

*Full Length Research Paper*

# **U.S. development diplomacy in Africa: From Bill Clinton to George W. Bush**

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**By means of descriptive approach and content-analysis of documentary sources collected from two U.S embassies in Africa (Lagos and Pretoria), the article examines the U.S development diplomacy in Africa during the Clinton years and the early directions of George W. Bush's policy toward Africa. The article is broadly divided into three sections. The first part deals with introduction, motivation and methodology. This section also attempts a concise historical overview of U.S policy toward Africa, from Truman to J.F Kennedy and to George Bush. The second section outlines the several development imperatives apparent in the US official thinking about Africa at the beginning of the Clinton administration. The section specifically focuses on basic provisions of the Clinton's AGOA policy and to what extent Africans/Africanists were agog with AGOA. Within this context, the article also enumerates the reservations of Africans/Africanists about AGOA. The third section describes the early indications [or lack of it] of the direction of George W. Bush Africa policy before 9/11 terrorist attack on the U.S. The study concludes by identifying key development issues that have been side-stepped by the paradigm of 9/11 and how the war on terror have scuttled the gathering momentum on the anticipated transition from Clinton to Bush pro-development diplomacy in Africa.**

**Key words:** United States, Africa, diplomacy, foreign policy, development, post cold war, AGOA, 9/11, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The U.S role in the establishment of Liberia may be regarded as the foundation of a tangible relationship between U.S and Africa, while the American's indirect involvement in the politics of Berlin Conference of 1884 showed that US had once nurtured but did not develop an economic and political interest in Africa before World War II. But the granting of political independence to some African countries in the late 50s and early 60s though marked the end of foreign rule; it also transformed Africa into a major site for superpowers (US and USSR) contestation and proxy battleground for supremacy in global affairs. Various studies which have devoted some attention to the nature and disposition of U.S interests in and foreign policy toward sub-Sahara Africa, have all nearly tended to conclude that Africa was clearly of little significance to the White House and thus have elicited minimal attraction to American foreign policy crafters before the end of cold war<sup>1</sup>.

## **MOTIVATION AND METHODOLOGY**

The motivation for this study is linked to the drought of empirical scholarship or studies addressing primarily the period, about a decade, of US pro-development activism and active engagement in development diplomacy with Africa. The exception to this observation though is Morrison and G. Cooke who in their seminal work concluded that the Clinton years saw unprecedented high-level U.S engagement in Africa and the articulation of a vision of partnership based on consultation and ambitious policy initiatives<sup>2</sup>. However, this article is motivated by the desire to further highlight how the emerging US development diplomacy got extinguished before it became a major or permanent characterization of US-Africa relations.

Thus the article is interested in answering the following questions: What was the nature of US-Africa policy before the presidency of Bill Clinton? What gave rise to Clinton's pro-Africa policy? What has been the strength and limitations of AGOA Bill, the bill which best illustrates Clinton's development through trade approach? Further-more, what are some of the development issues on US agenda for Africa before 9/11 and how have they been

side-stepped, dramatically revised or deconstructed? The answer to these questions as well as insight into development issues on the US agenda for Africa will eventually draw out the negative impact of 9/11 on George Bush policy toward Africa. This is with specific reference to why US opted for anti-terror diplomacy rather than continuing with development policy inherited from the Clinton years. The article intends to achieve the above objectives by means of descriptive approach flowing from rigorous content-analysis of primary and secondary data. The data for the study have been sourced from print and electronic media (newspaper, magazine, bulletin and reports), library and personal interviews as well as official documents collected from two U.S embassies in Africa-Lagos and Pretoria.

## **US-AFRICA POLICY IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES**

In the following section, the article will focus on brief summary of scholarly submissions on the position and disposition of American leaders toward Africa during cold war era. Peter Schrader in his work argued that 'soon after the Second World War, the basic assumption that influenced U.S policy toward Africa was that external communist pressure was the root of African conflict, as exemplified by President Truman. African nationalism was hardly supported: countries were not considered neutral; they were either for or against the U.S. Policy was targeted at containing the Soviet Union's influence rather than strengthening African attempts at independence. This trend marks the beginning of a long standing argument that U.S. policy toward Africa (for the benefit of Africa) falls low on the American priority list. During the Kennedy years, the anti-communist consciousness literarily overshadowed any tendency to believe that internal national conditions gave rise to insurgency in African countries'.

### **Lyndon Johnson, Nixon, Ford and Africa**

In the Lyndon Johnson years, official interest in Africa was said to have petered out as quickly as it had risen. The economic and cultural ties that bound African nations to Europe were viewed as far more powerful than any relationships that the Soviet Union or China attempted to create. Lyndon Johnson's Secretary of State for political affairs, George Ball, for example writes that: 'we could ... simplify our problems with Africa as well as certain other areas of the less-developed world if we did not take such a proprietary interest in their development'. During the final years of the Johnson presidency, Africa was, in the words of an unnamed official, "the last issue considered, the first aid budget cut'(Clough, 1992: 8). The Nixon and Ford administrations took intervention in Africa to a new level, by considering the possibility that the Soviet Union was not bent on world view held by these leaders, but instead focused on negotiating with the Soviet Union to avoid superpower conflict in Africa. U.S. forces were

recalled from pro-U.S. client state such as Ethiopia. Again, policy changed once Jimmy Carter took office in the late 1970's.

