



## U.S.-Africa Policy and Florida

**Gregory L. Garland, Public Affairs Chief, African Affairs**  
Tallahassee Kiwanis Club  
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Good afternoon. It is an honor to be here today in Tallahassee.

I am especially please to follow a speaker from the Florida League of Cities. You are music to my ears. Cities, countries, and states all play a role in international affairs. I worked at one point with one of your member cities, Jacksonville, where I handled international affairs. I have served in six countries overseas and have witnessed the other side. I know what community involvement can mean. Multiply that by hundred and thousands across the country, and you have a dynamic message of positive citizen-to-citizen foreign policy. My hat is off to the Florida League of Cities, and I want you to know that you have a friend in the U.S. Department of State.

In fact, I came to Tallahassee principally to help celebrate the establishment of a new Sister City relationship with Assanti District North, Ghana. I spoke yesterday at the Tallahassee Sister Cities Committee Africa Awareness Month Conference at Florida A&M. The audience was very different, of course, and mostly young. I addressed Florida-Africa relations, looking at our state's 440 year history of links between our state and Africa. I won't burden you with that today, but I do want to leave with the fact that there were Africans in Florida at least as early as 1565. They were very much a part of the oldest city, St. Augustine, and the oldest continuous European settlement in the United States, Northeast Florida.

### U.S.-AFRICA POLICY IN CONTEXT

Last month, President Bush traveled to Africa for second time. In 2004, he visited Nigeria and South Africa. This time, he went to five countries not often in the news back here: Benin, Tanzania, Rwanda, Ghana, and Liberia. In fact, that was the point. Much of the continent is doing well, economically, socially, and politically. Yet to read the papers and watch CNN, you would think that Darfur was all of Africa.

There is a quiet revolution going on in Africa. It is one of democratic rule of law, growing economic, a rising middle class, and end of conflict. The president chose to take the opportunity to show the quiet and prosperous side of Africa.

He took along with him, as is always the case, the White House press corps. Now, this is a cynical bunch who have witnessed a lot. Coverage before the trip was oriented more toward the question of why the President would not travel to any country in a crisis, notably Kenya or Sudan. Let me tell you, ladies and gentlemen, that these reporters had seen little of Africa, and their preconceptions were rooted pretty much in what they read in their own papers. By the time the trip got to Tanzania, attitudes started to change. This Africa was an interesting place, even when there was a war going on. They witnessed the extraordinary welcome all these countries laid out for the President, one greater than he would receive back in the U.S. They witnessed an Africa that is a wonderful host, human, tolerant, and alive with life in all its permutations. Finally, the coverage started to reflect that maybe the President was on to something.

For the United States, Africa for too long was on the margins of U.S. foreign policy interests. In World War II, Africa was a strategic stepping stone to the places that mattered in Europe. In the Cold War, Africa was a sideshow to the struggle that mattered -- in Europe and East Asia. Even as we Americans set in place well-intentioned economic development policies, it was too often with the idea of doing good for Africa, rather than with Africa.

All that has changed. In 2001, the U.S. changed its foreign policy strategy, a move long overdue with the close of the Cold War. We decided not to rank U.S. interests according to the traditional hierarchy of regions. In that ranking, Europe was considered a vital national security interest, Asia and the Middle East important, and Latin America and Africa mainly of humanitarian interest. We no longer operate according to this hierarchy.

Instead, the U.S. has implemented a strategy to operate more effectively in a world where non-state actors, and illegal trans-border activity, can pose essential threats to even the most powerful of countries.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has applied this vision to her strategy of transformational diplomacy. The goal is to develop a network of well-governed states capable through responsible sovereignty of protecting themselves and contributing to regional security. By so doing, they also protect the international system.

She has described her approach as "doing things with people, not for them." Note the key prepositions: with, not for. In a word, this means partnership. This vision supports African leadership as strategic partners and seeks to build up Africa's institutional capacity. In other words, doing things with Africans, not for them.

### ECONOMIC SUCCESS

Contrary to impressions that many have, let me say that Africa is doing well now by traditional economic criteria. In 2006, the economy of all sub-Saharan Africa grew by 5.5 percent -- the same rate the world economy grew. Put differently, twenty-three African nations grew at a rate faster than 5 percent. Only one -- Zimbabwe -- failed to grow at all.

U.S. policy seeks to support and sustain that growth over the long term. It has become a truism that trade is the best aid. Creating the basis for a healthy, open trading relationship with Africa is a key objective.

