



THE WHITE HOUSE
PRESIDENT
GEORGE W. BUSH


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President Bush Participates in Joint Press Availability with President Kagame of Rwanda

Presidency - VIP Building
Kigali, Rwanda

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12:20 P.M. (Local)

PRESIDENT KAGAME: President, it's my great pleasure, it's the pleasure of the whole country to welcome you, Mr. President and Mrs. Laura Bush and your distinguished delegation. We thank you very much for your visit, your friendship, and the support -- these have made a substantive difference to many lives in our country.

PRESIDENT BUSH: Thank you.

PRESIDENT KAGAME: The bilateral investment treaty that we have just signed is further testimony to your commitment and the good will of the American people. Mr. President, your visit is a reflection that the United States and Rwanda have shared values. We believe in investing in our people. We share a commitment to expanding our people's economic and democratic aspirations. We believe in strong and effective institutions accountable to our respective citizens, but as is well appreciated, different countries begin their democratic and development agenda from different circumstances.



You saw for yourself there is also decades of bad politics and bad leadership when you visited the genocide memorial that you just saw this morning. The country you are visiting today was vastly different 14 years ago when the very survival of Rwanda as a nation was in question. But the Rwandan people refused to give up hope, and we have instead embarked on the task of healing, reconstruction, and development.

The results of these efforts may be illustrated by our modest achievements in such areas as education, health and a general improvement towards sustainable economic growth. Rwandans and the more -- especially our youth, have hope in a better future. Primary school enrollment has risen to about 96

percent, spurred by tuition-free education. In our concerted effort to invest in our people, we have extended universal education to the very first three years of secondary education. And we intend to do more through the entire value chain of trade.

In the field of health, immunization coverage has risen to 95 percent. Thanks to American support and partnership, thousands of Rwandan children and mothers are alive and have hope because of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief program. Malaria has almost been eliminated in our country due in large part to the President's Malaria Initiative.

On the economic front, today's agreement will certainly deepen our economic collaboration, Mr. President. Mr. President, we share a deep commitment to democracy and good governance. In this respect, we in Rwanda believe strongly in power-sharing and consensus-building as a cornerstone of our political dispensation. This perspective has been made the centerpiece of our constitution, informed by our particular history, and the circumstances that disenfranchised communities and political expressions, often leading to calamities. We know that governance has both universal and homegrown features to allow for greater relevance. We believe we are making progress towards a balance between these imperatives.

Mr. President, the significance of your administration's record is illustrated by your strong leadership in many fields, including health, conflict resolution, promotion of investment and trade, and your insistence that we Africans take ownership of our own development challenges and processes. Permit me to thank you once again for the attention you've paid our continent. It may be stated that you have raised the bar of American-African relations, a level which the next President of the United States will not lower.



We are very happy and honored to have you here, Mr. President and Mrs. Laura Bush. This is the second time Rwanda for the First Lady, and we appreciate that. I thank you for the trust and the confidence you have placed in our country. Mr. President, I thank you very much.

PRESIDENT BUSH: Mr. President, thanks. (Applause.) We're honored to be here. Thanks very much for inviting Laura and me to join you and Mrs. Kagame for lunch today, in what has been so far a very important stop. We had good discussions on a variety of subjects. It is really inspiring for us to see people who have endured such suffering respond with such hope.

I really do want to congratulate you and the people in Rwanda for the remarkable recovery you have made. And I assure you, you have a steady friend in the United States. I appreciate the opportunity to visit with your cabinet, as well. It's important for my fellow citizens to know that I'm dealing with a respected leader, not only here at home but in the region.

And so our discussions not only centered on the issues facing Rwanda, but also how we can work together to bring peace to different parts of the continent of Africa. We're cooperating to address

violence and genocide in Darfur. The Rwandan people know the horrors of genocide. I find it -- it's not surprising at all that the first nation to step up and say that we want to deploy peacekeepers was Rwanda, and I thank you for your leadership, Mr. President. That's a -- it's a strong statement on your part, and you remain one of the largest contributors to stability and peace in Darfur.