### **Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan and Africa**

President Jimmy Carter branched from the typical anti-communist and containment policies and placed a greater emphasis on human rights (Schraeder, 1994: 33). The Carter administration was, again, a complicated battle between containment policy and the threat of Soviet expansionism and the need to look at internal roots of crises (historical, political and cultural) within African nations themselves. (Schraeder, 1994: 34). Carter's visit to Nigeria was seen as a major and significant indication of his pro-Africa policy. Despite any shift in progress which shifted of U.S. foreign policy focus away from preventing sovietism or communism from taking root in Africa, President Reagan cast aside any consideration of regionalist logic. Again, policy-making returned to the cold war beliefs of Truman. Reagan characterized the Soviet Union as the "evil empire" which was the primary sources of instability in Africa. Reagan declared in 1982 'let us not delude ourselves... the Soviet Union underlined all the unrest that is going on. If they were not involved in this game of dominoes, there would not be any hotspots in the world' (Schraeder, 1994: 34).

With reference to Africa, the cold war was generally believed to have ended in Africa with the signing of independence agreement of Namibia in December 1988. According to Clough (1992: 12) the turnabout in U.S. priorities was most marked in the Horn of Africa. With the Cold War over, the United States also lost the urge to intervene in African conflicts. This has been the most obvious in Liberia and Somalia, all of which were major recipients of U.S. military aid in the early 1980's (Clough, 1992: 12). The neglect of Africa since the withering of the Cold War is best illustrated by the spreading of chaos and terror on the continent as American and former Soviet client states disintegrate into anarchy. The post-cold war 'New World Order' was faced with many problems when policy-making attempts were made to deal with critical situations while setting the U.S. preconditions for peacekeeping operations (Furely and May, 1998: 30).

### **George Bush, the New World order and Africa**

When George Bush (Snr) took over from Ronald Reagan, the question of how to form a coherent foreign policy framework towards African states was not even close to being answered. But Dumbrell argued that Bush's early strategy was a combination of affirming Reagan's legacy and distancing from the Old World order of East versus West politics. Bush was not burdened with the same fears that the Soviet Union would succeed in spreading communism to developing regimes in Africa. In October 1989, he stated, 'given the choice, people all around the

world are opting for democracy' (Dumbrell, 1997: 136).

Bush administration officials were said to be aware that they had the opportunity to change American foreign policy. This realization was expressed to Congress in 1990, when he said: we stand today at a unique and extraordinary moment... out of these troubled times... a new world order can emerge...today, that new world order is struggling to be born, a world quite different from the one we have known, a world where in which nations recognize the shared responsibility for freedom and justice, a world where there is strong respect for the weak (Dumbrell, 1997: 163).

To African officials, it was unclear how their nations would fit into the New World Order. For good reason, African scholars were concerned that the United States would use the New World Order perspective to disengage from African continental problems. For example, in December 1989, when the Liberia civil war escalated, the State Department spokesperson, Richard Boucher remarked that, 'the (George Bush) administration believes that it is not our role to intervene, to engage in peace-keeping or to impose a government or political system in Liberia' (Clough, 1992: 95). In late 1989, when U.S. Marines were deployed to Liberia, it was specifically to evacuate American citizens and safeguard U.S. property. The United States swore that it was blameless for the crisis and maintained that Doe was at fault for mishandling his national interests (Clough, 1992: 95). Again, in 1990, developments in Kenya proved that the New World Order was not diverting from traditional Reagan-type practices. In August 1990, when the U.S Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Cohen visited Nairobi, he refused to meet with human rights activists and would not denounce the Arap Moi regime publicly. This stance only helped to facilitate the serious deterioration of respect for human rights that followed (Clough, 1992: 100).

The same controversy manifested when the George Bush administration delivered US \$1.4 million in lethal aid to the Somali Armed Forces during the height of Somali's civil war. Congressional critics of the U.S–Somali relationship did not accept the military rationale of coming to the aid of a strategic ally, and complained that U.S weaponry was being used by the Somali forces to bomb urban areas and executes innocent civilians (Shraeder, 1994: 160). Congressional pressure forced the Bush administration to reprogram US \$2.5 million in military aid originally intended for Somalis. The deadlock between proponents of the U.S. government resulted in the ability for the United States to make any progress in U.S-Somali relations one way or the other. In short, the US continued to occupy an uneasy middle ground that neither completely supported, nor opposed the Somali regime, while hoping that political conditions in Somali would improve (Schrader, 1994: 163).

