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More Than Humanitarianism: A Strategic U.S. Approach to Africa

We created this independent task force a year ago to look at issues of Africa's importance. It was significant that we did this during 2005 because there was a great deal of international attention focused on Africa that year. Tony Blair, the United Kingdom's prime minister, had created a commission on Africa that produced a very substantial report that was to be a prelude to the meeting of the G-8 leaders in July. He had made Africa the top agenda item for that meeting. Leading up to that there was organized, by two prominent rock singers, Bono whom I think everybody knows, and Bob Geldof, who some people know from long ago, what was called the Live 8 concert that was supposed to focus on ending poverty in Africa and influence the meeting of the G-8. A lot was focused on, a lot was accomplished at the G-8, a lot was done, but we felt something very important was missing in all this, particularly in the way these issues were being portrayed to the public.

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Let me start with the Live 8 concert—and this is not a criticism of the people behind it, who are deeply concerned humanitarians. That concert had venues around the world. As many as two billion people watched or participated in it, and I watched that concert on television throughout several hours. What struck me about the concert was that it was dedicated to ending poverty in Africa, but not a single African leader, statesman, doctor, nurse, community worker or health worker ever appeared on those stages. It was Africa, that poor devastated continent that we somehow have to do something for, without any impression that anything was being done by Africans in addressing all of these issues. And that's a misrepresentation of what's going on on the continent.

The second thing that was missed, in our view, was that with the focus on humanitarian concerns, which is not only important but legitimate and one of the strengths of American character, the impression was that it is [the primary], if not the only, interest that the United States has on the continent. The combination of those two things—of not paying attention to what's happening in Africa itself and looking upon Africa as only a humanitarian interest—that meant little by little, step by step, our concern with Africa morphed into treating Africa as a charity case. When you treat a continent or a person as a charity case, you're not treating them as a partner and you're not necessarily treating them as someone important in a variety of ways.

What we set out to do in this report was certainly not to turn away from those humanitarian concerns, but to point out that for a number of reasons Africa was becoming increasingly important to the United States in a wide variety of ways. And that when we recognize that, we have to go back and look not only at those issues but even the way we treat the humanitarian issues.

What we said in the report is that there are some things that are new or newly emerging that make Africa more important. One of them is energy. The United States now imports 15 percent of its energy from Africa. Africa is going to be doubling its output over this decade of oil and is increasingly becoming a major supplier of liquefied natural gas. We estimate that within a decade we may be importing as much oil from Africa as we now do from the Middle East. Africa is contributing a major part of the new oil coming on the world's market. Now, much of that is along the coast of West Africa, in the Gulf of Guinea area—Nigeria and Angola are the big producers but other countries are coming on stream—small countries like Equatorial Guinea Sao Tome and Principe. Because most of this oil is offshore, these coastal or even island countries have become, or will become, significant producers. But it's also a highly unstable area, and if we learn something out of the Middle East it is that we have to be concerned with what happens to all the money that goes into the oil producing states if we are to be concerned not only with the long-term supply but with the stability of those ar-

east. U.S. policy has not really focused on that to any significant extent.

Related to that, we could see that Africa is becoming a much more competitive area. We used China as the leading

the Chinese come to Africa, they've been involved in Africa for a long time, but now they come to Africa with what one person has called the "total package." They come with technology, particularly the oil sector, but in other sectors they

come with cash and they come with their seat on the U.N. Security Council. What they say to African governments, and this is wonderful to hear from a Marxist government, they say, "Look, business is business and we're only here for business. We don't care about your governance, we're not going to put conditions on human rights, we're not going to worry about what's going on inside your country, that's what Western guys do. We're here to bid on the

lion people out of their homes and committing a lot of terrible things—a series of acts that the United States has called "genocide" and the U.N. has said are genocidal acts and crimes against humanity.