And the United States is happy to help. We've trained -- or helped train more than 7,000 Rwanda peacekeepers. We've provided more than \$17 million to equip and transport these forces into Darfur. The President mentioned something that I agree with, and that is, the role of the United States and others is to help African nations deal with African problems.

And here's an example of a collaborative effort to help solve what our nation has labeled genocide. The United States is making \$100 million available to assist African nations willing to step forward for the cause of peace in Darfur, and up to \$12 million of those will help you, Mr. President, do the job that you want to do in Darfur. The United States appreciates the commitments to help bring peace to the -- to Darfur made by other African nations, as well, such as Ghana, Senegal, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Burkina Faso and Malawi.

And my message to others nations is, join with the President and help us get this problem solved once and for all. And we will help. We will help through sanctions. We will help through pressure. And we'll help provide money to get these forces in in an effective manner.

The United States and Rwanda are cooperating to assure long-term stability in eastern Congo. We spent a lot of time talking about that today. I appreciate your guidance and your advice, Mr. President. I hope you could tell from our discussions that Secretary Rice and Jendayi Frazer, Ambassador Frazer, and other people in my administration takes this issue as seriously as you do. Last month we helped broker a peace agreement between the Congolese government and several armed groups. We also helped broker an agreement between the Congolese government and the Rwanda government.

And now we've got to make the agreement stick. It's one thing to agree on something. The most important thing is to get results for the agreement. And that's what we discussed today, on how to help bring peace to this part of the world.

We also talked about economies. Look, this bilateral investment treaty is important because it sends a signal to U.S. companies that they ought to consider investing in Rwanda. The President wisely understands that capital investment is much more effective in the long term than just grant money. And he understands the creation of jobs happens when people are able to attract capital.

And so I was pleased to sign this investment treaty with you, Mr. President. It's a sign of your leadership, and it's a sign that you and I both understand that an agreement such as this will provide legal protections for investors in both our countries, including non-discriminatory treatment, respect for private property, transparency and governance, and the international arbitration of disputes. In other words, this treaty is a way of saying not only is this a good place to look, but when you invest, there will be certain guarantees -- not a guarantee of profit, not a guarantee of return on investment, but a guarantee you'll be treated fairly.

And finally, Mr. President, thank you for mentioning our efforts to help you fight disease. You know, people say, why would you want to come to Africa at this point in your presidency? Because I'm on a mission of mercy, that's why.

I want the American people to understand that when it comes to saving lives, it's in our national interest. I firmly believe that, Mr. President. It's in our security interest to help alleviate areas of the world from hopelessness. It's in our moral interest to help save lives. And that's precisely what we're doing, thanks to your leadership and help. This program wouldn't be effective if your government wasn't committed.

And secondly, I'm frankly not interested in, you know, spending taxpayers' money on governments that end up pocketing the money and not helping citizens live. It's one of the reasons I've come to Rwanda, is the record here is quite extraordinary when it comes to saving lives.

It is irresponsible for nations to whom much has been given to sit on the sidelines when young babies are dying because of mosquito bites. And so the United States isn't on the sideline, Mr. President; we're right in the middle of the action with you, and proudly so.

The Malaria Initiative has helped distribute 450,000 bed nets in Rwanda. It's not a very sophisticated strategy; as a matter of fact, just a simple strategy -- but when implemented, saves lives. And it starts with having bed nets for citizens throughout your country. And we're just getting started. And I want to thank you for your leadership on this issue.

We've set a goal to help provide indoor spraying in more than 350,000 homes, and helped provide more than 900,000 treatments of life-saving medicines. In my state of Texas, we say, here's a problem, and we're getting after it. That's exactly what's happening here, and all across this continent, Mr. President, and we're proud to be your partner in a mission of -- that is a mission of the deepest sense of humanity.