On the eve of U.S presidential elections, George Bush decided that he had one last chance to demonstrate his

decisiveness on US-Africa policy. He launched "Operation Restore Hope". The lack of planning on the part of UN and the Unified Task Force served to alarm the Somali factions rather than secure a safe environment for relief (Furley and May, 1998: 149). Operation Restore Hope, a humanitarian mission which turned awry, provided newcomer Bill Clinton with an immediate task at hand

## **DEVELOPMENT DIPLOMACY: CLINTON AND AFRICA**

By my definition, development diplomacy is the conduct of a whole range of foreign relations by developed world with developing countries targeting poverty mitigation and reduction as end product. It can also be described as the overall policy options of a developed state or super/hyper power towards less endowed states, weak economies and countries in conflict or emerging from conflict that focuses on issues that has direct impact on human security and survival with primary aim of enabling beneficiaries (citizens of recipient states) to have access to good life. Finally, it can be bilateral or multilateral, but must be the official engagement with the developing world by the developed north with the sole aim of finding effective solutions to a growing number of socio-economic, political, health and environmental problems in the global south. Development issues may include HIV/AIDS, Debt crisis and direct financial assistance, aid, peace-keeping and building. Others include economic justice and fair trade, human rights and democracy, environmental sustainability, disaster mitigation and conflict resolution amongst others.

Under Bill Clinton, the focus of U.S foreign policy was on international economic relations. It is also where the administration has been most successful. To put it bluntly, Bill Clinton's foreign economic policy tends to be everything that the rest of his foreign policy is not; his goals are well-articulated, the payoff for the American public is clear cut, and the passions of the President obviously engaged (Furley and May 1998, 149).

Though the Clinton administration's world view seem unclear at the beginning of Clinton's presidency, campaign rhetoric suggested that he held similar opinions about moving beyond containment in the post-cold war era and creating a new world order based on U.S. leadership as the sole remaining superpower. Some suggested that his selection of officials suggested a return to the regionalist policies reminiscent of the Carter administration. The administration was expected to downplay the foreign dimensions of conflicts in Africa in favor of their internal roots, and recognize African nationalism as an important constraint on American intervention on the continent (Shraeder, 1994: 35).

However, the emphasis on the spread of democracy as a key policy tool was still very prevalent in Clinton's agenda. The new administration prioritized market reform

and free trade as a mechanism for development and democratization. For reasons of international strategy, Africa's conflicts rank lower than those in Bosnia or the former Soviet Union. Thus at the point of Clinton's entry into the White House, Africa still ranks lowest on the USA's totem pole of international concerns.

Arguably Clinton appointments soon changed the course of U.S. policy thought on Africa. George E. Moose, who was appointed by Clinton to replace Herman Cohen as Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, inherited a full desk of United States' concerns in Africa: From civil war in Angola to humanitarian disaster in Somalia and to concerns about the onward march of Islamic fundamentalism in Africa<sup>3</sup>. After whirlwind diplomatic shuttle in Africa and Europe, George Moose, declared that, 'Fostering democracy will be the central plank of the administration's policy'. The second and third areas of U.S. Africa policy he listed were conflict resolution, followed by trade and investment (Agonafer, 1996: 247). As noted above the change in the direction of policy came on the threshold of Clinton's appointment of other key foreign (Africa) policy aides. Some of these diplomatic actors includes committed Africanist or have had extensive experience in Africa such as, Warren Christopher, George Moose, Dennis Jett and Jennifer Ward. Soon after their call to service, several imperatives became apparent in the official U.S. thinking of Africa which became the essential character of the Clinton years. Some of these include the following:

#### **First, Clinton's Africa policy aides opted for more multilateralism and less bilateralism**

Traditionally, Democratic administrations are more enthusiastic about multilateral diplomacy than Republicans. For the Clinton administration, support for multilateralism was a means of countering accusations of isolationism, while retaining a critical focus on domestic policy issues dominated by the economy. In one of his few statements on Africa during the election campaign, Clinton said 'the USA should do more to support United Nations peace-keeping operations, and should explore new ideas for preventive diplomacy.' (Africa Confidential, 1993: vol 34)

#### **Second, Clinton's Africa policy highlighted key development issues**

The Clinton Administration created the post of Secretary of State for Global Affairs, to highlight many key issues that affect Africa more than other regions. Some of these includes: environmental degradation, terrorism, drugs, population policy, international health risk such as HIV/AIDS and trans-border and inter-continental migration. In particular, Vice President Al Gore was committed to pushing environmental issues up the agenda in

Washington and spoke out strongly about environmental disaster in Africa. Al Gore has kept faith with the campaign on environmental issue beyond his tenure in the White House.

#### **Third, Clinton opted to support for renewed regionalism in Africa**

State Department officials embraced warmly the Nigeria-led ECOMOG peace operations in Liberia, despite media criticism. Washington gave some \$29 million support to the ECOMOG peace-keeping operations and channeled some \$200 million through aid agencies and Amos Sawyer's government in Monrovia for humanitarian assistance (Africa Confidential, 1993: Vol. 34). US officials also encouraged the Organization for African Unity, now African Union (AU) to give a stronger lead in regional crises as it moves away from its strict doctrine of non-intervention in domestic conflicts.

