$698 million under an Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Compact to help fight corruption, promote transparency and rule of law, and support oversight for public procurement.

DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

This President believes that Africa is central to our nation's national security and foreign policy. He has backed his words with action. Since 2001 our official development assistance to Africa has more than tripled.

But it is not only that the dollar and cents that have changed. Our entire approach to assistance reflects the often difficult lessons learned during five decades of working in Africa. We know that the best way to enhance development is to invest in people – their health, their education, and using our partnerships to encourage governments to make the choices that enable people to achieve a better life.

A. PEPFAR

The U.S. is partnering with developing nations to fight terrible diseases. The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief – proposed by the President and funded by the Congress – is the largest international health initiative in history ever dedicated to one disease. 12 of its 15 focus countries are in Sub-Saharan Africa. President Bush has called for a doubling of PEPFAR's funding, to \$30 billion over ten years.

B. Malaria

Yet the #1 killer in Africa is not AIDS, nor war, but malaria. The President's Malaria Initiative – also with the support of the Congress – is helping to fight a disease that claims the lives of a million children under the age of five each year in the region (SSA). This is a five-year, \$1.2 billion effort. The program uses tried-and-true methods: insecticide-treated bed nets, indoor spraying, and anti-malaria medicines.

C. Education

The U.S. is partnering to provide basic education. Our Africa Education Initiative provides \$600 million over eight years to increase access to quality basic schooling. By 2010, we aim to have distributed over 15 million textbooks, trained one million teachers, and provided 550,000 scholarships for young women.

D. MCC

I have mentioned the Millennium Challenge Corporation. This program funds projects in countries that are doing the right things: they govern justly, fight corruption, invest in education and the health of their people, and promote economic freedom. Of the 13 MCC Compacts signed to date, seven are with African countries (Benin, Cape Verde, Ghana, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mali, and Mozambique). These total nearly \$2.4 billion – over half of the total value of all MCC compacts signed so far.

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

A. America as a Society Engages with Africa

I've spent my time so far discussing what the U.S. Government does: our policies and our programs. But as you know better than most people, what we do in this building is only a part of a growing engagement of Americans and American institutions with Africa and Africans. Whatever may be the politics and policies of the moment, this engagement is here for good. It includes educational institutions, NGOs (non-governmental organizations), religious organizations of every stripe, business, local and state government, the arts, music, literature, and film.

B. PD Support

I have spoken about the rise of non-state and trans-border actors in today's world. Usually, we in government are referring to the threats posed by terrorist organizations. But other non-state actors can be forces for good, especially in Africa: NGOs, universities, religious organizations, and community groups such as yourselves.

It is an engagement with these forces for good that we in government support strongly through public diplomacy programs. My colleague, Claudia Anyaso, will go into more detail about public diplomacy shortly. In general, we have come to understand that public diplomacy is essential to successful foreign policy and national security. Academic exchanges, citizen exchanges, local and state government international programs all tap into citizen knowledge and expertise to increase international understanding and to support overall foreign policy goals.

C. International Visitors Leadership Program

The International Visitors Leadership Program is one of our flagship public diplomacy programs, one that links the State Department with communities around the country. For more than half a century, it has brought rising leaders of many backgrounds to the United States for an intense orientation to our complex society. It has survived and indeed thrived for so long because it works. It has worked because of you.

You, ladies and gentlemen, are the heart and soul of the International Visitors Leadership Program. We in the State Department do our best to identify participants, and to get them here. You are the ones that are responsible for opening up a window on America that will last a lifetime. You are the heart and soul of the International Visitors Leadership Program.

CONCLUSION: NCIV AS A KEY IN AMERICA'S ENGAGEMENT WITH AFRICA

In recent years, local and state governments around the country have taken an active interest in international relations. Much of that interest has focused on trade promotion, something that can have often visible and immediate benefits to the community. But more and more, your cities and states are understanding, too, the importance of citizen involvement in international activities. They are recognizing all across this country the enormous well of interest in extending a welcoming hand to foreigners who come to America on business, to study, as tourists, in Sister Cities programs, and of course as International Visitors.

When International Visitors return home, they meet with Embassy personnel to discuss and evaluate their programs. Most of the time, it is the visits outside of Washington that make the greatest and most positive impressions.

It is with you that they begin to understand that America is more than the White House, the Department of State, and Hollywood movies. They begin to appreciate that Americans, too, have real families, real communities, and share universal aspirations. They see first hand that ordinary citizens can participate and make a difference in government, starting with the International Visitors Program. They begin to appreciate the dynamics of a democratic system of government, the influence that local interests can wield on national policy and international affairs. They see that different communities and different regions can take very different approaches to governance in our federal system, and out of many something better will result.

For that I thank you, and thank you for coming to Washington.

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