Same with HIV/AIDS. Our Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, PEPFAR, has helped deliver antiretrovirals to 44,000 Rwandans. We've helped deliver services to nearly 650,000 pregnant women, to help prevent mother-to-child HIV transmission. This is a good beginning, like a good record, but it should only be viewed as a beginning. And therefore our United States Congress must double our PEPFAR initiative from \$15 billion over five years to \$30 billion over five years, quit the squabbling, and get the bill passed.

Finally, we'll be sending the Peace Corps back into Rwanda, Mr. President; first time it's been here since 1993. These are good, decent folks, coming to your country simply to help -- help people realize their God-given talents and realize the blessings of a peaceful, hopeful life.

So I'm proud to be with you. I want to thank you for your record, thank you for being a personal friend. (Applause.)

Q My question goes to both of you, Presidents. 2008 is a critical year, especially politically, because here in Rwanda we are going to be having parliament elections in September, and in the U.S. it's going

to be presidential elections. Presidents, what do you see -- how good are your chances to your respective parties? (Laughter.) And if you wish, you can even -- your answers can include what you think are going to be the challenges.

PRESIDENT BUSH: Yes, thanks. This American press has been trying to get me to comment on this for, like, a couple of months. Why don't we start -- Republicans will win. (Laughter.) Whoever is the President must understand that this mission on the continent of Africa is in our nation's interests. But I think my party's nominee will win. Don't be listening to all these pundits here -- you know, half of them sitting right here. (Laughter.) You know, they -- the issues in America are, who is going to fight terror and protect their homeland, and who is going to keep people's taxes low to make sure that the economy is -- grows. Really the issues. And so there's a lot of noise, a lot of movement, but things change rapidly in American politics. It will eventually get down to two people, and then the choice will become very clear. And we'll win.

I don't know about your politics, Mr. President. (Laughter.) It's probably best not to comment too specifically about it.

PRESIDENT KAGAME: President, we have something in common, and that is succeed in what we are doing. So my party will, I think, win these elections, on the basis of how this government and central to it, has performed well; has uplifted the living standards of our people. They have protected -- given protection and security and brought in stability to the -- this country, and restored the rights of every individual citizen of this country, and economic progress is being registered. I think the people of this country will be wanting more of what we are doing.

My prediction is that it will be fine for my party, and we'll do our best to continue the agenda of development in this country. And I think that citizens of this country are willing to give us the chance to continue solving them the way we have been solved. And the challenges are normally just in terms of organization, and it takes time, takes money, takes -- but those are easy to overcome. So I think, Mr. President, we're on the same path of succeeding.

PRESIDENT BUSH: That's good.

Q Mr. President, can you tell us what it means for the United States that -- for the U.S. policy, that Castro has said he's going to step down? And how is that going to change things for the U.S.?

PRESIDENT BUSH: Yes, thanks. I heard the reports, several ways -- one, reporters yelling it at me, and then of course I was briefed. Not saying you were yelling it at me; I'm saying --

Q I wouldn't --

PRESIDENT BUSH: -- no, no, of course not, you were very polite. More important -- you know, the question really should be, what does this mean for the people in Cuba? They're the ones who suffered under Fidel Castro. They're the ones who were put in prison because of their beliefs. They're the ones who have been denied their right to live in a free society. So I view this as a period of transition; that -- and it should be the beginning of the democratic transition for the people in Cuba.

There will be an interesting debate that will arise eventually. There will be some who say, let's promote stability. Of course, in the meantime, political prisoners will rot in prison, and the human condition will remain pathetic in many cases.

I believe that the change from Fidel Castro ought to begin a period of democratic transition. First step, of course, will be for people put in these prisons to be let out. I've met with many of the -- or some of the families of prisoners. It just breaks your heart to realize that people have been thrown in prison because they dared speak out.

The international community should work with the Cuban people to begin to build institutions that are necessary for democracy. And eventually, this transition ought to lead to free and fair elections -- and I mean free and I mean fair, not these kind of staged elections that the Castro brothers try to foist off as being true democracy.

And we're going to help -- the United States will help the people of Cuba realize the blessings of liberty. And so those are my initial thoughts.

Q Thank you so much. I'm from the Reuters news wire.