#### **Fourth, under Clinton the US military seek to redefine its role in Africa**

Under Bill Clinton, the Department of Defence for the first time specifically budgeted for ongoing 'conflict-resolution operations' and for contingencies in Africa. Both the Pentagon and the State Department argue that failure to secure a thoroughgoing demobilization of the rival forces in Angola was the key factor in resumption of the civil war there. The US sponsored conference in Burundi on the 'Military and Democracy' in February 1993, which brought together high-ranking military officers and defence ministry officials from 10 African countries, was the first of many (Africa Confidential, 1993: Vol. 34).

#### **Fifth, Clinton's Africa policy increased the power and influence of US Non-governmental organisations (NGOs)**

Under Clinton, US officials continued to work more closely with such US-based organisations as the Global Coalition for Africa (GCA), the African-American Institute (AAI), the Atlanta-based Carter Center and Africare. In its attempt to promote democracy in Africa, the State Department strongly supports election monitors and observer missions such as the National Democratic Institute, the International Republican Institute and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems. Part of the strategy, according to Moose, 'is to build up grass-roots organisations in Africa as part of the democracy process and to strengthen professional associations and community groups to make governments more accountable. Moose intensified this 'outreach' by State Department to the NGOs' (Africa Confidential, 1993).

### **Sixth, Clinton retained political conditionalities for giving aid**

There was a consensus on this issue across the State Department, USAID and many of the US-based NGOs operating in Africa, that political conditionality to be applied to most credits made available by the multilateral financial institutions such as the World Bank. Moose argued that 'the encouragement and consolidation for democracy was Washington's top priority in Africa alongside concerns about the region's weak economy'(Africa Confidential, 1993: Vol. 34).

### **DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TRADE: THE CASE OF AGOA**

From the foregoing, it has become pretty clear that Clinton administration had a well thought-out plan and policy options with reference to US engagement with Africa. The 'trade not aid' campaign which the new regime had stoked culminated into soon yielded result in a trade bill, The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) Bill that was signed into law by President Bill Clinton on May 18, 2000. The deals with extension of trade benefits designated 34 sub-Saharan African countries. While on state visit to Nigeria in August 2000, Clinton also suggested the inclusion of some indigenous items in the list of items to enjoy duty-free and quota-free access into the U.S. market. The basic provisions of AGOA under this include:

1. The lifting of all existing quota on textile and apparel products from sub-Saharan African countries into the U.S. market.
2. The extension of duty/quota free access into the U.S. market for sub-Saharan apparels made from yarns and fabrics not available in the U.S.
3. The extension of duty/quota free treatment for apparel made in Africa from U.S. yarn and fabric and for knit-to shape sweaters made in Africa from cashmere and some merino wool's as well as apparel produced in Africa from silk, velvet, linen and other fabrics not produced in commercial quantities in the U.S.
4. The Act extends duty-free and quota-free access to the U.S market for apparel made in Africa with Africa/regional fabric and yarn. Such imports, however, are subject to a cap (limit) ranging from 1.5 to 3.5 billion dollar U.S. apparel import over an eight-year period. African apparel imports made with African fabric/yarn currently totals about \$250 million<sup>4</sup>.

As noted earlier during the Clinton administration, Africa witnessed an unprecedented focus and corresponding policy debate, on efforts to increase U.S. trade with and investment in Africa. Despite the fear of being directly involved with African crisis and one must give credit to President Clinton for engaging with the

economic development of African nations, as well as attempting to form solid relationships and diplomatic ties with leaders from the continent. Within this context, Susan Rice argued that, 'Clinton's government dedicated more effort and attention to Africa than any previous administration'<sup>5</sup>. The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) have been at the center of this policy debate. Those who favour AGOA point to the paradigm shift it represents, hailing it as a more mature, more pragmatic U.S. approach towards Africa. Those opposed to the Bill argue that it promotes U.S. business interest at the expense of African economic growth and the needs of Africa's poor. The following section, which is entirely based on African-American Institute (AAI) organized debate on is AGOA good for Africa? Highlights varied opinion on the opportunities in AGOA as well as reservation about the Bill<sup>6</sup>.

### **Opportunities in AGOA**

First, most pro-AGOA commentators during the AAI debate were of the view that present parameters defining the global economy prevent most African countries from taking advantage of increasing global market opportunities. Thus AGOA is perceived as a means of building capacity in Africa in preparation towards becoming a participant in a competitive global economy.

Second, most sessions were unanimous in calling for a change in U.S. Africa policy initiatives from foreign assistance designed to help Africans to partnerships designed to empower Africa.

Third AGOA has been found to be a new, albeit limited opportunity for Africa to engage and negotiate with U.S. on how to combat the development crisis facing the continent.

Fourth, observers have identified Private Sector Trade and Investment component of AGOA as an opportunity. The discussants cited the establishment of 500 and \$150 million funds for infrastructure and equity respectively, as major elements of AGOA that would expand opportunities for private sector trade and investment. In addition, participants added that some eligibility requirements might stimulate African government to enact economic policy measures that would liberalize product and financial markets and foster private sector empowerment.