Western companies left the oil industry in Sudan a long time ago because of these kinds of things. China and India and Malaysia came in. China now owns 40 percent of the Sudanese oil industry, imports seven percent of its oil from the Sudan, and has effectively blocked any sanctions against the government in Sudan in response to the situation in Darfur. The U.N. has passed resolution after resolution on Darfur but has never been able to put any teeth into them because of the threat of a veto from China. And China is similarly a major supplier and supporter of Zimbabwe, where a number of serious human rights violations have taken place. So that raises an important policy issue. But there is also a subtler complication that we have to address, and that is over the issue of governance and transparency. There's a growing body of international attention within these countries as well as internationally [looking] to bring transparency to the oil sector and the mineral sector and to have all the figures out in public and be sure that the benefits are going to the people in those countries.

One of the countries that is badly in need of such reform is Angola, the second largest oil producer in Africa. The international community was working with Angola. Angola has just come out of a long, terrible civil war and the donor community said, "We are prepared to have a donors' conference to help Angola through its post-conflict reconstruction. You need to have an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which has to focus on transparency in the oil sector." With the negotiations going on, China then came along and made a bid on the oil block in Angola and sweetened the pot with a \$2 billion

example in the report, although it's not just China. It's India, it's Malaysia, it's South Korea, it's Brazil, and increasingly, European countries. Because the demand for natural resources as economies grow, particularly the Asian economy which is growing so rapidly, has become keen. China represents a major important class of player on the African continent and it poses a couple of issues for the United States. Obviously, they are legitimate competitors, they have a right just like everybody else to go after oil or timber or copper or other resources and buy them. Indeed, the demands of China and India and other rapidly growing economies in Asia have benefited Africa because commodity prices are much higher and Africans are earning more. But

oil. Produce the oil, and make a deal with you," and that's a very welcome approach for many countries that are tired of all the conditionality.

But they take it a step further: they're willing to protect what we like to call "rogue regimes," regimes that are serious violators of human rights, and nowhere is that more prominent than in Sudan. Sudan, as you know, has come through a long, long period of civil war. A big civil war between the north and the south is just coming to an end, and in the last couple of years, a rebellion broke out in the western part of Sudan, Darfur. The government's response to that rebellion was the arming of a number of local militias and driving two mil-



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soft loan. The Angolan finance minister a few weeks ago in Washington said to us, “You know what? We don’t need the IMF and we don’t need the donors’ conference and we don’t even need debt re-scheduling, thank you very much. We have the Chinese, [and] the Indians are coming in with a similar loan.” These are all legitimate activities on the part of competitors, but they do raise important policy issues for us if we are going to press for democratization and for transparency. It’s also a difficult competition for our companies because what China can do that we don’t do is to combine different packages. They can bid on oil but also agree to build a road or build a refinery—the South Koreans just did the same thing in Nigeria—and our companies are not structured to do that. So, it’s a serious area of competition and that has to affect our own policies.

A second area we looked at was terrorism. Now, terrorism in Africa struck in 1998. You will recall that Al Qaeda blew up our embassies in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar-es-Salaam. We know there are a series of terrorist cells down the east coast of Africa. We now have a combined joint task force of 1,200 military trying to intercept the flow of people and arms and money down the coast. It’s a very difficult task. Our counter-terrorist people are worried about West Africa. We’ve sent Green Berets to train people in that area to try to improve border security. But what is ahead of us is the question of whether there is an environment in major countries like Nigeria for terrorist cells to take hold. And yet our response so far has been largely military. I don’t criticize our European command for taking the initiative in this area and initiating a number of military-oriented programs, but it’s not sufficient because without political oversight military programs alone can get you into a lot of difficulties.

I’ll just give you an example from the European command programs in the western part of Africa. They were working with the countries in the region between the Sahara and the higher vegetation zones in Africa, and training various militaries in the area, and that included countries with some very questionable

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human rights practices – Mauritania, for one, and Chad for another. The situation in Mauritania was that the government was overthrown and we found ourselves on the wrong side of the political situation there. And what we are saying in the report is that we need a broader and more politically-directed aspect to our counterterrorist program in Africa.

A third area that we focused on was HIV/AIDS. HIV/AIDS isn’t new and it’s been a major problem in Africa for some time, but it’s reaching a more critical stage because the bulk of infections in sub-Sahara Africa took place in the 1990s and the time line of this disease, between infection and full-blown AIDS is roughly a decade. Even though last year two million people died from HIV/AIDS, we are really just at the beginning of what is going to be a rising death rate across Africa and in other places of the world where this is spreading. Now, a lot has been done on HIV/AIDS in the last de-

cade and in the last few years in particular. The United States can take quite a bit of pride in the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief which pledged \$15 billion over five years towards HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria, and galvanized an international response that has jumped the amount being spent on this from \$1 billion a year to \$8 billion a year.

