

**“PROMOTING STABILITY AND DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA
THROUGH COLLABORATIVE DIPLOMACY”**

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Presented to the Institut Francais des Relations Internationales (IFRI)

11 June 2010

“I would like to thank IFRI, Alain Antil, Sylvain Touati and the French American Foundation France for organizing this colloquium. Partnership and dialogue are cornerstones of President Obama’s and Secretary Clinton’s foreign policy. We at the United States Department of State value opportunities such as this colloquium to exchange ideas and opinions freely in an open environment. This is critical for crafting smarter and more effective policies.

Before beginning, I’d like to apologize to anyone expecting to find a Soninké or Sarakolé man—a “marakacé”—at the podium. Fate has given me a common West African name but I am not aware of any Soninke ancestors on

either side of my family. Nonetheless, I'm happy to accept adoptive status and, having spent several years in Mali, am proud to be part of the Mande world.

In my remarks this morning, I would like to provide you with some insight into the direction of our policies for sub-Saharan Africa. Nearly a year has passed since President Obama defined the general parameters of those policies in his Accra speech. Since then we have been working on their refinement and implementation. The concepts of "mutual responsibility," "mutual respect," and "partnership" figured prominently in that speech and, as I've just indicated, they remain integral to our foreign policy.

An overarching objective of United States policies in sub-Saharan Africa is to nurture the development of stable and democratic partners who are committed to the rule of law, human rights, transparent governance, and the welfare of their citizens. This approach might appear idealistic and naïve to skeptics but in fact derives from a very pragmatic understanding of our interests. The United States and international community need stable and democratic partners throughout the world to deal effectively with the complex challenges we face in the twenty-first century. These challenges include nuclear weapons proliferation, climate change, epidemic diseases, terrorism, international organized crime, and illicit trafficking in persons and drugs. Such partners are also needed for expanding opportunities for trade and investment and thereby assuring continued global economic integration and growth.

African countries that are undemocratic and unaccountable to their populations are prone to instability, vulnerable to collapse, and therefore less reliable partners over the long term, even if today they might appear stable and helping to advance particular short-term interests. Many of Africa's most unstable states in recent years, such as Somalia and the Democratic Republic

of Congo, were among the least democratic of our partners in earlier times. Authoritarian regimes in both countries did little to improve living conditions for their populations and set the stage for conflicts that have cost millions of lives and billions of dollars in emergency relief and peacekeeping. Even one of Africa's once most prosperous, stable, and reliable countries—Cote d'Ivoire—succumbed to military rule and civil war after having failed to establish strong democratic traditions and respect for the rule of law in its first four decades of independence.

Devising effective strategies that move us toward our objective requires an understanding and respect for history. I tend to look at issues in broad historical context and am a big believer in the “longue durée” approach to history that got its start in this city. The “longue durée” approach views historical change as a slow-moving process that predominates over the actions of individual actors and events. The “longue durée” recognizes the collective influence of ideas, habits, practices, and structures that accumulate and leave their imprint over long periods of time. Though the “longue durée” might be out of fashion among some historians, I find it a very useful concept in the policy realm for understanding the challenges we face and devising realistic strategies in dealing with them. Our ability to reshape our world is enormously constrained by what has been handed down to us by our predecessors and those who preceded them. Transcending what we inherit from the past and affecting positive change therefore requires enormous effort, persistence, and patience. It requires an ability to work within and through institutions, and resistance to the allure of simplistic quick fixes and short cuts.

In terms of governance and institutional capacity, Africa's inheritance is a poor one. In the earlier part of this decade, several Ghanaian technocrats

once expressed frustration to me over their limited ability to implement reforms because of bureaucratic inertia and dysfunction. Through no fault of their own, much of Ghana's workforce was poorly trained and locked in antiquated and dysfunctional work habits and mindsets. Nor was this was the fault of any particular individual or group of individuals in the previous Ghanaian administration. The bureaucratic challenges that existed were a consequence of years of political and economic instability, corruption, and infatuation with statist models of governance that had emerged from the colonial period and remained in fashion across the continent throughout the Cold War.

If you work in a large bureaucracy that must coordinate its activities with even larger bureaucracies, you might empathize as I did with the predicament reformist technocrats faced in Ghana. Even in our own much celebrated Weberian institutions in the West, we all have set ways of working and thinking, and are often averse to risky changes. Accepting change is especially difficult if one has personally experienced instability and insecurity in the past. Implementing change is also difficult if one lacks the necessary training, education, resources, and infrastructure. One cannot wave a magic wand, erase history, and instantaneously mold a workforce to implement one's vision. Change and reform require long-term strategies that take into account the obstacles and limited resources and capacity at one's disposal. At every level of government, it requires strong and principled leaders who are able to inspire, coax, and cajole their populations into embracing change. It requires managerial and administrative acumen. When multiple countries and multilateral institutions are involved, affecting change is all the more complicated and grueling.

It's within this broad historical context that the many challenges Africa faces today must be understood as one crafts strategies to deal with them. The challenges are deeply rooted, intertwined, and overwhelming. Given our limited time, I will only cite a few of the most significant challenges. Despite some noteworthy exceptions such as Ghana, Botswana, Cape Verde, and South Africa, the democratic performance of many countries is uneven or in decline. Living conditions in many places are either stagnant or deteriorating, as reflected in life expectancies of 40 to 45 years in some countries and an overall average life expectancy of 52. Africa's share of global trade has fallen from a peak of about 3 percent in 1976 to about 1.8 percent in recent years. Its share of global GDP was about 1.6 percent last year. Although conflict is less widespread than in the 1990s, many corners of the continent such as Somalia, Sudan, and eastern DRC remain susceptible to violence and millions of civilians are still displaced.