PRESIDENT BUSH: Yes. Wait a minute, back to back -- wait a minute, this is a little -- (laughter) -- there seems to be a monopoly here. (Laughter.)

Q Mr. President, you made what I would describe as an emotional talk, or speech, on the genocides of Rwanda, especially when you were visiting the memorial. But unfortunately, the perpetrators of the killings are still holed up in several parts of the country -- also several parts of the world, especially the Congo. And you just mentioned that we need to see results being done -- results being seen, and the civil agreement has been made. So I'm wondering, Mr. President, what is the U.S. going to do about these perpetrators that remain at large, and are walking freely?

And then my other brief question for President Kagame is, what are the details of -- can you give us some details about the investment treaty you've just signed with President Bush? What's contained in this treaty, and what's so special about it? Thank you.

PRESIDENT BUSH: Just couple of reactions. Thank you very much for that. To specifically answer your question, we support U.N. security sanctions -- U.N. Security Council resolutions targeting those who perpetuated the violence, and have made our position publicly known, and we'll continue to support.

Secondly, the museum was a profound -- had a profound effect on me. You can't help but walk in there and recognize the -- you know, that evil does exist and, in this case, in such brutal form that babies had their skulls smashed. And so the question is, what does the world do to prevent these kinds of incidences? And I came away with two lessons -- I'm sure there's many more. One was, we've got to work to prevent it from happening in the first place; when we see issues, that people need to pay attention to the warning signs, and prevent crises like this from happening.

We're obviously trying to prevent such a crisis from happening in Kenya. Condi Rice briefed the President and me on her meetings yesterday, and we strongly support Kofi Annan's efforts there. Now I'm not suggesting that anything close in Kenya has happened -- is going to happen -- anything close to what happened here is going to Kenya. But I am suggesting there's some warning signs that the international community needs to pay attention to, and we're paying attention to it, as is Kofi Annan; and I know the AU will, as well.

And secondly, that when you -- when the people decide to respond, that you go in with enough force that has the proper mandate. In a situation such as that, you don't want to send people in who are observers. You need to send people in who will help deal with the situation. That's why the mandate in Darfur is very important, and we're pleased with the mandate in Darfur. Now we just got to get people in place to be able to save lives.

But those are the lessons I left with. The other thing I came away from, just so you know, is how amazing your country has performed, given the horror of the genocide. I mean, it is -- I just can't imagine what it would have been like to be a citizen who witnessed such horrors, and then had to try to gather themselves up and live a hopeful life. And so, thanks for your question.

PRESIDENT KAGAME: For your question you asked about the treaty we've just signed. I think central to that treaty, and very importantly, is the fact that it's an invitation to the investors, and information that when they come here, their investments will be protected, will be in good hands. And when they are in Rwanda, they should be able to reap their returns. Of course what that means, it means that Rwandans benefit from the capital flows that will be there. They will benefit from technologies that come with such investments. It benefits our laws of employment of a citizen of this country, and the skills that will be applied also, along with that.

And it's also a commitment by the President and his administration to seeing investors from United States come to Rwanda, and it's also an assurance to them that they will be standing with them, as they come to make investments here, invest adequately. The most important thing to talk about will be this bilateral treaty.

Q Thank you. Mr. President, Bill Clinton came here and said he regretted that he wasn't able to do more to stop the genocide here. You have seen the memorial here today, and I'm wondering, what would you tell your successor about America's obligations and also its ability to stop genocide?

And to you, Mr. President, did you raise the issue of Darfur with President Bush? Did you ask him for any further commitment by the United States? And if so, what was it? Thank you.

PRESIDENT BUSH: I would say it's like -- as I explained to this fellow here -- that one of the lessons of the genocide in Rwanda was to take some of the early warnings signs seriously.

Secondly, a clear lesson I learned in the museum was that outside forces that tend to divide people up inside their country are unbelievably counterproductive. In other words, people came from other countries -- I guess you'd call them colonialists -- and they pitted one group of people against another.