The problem for UNAID is that the requirements are \$15 billion and it will go up to \$22 billion in two more years. What we’re saying in the report is we really haven’t begun to face the full dimension of this disease and all its ramifications, both social and political, as well as in our own commitment to try and address the pandemic through the health factor.

Added to all these issues is the issue of democratization, which is a major part of U.S. foreign policy, and the resulting conflicts, which have their own down side to American interests. Africa is democratizing faster than any other continent in the world. Twenty years ago if you went to a meeting of the Organization of African Unity you’d see a lot of military guys sitting around the table. Today, 31 countries out of the 48 sub-Saharan countries in Africa are rated by Freedom House as either free or partially free. Most African governments are elected and the current regional organization, the African Union, will not seat a government that comes to power by non-constitutional means.

African leaders have taken the initiative to reverse coups in Togo, in Sao Tome and Principe, and have worked to restore constitutional rule in Mauritania. The Africans have developed the program called the New Partnership for African Development, which emphasizes democracy, good governance, and sound economic policies. It has instituted a program of peer review, which is unique. The majority of African countries have signed up for this. A review takes place by a

group of experts who come in and evaluate the countries in terms of these principles of good governance, democracy, human rights and good economic policies. After they write their report the government has to go before the African Union and defend itself on these reports and agree to make some improvements. This system is still in its early stages, but what it represents some dynamism on the continent, dealing with governance, dealing with economic issues, dealing with health and agriculture, all of which offers us partners with which to work on these various interests that I've mentioned, whether it's energy or terrorism or AIDS or other issues.

The title of the report is rather interesting. *More Than Humanitarianism: A Strategic Approach to U.S. Policy Toward Africa*. We had a long argument over the word "strategy" in this task force. Because people who deal with foreign policy a lot, when you say you've got a strategy they say, "Well, that means you can't have more than three priorities—four at most. Or are there only four countries in Africa you're going to work on?" And those of us who spent a lot of time on Africa say, first of all there are a lot of issues that have to be dealt with because they're interrelated. If you're dealing with HIV/AIDS or economic development or trade or potential for terrorism or conflict you have to deal with the totality of them; you can't simply select. It's a trap to say you're going to deal with three or four major countries and not deal with others.

I can find a country that had absolutely no strategic or historical importance to the United States. It's called Rwanda, and by ignoring the genocide in Rwanda we've paid the price, not only a moral price but also the instability that has spread throughout central Africa and still ripples out from that period. So we couldn't quite come down to three or four priorities. Finally the compromise in the report was that we wouldn't use the word

"strategy." We would say a more comprehensive policy. Everybody then said "fine" and we signed off, we sent it up to the president of the Council on Foreign Relations, Richard Haass, and he came up with *A Strategic Approach to U.S. Policy in Africa*. I was very pleased.

If you take Africa seriously as a continent of importance to the United States in a wide variety of ways, then we have to look at what our humanitarian response has been. It's been very generous; it's been very humane. But if you look at the trends of foreign assistance to Africa—they have been going up fairly steadily over the last ten years—we find that roughly half of that foreign aid is emergency aid—aid to people in dire straits, whether from famine or wars. And that's a proper kind of response, but if you look at the levels of investments in long-term growth and development you find that the figures are fairly flat.

I spent half my career in the foreign aid program. Recently, there was a report out from a group in Washington called the International Food Policy Research Institute on what it would take to modernize agriculture in Africa and there's a long list of things to do to overcome the serious problems of famine and agricultural production. And I looked at that list. I said, "Gee. That's what we used to do in the 1970s and 1980s," but in the 1990s the World Bank and the United States reduced our aid to agricultural development in Africa by 90 percent. Are we surprised that there are famines still in Africa? That technology isn't being developed? That people aren't being trained? Now we're moving back into agriculture.