The fifth opportunity is the bill's textile and apparel provisions and its proposed expansion, and renewal of the Generalized System of Preference (GSP) was frequently cited as favorably. The sixth point is the opportunity AGOA offered in the promotion of 'feminisation' of development. Some people called for the support of AGOA because it makes provision for U.S. organization and institutions to support projects that encourage and support women entrepreneurs. In the spirit of gender mainstreaming and women empowerment, this is considered a very important step in creating more windows of

opportunity for women's involvement in growth and development in sub-Saharan Africa. Finally, some commentators felt that conditions enumerated in the bill may stimulate governments to promote accountability and transparency in governance, enhance protection of individual human rights, encourage environmental protection efforts and adopt labour standards in consonance with international best practices.

### Reservations about AGOA

The first broadside fired against AGOA is that it was externally imposed on Africa. The critics argue that the bill, like past U.S. policy initiatives, utilised + findings and analysis of the African situation based largely on misinformed analysis of the African situation based largely on misinformed and American perceptions and a shallow understanding of Africa formed from a distance. This paternalistic outlook is said to be in contradiction to the stated objective of changing past U.S. attitudes towards sub-Saharan Africa.

Second, a number of development activist contested that any discussion on development in Africa that does not decisively deal with the debt crisis will come to naught just like so many others before it as 80% of Africa's export earning is spent on debt service. Though AGOA was intended as a trade bill and not a debt relief bill, but under current circumstances, debt relief should be a high priority than trade promotion.

Third, criticism has been the primacy of the market and profits. This raised the suspicion that AGOA represents the mere use of legislation to secure (for the U.S) an African market for so long dominated by Europe. The fourth is the unbalanced private and public sector development. Critics pointed out that the bill asks African governments to play a diminishing role in the economic affairs of their countries while at the same time pushing for more private sector involvement. It is suggested that development in the public sector should accompany development in the private sector, so that the two sectors balance and complement one another.

The fifth reservation has to do with monitoring trade and aid initiatives. Critics observed that donor groups and African governments alike have manipulated conditionalities in the past to advance their own interest without regards to whether actual progress toward democratic and economic reform was been achieved.

The sixth criticism is that AGOA is antithetical to sub-regional integration. Concerns expressed within this context has to do with the fear that the moves to establish Free Trade Area with sub-Saharan countries would be selective and disruptive to African regional initiatives already underway and reflected the colonial era of divide and rule approach. Current regional initiatives in Africa are said to be barely managing to grow and develop, thus might make more sense if the U.S. sought to strengthen these existing regional groupings rather than seeking the

establishment of new ones.

The seventh negation is the possibility of AGOA shrinking investment in social capital. Some critics noted that AGOA prescribes cuts in domestic spending and corporate taxes that will significantly reduce the revenue base of African governments, leading to reduced investment in the development of social capital and poverty eradication schemes.

The eight worry about AGOA is the agriculture and food security concerns. The bill urges unilateral removal of subsidies and market safeguards aimed at protecting and stabilizing local agricultural production, the backbone of most sub-Saharan African economies. This would likely reduce agricultural output within Africa and increase dumping of U.S. exports on the African market, thus undermining the efforts of local African entrepreneurs.

The ninth problem with AGOA has been the fact that eligibility standards are too restrictive. These requirements such as, protection of intellectual property rights, improvements in labeling and certification standards, eliminating corruption and pursuit of WTO membership, would disqualify the majority of sub-Saharan African countries.

Finally, it is said to offer a false textile boom. AGOA package has been described as having no gains for the textile manufacturers. The decrepit state of the local textile manufacturing industry which has been exacerbated by the dumping of cheap, used clothes from foreign countries, may have prepared enough ground for the sectors lack of competitive standing in the AGOA scheme. Manufacturers have touted this, among other factors, as major constraint in the industry's bid toward international competitiveness.

### GEORGE W. BUSH AND DEVELOPMENT DIPLOMACY

Regardless of the shortcomings of AGOA, Clinton will be remembered by his symbolic gesture, exemplified by his interest in visiting the continent in 1998 and 2000 as well as the several visits of his second term Secretary of State, Madeline Albright<sup>7</sup>. There has been general impression that the U.S. concern with HIV/AIDS, trade and other development issues in Africa will most likely continue. In fact, the former South African President, Thabo Mbeki shared in the optimism that positive relations with the U.S. under George W. Bush will continue. Though throughout the late 1990's, Mbeki had developed a good relationship with Clinton's Vice President Al Gore, so one would suspect that Mbeki would be disappointed with Bush's victory. Alternatively, Mbeki maintains, 'we look forward to working with President-elect, George W. Bush in taking this relationship further in addressing some issue of poverty reduction, security and peace on a global scale' (Mail and Guardian, December 15, 2000).

However, the fear of discontinuity with Clintonian development diplomacy actually got planted when George W.

