
Remarks at the Foreign Affairs Brain Trust on Africa

By

John D. Negroponte
Deputy Secretary of State

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I'm delighted to have this opportunity to discuss what I believe will be one of this Administration's enduring legacies. When President Bush took office in 2001, Nelson Mandela's dream of an Africa "in peace with itself" seemed, at best, a distant vision. Millions across the continent were falling victim to civil wars and infectious diseases. Millions more seemed trapped in desperate poverty by corruption, tyranny, and economic misrule.

Today, that's beginning to change. A new generation of African leaders is stepping forward and re-claiming responsibility for their continent's future. They are meeting their own challenges, creating opportunity for their people, and leading their nations into the global economy.

And so we too have changed our approach to Africa.

We have recognized that Africa's leaders deserve our support, not our pity; so we have discarded the paternalistic notion of development that treats African countries as charity cases.

We have recognized that Africa's nations will succeed only when Africa's leaders are using their natural resources to invest in their greatest resources: the talent and creativity of Africa's people.

We are treating African leaders as equal partners in building peace, combating disease, expanding prosperity, and improving governance. We are supporting them in setting clear goals and producing measurable results. And we are reinforcing success by supporting the most promising developing nations—nations whose governments invest in health and education, fight corruption, embrace markets and trade, and govern justly.

We have matched this new approach with a renewed commitment to Africa's development. Since 2001, this Administration has worked with our G-8 [forum of top economic world powers] partners to relieve some \$34 billion in African debt; and, with strong bipartisan support in Congress, we have nearly quadrupled assistance to Africa as part of the largest expansion of foreign aid since the Marshall Plan.

Like the Marshall Plan, our commitment to Africa stems from both our ideals and our interests. It reflects what's best about the American people: our compassion, our generosity, and our fundamental belief in the dignity of every human being. And it reflects a more sobering truth as well—that our success and security increasingly depend on conditions in distant lands and that we are at greater risk if Africa is a place where states are failing, where extremist ideologies are fostered, and where violence and instability spread across borders.

In short, it is in America's interest that Africa succeed—not just in the narrow sense of resolving specific crises, but in the broad sense of building institutions and adopting policies that sustain growth, freedom, and justice. No outside actor can do this for Africa. Africans must lead their continent to success. And increasingly, they are.

Our role is to support their leadership. We have launched initiatives, such as the Millennium Challenge Account [MCC], that support development plans devised by responsible African governments. The MCC not only expands assistance; it changes the way it's delivered, supporting leaders who deliver results by

governing justly, investing in people, and encouraging economic freedom. The 10 MCC compacts we have with African nations, which together are worth nearly \$4.3 billion, are supporting projects tailored to individual countries' specific needs—from expanding educational opportunities for girls in Burkina Faso to improving transportation and energy and water supplies in Tanzania to strengthening legal institutions in Benin. What these projects all have in common is that they are laying the foundation for sustainable growth. They are also encouraging other nations, who see the benefits of MCC compacts, to move ahead with the tough economic, political, and social reforms necessary to compete for compacts of their own.

The United States is also partnering with Africa's leaders and people to fight modern scourges like HIV/AIDS and malaria—some of the greatest threats to Africa's success. In 2003, when President Bush announced the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, or PEPFAR, fewer than 50,000 people in sub-Saharan Africa were receiving anti-retroviral treatment. Today, thanks to PEPFAR's \$18.8 billion commitment, that figure is nearly 1.7 million. PEPFAR has allowed nearly 200,000 children in Africa to be born free of HIV and is on track to meet its ambitious five year goals of treating two million people, preventing seven million new infections, and caring for 10 million people affected by HIV/AIDS. We are grateful that in July Congress reauthorized PEPFAR for up to \$48 billion over the next five years. That additional commitment will save millions more lives and build critical health-care capacity in partner nations.

Partnerships are also at the heart of the President's Malaria Initiative [PMI].

Launched in 2005, the initiative commits \$1.2 billion over five years to cutting malaria-related deaths in half in 15 African countries. It is estimated the initiative has already reached more than 25 million people, and data shows malaria rates are dropping in many parts of Africa. In Zanzibar, the percentage of infants infected with malaria has fallen from about 20 percent to below 1 percent.

Of course, for all the success of PEPFAR and PMI, there are still millions more lives to save. We urge our G-8 partners to fulfill their pledge to match our commitments to fighting HIV/AIDS and malaria.

We also must continue to address the ongoing crisis of hunger in Africa—a crisis that is growing worse in places due to rising commodity prices. Feeding the hungry is a moral calling for a nation as blessed as ours, and the United States is leading the world by providing over \$5.5 billion in 2008 and 2009 to fight global hunger. Our ultimate goal, however, must be to support African countries in feeding their own people. So we urge Congress to support President Bush's proposal to use a portion of our assistance money to purchase crops directly from farmers in Africa, rather than just shipping all food assistance from the developed world.