What we're saying is that we have to have a serious program for development in Africa that is fixed with key sectors over ten, 20 years and that's when the success will come. But it's beyond that, because if we do as the G-8 agreed last July, to double aid to Africa—and

President Bush says the United States would double any aid by 2010—then the question is how do you avoid aid dependency? Already a number of countries in Africa receive over half their budget in foreign aid. Uganda receives 55 percent of its budget from foreign aid. So where are we going to be in 2010 with countries even more dependent? That's where we come to the necessity of opening the door to integrate Africa much more into the world's economy and to give it opportunities for trade and development that will produce real economic growth.

If you look you realize that the world's trading system is very strongly biased against agriculture. The United States, Europe, and Japan and South Korea do the same. The United States and Europe spend \$350 billion a year subsidizing agriculture and the World Bank says that \$270 billion of that is trade discouraging—that is, it either encourages dumping of commodities on the world's market to undercut farmers, or we have terrorists and various other predictions that inhibit developing countries selling agricultural products to the

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United States. And yet two-thirds of people in Africa live in the rural sector. The initial areas of growth and opportunity may come out of agriculture.

That isn't the only problem holding back Africa's integration into the world's economy, but it's clearly an important one, and again it comes back to: if Africa's important we have to face up to the very difficult political issue in the United

States of how we conduct agriculture policy, how we protect our world sector and at what cost to the farmers in the poorest countries of the world and in those areas where terrorism is actively a threat.

What we're saying, then, is that to have a comprehensive program in Africa you have to do a number of things. I come back to the energy area. We've recommended a U.S.-Africa energy forum, which would work on the issues of protection, security, development, and transparency in the oil sector and among the countries in that area. We recommend that we have a more serious dialogue with countries like China about policy in Africa, and I'm happy to say that that has begun. For the first time, we have put Africa on the agenda of the U.S.-China dialogue. The assistant secretary of state for Africa just returned from the first meeting in Beijing and the Chinese, I have to say, in response to this report, for the first time have approached the Council on Foreign Relations and said, "Yes, we're ready to talk about China's policy in Africa." That kind of dialogue is necessary to get some more common ground with the Chinese.

We need to have a more broadly based terrorism program that has a political and economic, social and agricultural dimension, and that means increasing our staff capabilities on the continent.

Let's talk about Nigeria, a country I served in. Nigeria is the most populated country in Africa; it has close to 160 million people; half are Muslims. There are more Muslims in Nigeria than there are in Egypt. It's a country that Osama bin

There are more Muslims in Nigeria than in Egypt. It's a country that Osama bin Laden has said was to be one of the targets for Al Qaeda. [Yet] we have no Americans in the embassy who speak the language for northern Nigeria

Laden has said was to be one of the targets for Al Qaeda. We have no conflict in northern Nigeria; we have no Americans in the embassy who speak the language for northern Nigeria. And, by the way, regarding the troubled oil sector in Nigeria, we also don't have a consulate in the oil sector of Nigeria. My colleague and friend, John Campbell, who's the ambassador to Nigeria—I feel sorry for him because I don't know how he can do his job with such a limited amount of staff and information and outreach in a country that big and that important. And you can multiply that across the continent. If we're serious we have to make those kinds of investments.

Let me just conclude on one theme. We should never overestimate our influence. I think in general the key in Africa as we're working on the issues that we think are important—growth, development, democracy, human rights, overcoming conflicts like Darfur, is to lend support to those in Africa who are fighting for the same things. When it comes to conflicts, the African Union has established a Peace and Security Council something like the U.N. Security Council. It sends its peacekeepers to trouble spots ahead of the U.N. They went into Darfur when nobody else went into Darfur. But they can't do it alone, we can lend a lot of support to that African initiative.

I mentioned the new partnership for Africa development, the people who are working on human rights. You find some fabulous people in Africa working on behalf of peace and justice, you find people struggling and working day and night to deal with the problems of HIV/AIDS against horrific odds but doing incredible work. It's when partnering with them, partnering with our friends who have shared those ideals and efforts, that we will have the most influence. It's not a question of going in and twisting arms; we can't do that. If we ever could, we can't now. That's the future we have to follow in carrying out and following the many issues of importance to us on the continent of Africa.

Thank you very much.

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