Bush made his famous remark 'there's got to be priorities' (The Economist, March/April, 2001) during the presidential campaign debate after he was asked why he did not list Africa as one of his highest foreign policy concerns, many Africans were left with dismal hope for a pro-development U.S engagement with Africa. Again, after George Bush refers to the Clinton years as 'the squandered years', and promises to make a new start despite pressures to continue the same path of diplomacy, Africans and Africanists indeed expressed worry. Africans and Africanist were told that they will be concern faced with the Bush administration that may adopt 'parallel unilateralism' (The Economist, March/April, 2001) as a state policy. But some others were optimistic of a more pro-development and Africa-friendly policy under Bush going by the fact that President George W. Bush hosted a visit by the then United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan and the then Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo to the White House on 11 May 2001 to discuss African affairs.

Following the meeting of President George W. Bush, it was followed by sending Collin Powell to Africa in May 2001. According to Greg Mills, in his attempt to interpret Collin Powell's 2001 trip to South Africa, opined that 'his first and only major policy statement on Africa was that the U.S. was concerned with AIDS, democracy and the linkage between trade economic growth and stability' (Mills 2001, 1).

In a more targeted comment with regards to Zimbabwe, Powell stated that 'action has been taken both on the economic front and on the political front to stabilize the situation and to persuade Mugabe to move in a more democratic fashion toward a resolution of the problem with Zimbabwe' (Mills, 2001: 1). Mills remarked 'and there is clearly a policy emerging from Washington that is less Clintonesque schmooze and most controversially, greater conditionality on African States. As Bush had argued 'we will work for free markets free trade and freedom from oppression. Nation making progress towards freedom will find that America is their friend, or, as Powell put it, America will be a friend of all African who seek peace' (Mills, 2001: 2)

However, some others believed that in the early days of his presidency, Bush stood by hard-lined liberal orthodox policy-making and constantly emphasized the importance of free market reform. Indeed during a multilateral consultation, Bush stated, 'the principles of the AGOA are important for Africa, but they are also important for the United States. Countries that respect markets and the rights of individual are more likely to achieve political stability ... strong African democracies with strong economies and healthy population will contribute to a world that is more peaceful and more prosperous for all' (netafriqueonline, May 2001).

In fact, to most African focused NGO in the U.S., a Bush presidency means 'a return to blatantly anti-African policies of the Reagan-Bush (Snr) years characterized by

a general disregard for black people and a perception of Africa as a social welfare case' (Salih Booker on line, 2001).

Salih Booker argues that U.S. policy makers under George W. Bush will conclude that poor countries must take care of themselves. The fact that the majority of countries in question are African will make it easy for a Bush administration to give a debt relief a lower priority. 'In context of a Bush presidency and a divided Congress, breaking through the systematic American disdain for Africa will not happen unless there are real shifts in public perceptions, comparable to those that happened in the 1980's regarding apartheid in South Africa' (Salih Booker online, 2001).

But all the projections and grand standing rhetoric were soon to be overruled, the struggle between those that wanted the continuation of Bill Clinton 'development diplomacy' and those who wanted George W. Bush to chart a new course were soon to be overtaken by the events of 9/11 terrorist attack on the U.S. This singular disastrous event and the subsequent geopolitics that emerged thereafter had forcefully pushed the emerging U.S development diplomacy of the Clinton years out of place and have been replaced by war on terror and new energy diplomacy<sup>8</sup>. This is not without cost for Africa in terms of missed opportunities.

## **DEVELOPMENT ISSUES IN AFRICA, 9/11 AND THE ROAD NOT TAKEN**

Arguably, there were a number of development issues on the table as a carry-over from the Clinton years prior to 9/11 attacks on the U.S and some of these will be highlighted in the following section, emphasizing how some of these issues have been extinguished or have completely been reduced to footnote in George W. Bush-Africa policy. Most of these issues have been sacrificed by the US on the altar of post-9/11 war on terror and the struggle for alternative source of oil:

### **THE HIV/AIDS PANDEMIC**

The HIV/AIDS crisis in Africa represents the worst plague in human history and the most serious threat to the continent's future. According to UNAIDS, Africa is home to more than 28 million of the 40 million people worldwide living with HIV/AIDS. More than 6,000 Africans die of AIDS every day. The social and economic effects of the HIV/AIDS crisis are devastating entire countries, and life expectancies are plummeting across the continent.

African governments and civil society are struggling to address this health emergency, but they lack the necessary resources and public health infrastructure to provide essential prevention and treatment services. Though the new Global Fund to fight HIV/AIDS and

PEPFAR are commendable institutional framework but funding and associated resources needed to defeat the pandemic are still in very short supply<sup>9</sup>.

### **AFRICA'S DEBT CRISIS**

Sub-Saharan Africa's massive external debt has been described as the single largest obstacle to the continent's economic development. It is also a major hindrance to African governments, efforts to respond to the HIV/AIDS crisis, within the context poverty-nutrition nexus. Over the past two decades, African countries have paid out more in debt service to foreign creditors than they have received in development assistance or in new loans. The current international debt relief framework, the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC), has achieved minimal success in providing solution to Africa's debt crisis. The willingness of the U.S to engage African countries on this issue against the background of deafening clamour for debt forgiveness by several international Non-Governmental Organisations have been shelved, probably until after the war on terror.