Our partnership with Africa is still broader than this picture suggests. More than assistance, Africans want our trade and investment because they increasingly recognize that those are the engines of long-term growth. One of the most powerful incentives for trade with Africa is the African Growth and Opportunity Act [AGOA], which we thank Congress for extending. Since AGOA came into effect in 2001, exports from AGOA-nations to the United States increased more than six-fold to \$50 billion; and U.S. exports to sub-Saharan Africa have doubled. Even when the energy trade is set aside, the results are still magnificent. In creating new trading opportunities for African businesses, AGOA has created tens of thousands of jobs and brought millions of dollars of much-needed investment to Africa. After a long period of economic stagnation, sub-Saharan Africa is growing—by nearly 7 percent in only the past year. Congress and the next administration should look for opportunities to reduce barriers to trade and investment in support of Africa's growth. One good step would be to approve the U.S.-Rwanda Bilateral Investment Treaty that President Bush signed during his recent trip to Africa.

Rwanda today is a symbol of Africa's potential—an example of what's possible when nations embrace

peace, strengthen democracy, and pursue trade. But we also remember the Rwanda of 1994. Our vision of free, prosperous and democratic African nations is not possible without peace; and so since 2001, this Administration has been active in facilitating an end to violent conflicts in Africa. Through the Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance Program, we have built regional peacekeeping capacity by training over 45,000 peacekeepers since 2005, many of whom are now deployed around Africa. Over the past ten years, their presence has contributed to the calming of seven conflicts that had plagued the continent. Now, we must remain vigilant to consolidate peace.

We must remain vigilant in supporting peace in Sudan through the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which ended horrific decades of civil war. The North-South Civil War and now the violence and atrocities in Darfur have inflicted untold suffering on the Sudanese. This Administration brokered an end to the North-South war in 2005, and we keep pressure on both parties to move ahead with the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, especially in the oil-rich region of Abyei. In Darfur, we continue to press for the full deployment of the UN-AU [United Nations-African Union] peacekeeping force, UNAMID [United Nations – African Union Mission in Darfur]. The President’s Special Envoy, Ambassador Rich Williamson, is working to accelerate the deployment of UNAMID and encourage donor contributions, like airlift provisions for peacekeepers into Darfur.

We must remain vigilant in supporting reconciliation in Kenya. The explosion of ethnic violence following Kenya’s closely-contested election last December shocked the world. Kenya calmed only after intense engagement by President Bush, Secretary Rice, and Assistant Secretary Frazer to support Kofi Annan’s facilitation efforts with Kenyan leaders and civil society to find common ground for compromise and to create conditions for a coalition government. We continue to support Kenya’s efforts to achieve lasting reconciliation.

We must remain vigilant in the Horn of Africa—where long-standing conflicts still simmer between Ethiopia and Eritrea and violence continues in Somalia. There, we are working to ensure that all parties fulfill their pledge in the Djibouti Agreement to end violence. And in New York, we are working to secure approval and deployment of a UN-mandated peacekeeping force to bring peace and stability to the Horn of Africa.

And of course, we must remain vigilant in supporting a future of peace and progress for the long-suffering people of Zimbabwe. Zimbabweans have lived too long under Robert Mugabe’s tyranny; we hope the agreement signed on September 15 at long last will give Zimbabweans the opportunity to live in a well-governed state, free from fear, violence, and intimidation. It remains to be seen when and how the agreement will be honored; but the United States will continue to work with regional leaders, the Southern African Development Community, and African Union to foster democratic transition, empower civil society, and meet urgent humanitarian needs in Zimbabwe. We will be watching Zimbabwe closely in coming months. If Mugabe demonstrates a clear commitment to reform, we are prepared to lift existing sanctions against him and his regime. However, in the absence of any concrete reforms, we are also prepared to impose additional sanctions.

The challenging situations in countries like Sudan, Somalia, and Zimbabwe tragically remind us Africa is still very much a continent in transition—a continent at once striving towards a better future but still haunted by ghosts from a troubled past. For too long, the developed world accepted violence, poverty, and tyranny as facts of life in Africa. We tolerated “there” things we would never accept “here.” But in the past decade, Africans have rejected this soft bigotry of low expectations. They have elected responsible leaders and pursued tough reforms to steer their nations towards freedom and justice, prosperity and peace.

When this Administration leaves office in January, Africa will be much better-off than it was only eight years ago. This is thanks to Africa’s leaders and people but also to our unprecedented new levels and kinds of support for them. The partnerships and programs we put in place are a foundation to support

Africa's continuing journey for peace, prosperity, and freedom. And it is a foundation on which the next administration can, and should, build.