### AGOA

The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) has brought increased trade flows and new industry to Africa. Thanks in part to AGOA, two-way trade between the U.S. and Africa has risen from \$29 billion in 2000 to over \$71 billion last year. In just one year, 2005-6, U.S. exports to sub-Saharan Africa rose by 17 percent (to \$12 billion). Imports from Africa also rose by 17 percent (to \$59.2 billion).

These figures didn't happen by chance. AGOA has helped jump-start the rise in bilateral trade. AGOA has become the cornerstone of our trade and investment policy in Africa. It was and is a great idea that has worked.

### MCC

I said that it is crucial to support Africa's quest for building accountable democratic institutions. To succeed in the global economy, nations need fair and transparent legal

systems; free markets that unleash the creativity of their citizens; banking systems that serve people at all income levels; and a business climate that welcomes foreign investment and supports local entrepreneurs.

We're doing this through a new program, the Millennium Challenge Account. This program works in countries that have already demonstrated commitment to fight corruption, implement democratic reforms, invest in health and education, and promote economic freedom. African governments -- not Americans -- must come up with ideas, a change in our way of doing development. Once again, we seek a partnership of equals, Americans and African, where Africans take ownership and responsibility.

### **INVESTING IN PEOPLE**

True commitment means dealing with health: notably, the terrible killing machines of AIDS and malaria. And the place to start is partnership with ministries of health, working with African leaders in their effort to battle disease.

#### **PEPFAR**

We have taken on Africa's most daunting health challenges. President Bush's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) was launched in 2003 as a five-year, 15 billion dollar program to combat HIV/AIDS in 15 countries, 12 of them in sub-Saharan Africa. A few months ago, President Bush doubled this commitment to \$30 billion over ten years.

#### **PMI -- MALARIA**

For too long the West has turned a blind eye to malaria, which no longer exists in the developed world but is the #1 killer of Africans. We have begun to right that wrong.

The President's Malaria Initiative, a 1.5 billion dollar initiative to fight this disease in fifteen African countries. This includes insecticide treated bed nets, indoor spraying, and life-saving anti-malaria medications.

To take one case, Zanzibar: This year -- the second year -- Malaria has nearly been wiped out on the historical island of Zanzibar in East Africa. That show what commitment, resources, and existing knowledge can accomplish.

### **THE GRASSROOTS ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

#### **Churches**

I have said little about the role of churches. It was American missions who built and operated many of the first school that educated Africans -- black Africans. Generations of African leaders got their learning in these American schools, and some went on to study in HBCUs and other American colleges and universities. That is a powerful and positive legacy, one that happened in spite of official U.S. policy.

Today, that tradition continues and is growing. Churches of all denominations have expanded their missions in Africa. I have seen Africans come to speak to congregations that only a generation ago would have kept them out because of the color of their skin, I have seen Americans of all backgrounds from very corner of our society work in Africa as teachers, doctors, nurses, and ministers, beloved by those communities they have dedicated their loves to. And I have seen, as you have, too, Africans make this flow a two-way street, coming to America not just to study, but to minister, teach, and serve, all under the aegis of a church, not Uncle Sam.

#### **Peace Corps**

When the Peace Corps started up in the Kennedy Administration, few anticipated one of its greatest impacts: The impact of a community of tens of thousands of former volunteers in Africa. Many of these fell in love with Africa, sometimes with Africans literally, and have dedicated their lives to the continent.

#### **Immigration**

I see it in Immigration of Africans to America. Just as the Civil Rights revolution opened many doors to African Americans, it made possible the immigration reform of 1965, which ended race-based favoritism as immigration policy and opened the doors to people of color. Today, large and growing communities of Ethiopian-Americans, Somali-Americans, Nigerian-Americans, and others have spread across America, following the pattern of previous immigrants. One of those patterns is maintaining an interest in their roots, and trying to influence foreign. Just as Cuban, Polish, and Chinese immigrants have done for many decades, African immigrants are learning, and learning well how to press the buttons of power in Washington. Pay attention, I say to my colleagues, this is something new, and you'd better understand it.

And I see it in the private sector. We hear so much about oil, and that is part of the American story in Africa, at least in Nigeria and Angola. And there's bauxite in Guinea and Ghana, iron ore and rubber in Liberia, and so on. Now, however, we are witnessing the broadening of that trading relationship, fueled in many cases by AGOA, but driven by middle and small business. Just to cite one example -- shrimp from Mozambique, shipped to Miami for packaging. (Mozambique, I can say, has the best shrimp on earth.)

Presidents come and go. Secretaries of State come and go. Congresses come and go, all something that an elections year reminds us of.

What will not and cannot change is this fundamental shift, a societal shift, of attention towards Africa. It is here for good, at this the grassroots level.

Thank you.

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