### **DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE**

Public investment in Africa's development, in the form of official development assistance (ODA), is critical to African efforts to address the immense social and economic challenges, the continent faces. While the need for such support is greater than ever, levels of development assistance have fallen in a consistent downward trend over the past decade. U.S. spending on foreign aid has declined relative to the size of its economy. In 2005, President Bush refused to meet British Prime Minister Tony Blair's request to double aid to African nations. Instead, the two leaders announced on 7 June, 2005, a U.S. aid package of \$674 million dollars from funds previously appropriated by Congress. The Pre-9/11 Bush Administration proposals to increase foreign aid to Africa though far less than expected has almost been sacrificed on the alter of post-9/11 terror-diplomacy. According to media sources, 'most Americans believe that the United States spends 24% of its budget on aid to poor countries, it actually spends well under a quarter of 1%' (The New York Times, June, 2005). In an editorial titled "Crumbs for Africa," the New York Times, June, 2005 writes "At a time when rich countries are mounting a noble and worthy effort to make poverty history, the Bush administration is showing itself to be completely out of touch by offering such a miserly drop in the bucket' (The New York Times, June 2005).

### **ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND FAIR TRADE**

Africa is marginalized in the global economy by both the institutions and the rules that govern the system. Both are

dominated by the interests of the world's richest countries. The World Bank, the IMF and the WTO are controlled by the U.S and other G8 countries. These institutions have come to dominate economic policy making in African countries, and this has severely weakened the capacity of African countries, to respond to urgent domestic needs. Unfavourable poor terms of trade and restricted market access also keep Africa economically vulnerable, and have restricted the continent's share of world trade to 1%. The anticipated U.S intervention in the Bush years and prior to 9/11 has evaporated and may not be brought back to the table for a long time to come.

### **HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY**

Prior to 'war on terror', democracy governance and the respect for human rights were noted as indispensable by U.S to ensuring stability and sustainable development in African countries. But in the post 9/11 years, the practice of employing double standards to measure human rights practices in Africa, has contributed to the loss of credibility and influence that the U.S. government has on these matters. African states judged to be 'allies' in the war on terror are not pressured on human rights abridgement and democratization hiccups. The post-9/11 U.S thinking has metamorphosed into 'if you are not for me, then you are against me'. Political neutrality or non-alignment on the war on terror suddenly becomes expensive positioning for African states, except of course if the country is an oil-producer.

### **CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

Before the advent of 9/11, U.S. diplomatic and financial supports for conflict resolution in Africa were to be increased because this was deemed to be essential for both regional and global stability. Unresolved conflicts continue to threaten democratic progress and development efforts in the continent as a whole. The human and economical toll of these wars has been devastating. U.S. support for bilateral and multilateral efforts to end ongoing conflicts in Africa, and to mitigate the impact of these conflicts, is critical. Arguably, Pentagon-designed African Command (AFRICOM) has been imposed on Africa without inputs from critical continental actors and players in peace-keeping. Indeed the Command is generally perceived as a mere U.S opportunity to deepen its war against terrorist in certain regions of Africa and not necessarily a product of White House 'safer Africa' project.

### **NEED FOR SPECIAL RELATIONS WITH NIGERIA AND SOUTH AFRICA**

As exemplified by Bill Clinton, it was expected that the



Bush administration would develop its overall Africa policy, by strengthening bilateral relations with South Africa and Nigeria, for two reasons: First, U.S. effectiveness in sub-Sahara Africa demands partners and at this time Nigeria and South Africa are the most ready candidates for such partnership. Both countries loom large in their regional ambience and military capabilities, economic sway and assertive foreign policy ambition. Furthermore, both South Africa and Nigeria are important interlocutors in the larger dialogue between the United States and the developing world, whether on debt, control of weapons of mass destruction, trade agreements at the WTO, or drugs/narcotics control. Both have distinguished themselves in the 1990's through historic, miraculous transitions that embraced electoral competition over military/repressive governance and re-entry into the community of democracies. Even in terms of population, Nigeria's 150 million in addition to South Africa's 49 million constitute about 25% of all Africans.

Second, both Nigeria and South Africa, although essential to the future viability of the continent, are nonetheless subject profound political and economic strains, and hence vulnerable in varying ways to breakdown. U.S. interests lie in mitigating those forces that weaken and put at risk the South Africa and Nigerian democratic projects. Both countries have the capacity to lift their regions if they succeed and to inflict eternal damage if they do not or falter.