And an early warning sign was -- and it's hard to have seen it, I readily admit, but I'm talking earlier than 1994, and earlier than the '90s -- was the fact that it become a habit to divide people based upon -- you know, in this case, whether they were Tutsi or Hutu, which eventually led to exploitation.

Secondly, I would tell my successor that the United States can play a very constructive role. I would urge the President not to feel like U.S. solutions should be imposed upon African leaders. I would urge the President to treat our -- the leaders in Africa as partners. In other words, don't come to the continent feeling guilty about anything. Come to the continent feeling confident that with some help, people can solve their problems.

You know, as I told you yesterday, I made a decision not to unilaterally send troops into the Sudan. And I still believe it was the right decision, but having done that, if you're a problem solver, you put yourself at the mercy of the decisions of others, in this case, the United Nations. And I'm well known to have spoken out by the slowness of the United Nations. It is -- seems very bureaucratic to me, particularly with people suffering. And one reason I'm so proud to be standing here with this President is that he didn't wait. He said, we want to help. And so we're trying to get forces in, and we'll help.

The third thing is, is that the U.S. will provide -- you know, can provide money and help and training; and we have trained their forces -- helped train their forces. They're good forces to begin with, and they just need a little added value, and we helped.

So I guess the answer to your question -- it's kind of a long-winded approach to take problems seriously before they become acute, and then recognize that there's going to be a slowness in the response if you rely upon international organizations.

Q Are you worried that you might have regrets?

PRESIDENT BUSH: No, I made a decision to stand by. I'm now worried that the rest of the world needs to move as -- expeditiously, quickly. Therefore we're, as I've told you in this little address here, we've got \$100 million to help move people into Darfur. And nor am I regretful of the fact that we put serious sanctions on leaders in Sudan and companies owned by certain actors in Sudan. It was the right thing to do.

I am trying to get other people to join. As you know, getting a universal sanction regime can be difficult. People sometimes have got different interests, different commercial interests. Our position is, is that human suffering ought to be -- preempt commercial interests. And so I'm comfortable with the decision I made. I'm not comfortable with how quickly the response has been.

And nevertheless, there is a -- we'll continue dealing with the issue. Every stop I made, I've talked about Darfur, and the President talked about it, too. I've talked so long you probably forgot her question to you. (Laughter.)

PRESIDENT KAGAME: I still remember, President. Certainly, we discussed Darfur as we discussed other problem areas, especially on our continent. And I do want to agree with the President: problems are there. But I think the best approach is indeed to have Africans develop their capacity to deal with

these problems. And more importantly, as the President said, we probably also have to invest our time and even resources in the monitoring and also preventing problems coming up, as they keep coming up in different places.

But it is important to understand that indeed, today we'll have Darfur; maybe tomorrow there will be another problem area, God forbid. But it's important that these programs are not to be seen as if they have to be resolved, attended to, by the United States. They must be attended to by the international community. They must also be attended to by people, if it is in Africa, by Africans. Primarily they must develop this capacity, and they should be supported to develop this capacity so that we can prevent and we are prepared to prevent and you should be able to cope with these challenges, resolving the problems.

So I think the approach taken by President Bush were realistic, in the sense that you're so -- do not want to see every problem, the United States being called upon to be the answer to that problem -- and of course we -- the backlash, also, in the sense that -- at the same time, they also start blaming the United States, that they are rushing everywhere, solving problems and, of course, reading through that, to mean they have other interests and so on and so forth.

So I think that will -- way of helping the people to solve their own problems, but, of course, with the support of the United States, with its huge capabilities in different areas. And walking together with the rest of the international community is perhaps more important than just blaming the United States, saying, "Why didn't you go in and solve the problem?" The problems and the solutions for those problems should not be taken away from -- for their responsibilities over their action; not be taken away from places where they're taking place, and the people in those places.

I think that is the best way I could -- but we did talk about that, and we did talk about our own contribution, and how that can be enhanced. And the President is willing to support us -- support has always been coming, so that we continue to move forward with this.

END 12:55 P.M. (Local)

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