Though he visited both countries in 2003, not much progress had been made on the account of differences over the US tactics and uneven standards over the war on terror

## CONCLUSION

The article has attempted an overview of US policy towards Africa even before most Africa states became independent, as well as in the Cold War and Post-Cold war years. The Clinton years arguably have been judged as the beginning of development diplomacy illustrated by the AGOA Bill regardless of its several shortcomings. While not trying to excuse the Bush lack-lustre approach to African development challenges, the events of September 11, 2001 brought the U.S. to focus on its role in the world and on global threats to human security. But in Africa, little has been done to reconnect with traces of development activism identifiable in the Clinton years.

In summary, the U.S. claims to have special historical relationship with the continent of Africa, but the George W. Bush administration underplayed African concerns, hence the continent remains marginalized in a system of global apartheid. As the wealthiest and most powerful country on earth, the U.S has both moral and financial obligations to support African efforts to address the continent's most urgent challenges. The most immediate threat to global human security, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, will not be defeated unless there is a successful effort to

respond to the crisis at its epicenter in Africa. Other concerns include Africa debt crisis, development assistance, economic justice and fair trade as well as promotion of good democratic governance and conflict resolution in partnership with regional hegemons.

In conclusion, there should therefore be a new appreciation among U.S. policymakers of the need to address the destabilizing divide between rich and poor countries, and of the importance of building a shared global response to the most urgent global challenges from HIV/AIDS, to poverty and to terrorism.

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<sup>1</sup>Jackson Henry F.1984. *From the Congo to Soweto: U.S Foreign policy Toward Africa Since 1960*. New York: Quill. [ii] Duignan Peter and Gann L.H.1984. *The United States and Africa: A History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [iii] Crawford Young, 1984. *United States Foreign Policy Toward Africa: Silver Anniversary Reflections*, *African Studies Review*, 27, 3 [September]. [iv] Kitchen Helen.1983. *US Interests in Africa*. New York: Praeger, [iv] Winchester Brian N.1988. "United States Policy Toward Africa" in *Current History* 87, 529 [May], [ v] Baker H Pauline.1987. "United States Foreign Policy in Southern Africa" in *Current History* 86, 520 [May] and [vi] Rotberg I. Robert, ed.1988. *Africa in the 1990s and Beyond: U.S Policy opportunities and Choices*. Algonac, MI: Reference Publications.

<sup>2</sup>Morrison. Stephen J; and Cooke Jennifer G.eds.2001. *Africa Policy in the Clinton Years: Critical Choices for the Bush Administration*, CISS Press: Washington

George Edward Moose served as Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, from 1993 to 1997 after serving as U.S Ambassador to the UN agencies in Geneva, and as Ambassador to the Republics of Benin and Senegal.

<sup>4</sup>For more information see the full report and it is available on the AAI web site (<http://www.aaionline.org>). See also Washington Office on Africa position paper on The African Growth and Opportunity Act and the H.O.P.E. for Africa Act: <http://www.woafrica.org/AGOA.htm/> posted on 4 October 1999.

<sup>5</sup>Susan E. Rice was the United States Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs from October 1997 until January 20, 2001. Susan Rice was a key figure during a time of challenging transformation and turmoil in Africa and remains a keen observer of African affairs. In an interview with all Africa's Charles Cobb Jr. and on CNN on 21 November 2000, Ms. Rice also insists that the Clinton administration's approach to Africa achieved a number of breakthroughs and that the 'United State should continue to be involve in Africa'.

<sup>6</sup> For more information see the full report of the debate on AAI web site (<http://www.aaionline.org>).

<sup>7</sup> First woman Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright took four trips to Africa, one each year, in the course of her tenure as 64<sup>th</sup> Secretary of State [23 Jan. 1997- 20 January 2001], the last one in December, 2000. She very often consciously used rhetoric referring to Africa as a place that has to be high on US priority list, come what may. [allAfrica.com/news/21 November 2001].

<sup>8</sup> See the following on the rising stake and interest of U.S in Africa's oil after 9/11: [i] Ken Silverstein, "U.S. Oil Politics in the 'Kuwait of Africa'" (Equatorial Guinea), *The Nation*, April 22, 2002. [ii] Jon Lee Anderson, "Our New Best Friend: who needs Saudi Arabia when you've got Sao Tome?" *New Yorker*, October 7, 2002. [iii] *East African*, "U.S. Moves to protect Interest in African oil" September 16, 2002.

[iv] *New York Times*, "In Quietly Courting Africa, U.S. Likes the Dowry: oil" September 19, 2002,

[v] *Houston Chronicle*, "West Africa oil suddenly strategic for U.S." September 20, 2002. and [vi] *The Independent* (Banjul), "Africa Becomes New Focal Point of U.S. Energy Strategy" September 23, 2002

<sup>9</sup> President George W. Bush struggled to launch its President's Emergency Programme for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) on 23 February 2004. The plan commits the US to a 5-year, \$15 billion effort to provide antiretroviral drugs for two [2] million HIV-infected people; prevent 7 million new infections; care for 10 million individuals and orphans infected by the disease; and build the health system capacity in Africa and the Caribbean. See O. O. Olubomehin and W. A. Balogun. "The United States of America and the 'War' Against HIV/AIDS in Africa," *West Africa Review: Issue 8*, 2005.