Our strategy for achieving a more democratic, stable, and responsive international system in the face of these challenges is best described as "collaborative diplomacy," the act of persistently engaging all major stakeholders in the planning and execution of policies that aim to resolve specific problems or affect broader change. Collaborative diplomacy depends as much, if not more, on the initiative and capacity of African players as it does on ours. When there is a strong will among key African stakeholders to resolve a problem, we are better positioned to partner with them to achieve progress despite complexities and obstacles. For example, over the past year, U.S. diplomats have been actively working through the International Contact Group on Guinea to avert an escalation of unrest in the country and provide its military rulers with the confidence and guidance to return to an elected government. Numerous stakeholders including ECOWAS, the African Union,

France, the European Union, the United Nations, Morocco, the Organization of Islamic Conference, and the World Bank have participated in ICG efforts. The current transitional framework came about only after months of repeated meetings, high-level phone calls, and other intensive diplomatic work. And the intense pace of collaboration is continuing in order to ensure that elections and a stable democratic transition occur later this month.

However, when the will to fix problems is lacking or key players are obstinate, as is the case with Zimbabwe and Madagascar, it is difficult to move beyond deadlock, and tougher measures are needed. Diplomats from SADC, France, the United States, and other countries have been putting in long hours into successive meetings and agreements that thus far have failed to achieve the desired results in Madagascar. The country had been one of the single greatest beneficiaries of preferential trade status with the United States under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) program, but lost that status earlier this year because of the continued failure to reach agreement on a return to an elected democratic government. Likewise, we have been in continuous dialogue with South Africa, SADC, the European Union, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand to find ways of putting Zimbabwe on a more democratic path. Targeted sanctions against Zimbabwean ZANU-PF government officials and companies remain in place, because these officials continue to hinder democracy in Zimbabwe through harassment of the opposition and civil society and failure to honor their obligations to open the political space as called for in the Global Political Agreement.

Collaborative diplomacy also depends on the diligence and openness of our own diplomats and officers working in the development and foreign affairs arenas. Rushing to sign agreements or execute projects without taking the

time to consult with key stakeholders and coordinate efforts only undermines our efforts over the long run. Mundane as it sounds, successful foreign policy often comes down to one's diplomatic skills and the amount of effort put into the extra e-mails, phone calls, and plane trips that are required to win the trust of stakeholders and work toward a common goal. Last year, our diplomats worked closely with their counterparts from ECOWAS, the African Union, France, the European Union, and several other countries to take tough a stand against former Nigerien President Tandja's efforts to prolong his rule beyond his constitutional mandate. The extra effort that we and our partners made to forge a unified position and deliver a common message isolated him regionally and internationally, and it significantly constrained his ability to play these different actors off each other. This effort regrettably did not prevent the coup but nonetheless helped set a precedent for dealing collaboratively with such governance crises.

We are pursuing collaborative diplomacy in sub-Saharan Africa in five priority areas: 1) democracy and governance; 2) conflict mitigation; 3) health; 4) economic growth and development; 5) and transnational issues such as terrorism, illicit drug trafficking, and climate change. I've already provided several examples of how this approach has played out in the first priority area of democracy and governance, and would like now to provide a few more examples for the other four areas.

In many ways, conflict mitigation is the most critical of our five priorities, because our ability to sustain progress in the other areas is nearly impossible without peace and security. Over the past two decades, 20 out of 48 sub-Saharan African countries have experienced some type of rebellion or civil war. These range from low-level and episodic separatist violence such as what

we have seen in Senegal's Casamance and Mali's Saharan regions, to large-scale wars seen in countries such as Rwanda, Sudan, Somalia, and the DRC. Most of the remaining 28 countries have been directly involved in these conflicts, either as belligerents, peacekeepers, or recipients of refugees. Although the scale of armed conflict across Africa is currently much less than it was in the 1990s and earlier part of this decade, we remain concerned by the handful of conflicts that persist and the constant threat of new and renewed ones across the continent. In dealing with each of the three major conflict zones in Darfour, Somalia, and the DRC, we are consulting with our African and international partners with greater frequency and depth. We are taking greater care to harmonize our respect for the sovereignty of African states with the international community's commitments and responsibilities to protect civilians. We are also striving to build peacekeeping and conflict mitigation capacity within the African Union and other regional groupings. Consultations on Somalia and Darfour have also broadened to include a wider range of partners from the Middle East and Asia. It is premature to measure results on the ground, but we believe this consultative approach will increase the chances for more durable solutions and greater institutional capacity in the long term. We also regard our proactive and collaborative diplomacy on tense political situations, such as those in Guinea and Kenya, as a critical form of conflict prevention; without such aggressive diplomacy, the risks of violent conflict in such countries would be significantly greater.

Our efforts in the health sectors require close collaboration with a wide range of government, non-governmental, and private sector institutions with relevant technical and programmatic capacity. Pre-existing programs such as the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the Global Health Initiative are being reformed to improve coordination within the U.S.

government and with host African governments and other international partners so that they are more strategically focused, sustainable, and supportive of African-designed and led initiatives. For example, the Global Health Initiative will coordinate efforts with multilateral institutions including the United Nations to streamline and expand immunization programs for children. It will also look for ways to reduce the administrative and reporting burden on host countries. The scope of these health programs will be broadened with the goal of building the capacity of African institutions to deal more effectively with the full range of health challenges in an integrated manner rather than focusing on a handful of individual diseases in isolation from each other. Particular emphasis will be placed on women's and children's health. Approximately \$63 billion in funding for these programs is planned for the next five years, and much of it will be directed towards Africa. In the field, our ambassadors will be expected to oversee and coordinate these programs in a more dynamic way to ensure they remain collaborative and are in line with our overall policies and diplomatic relationships.

One of our major goals in the economic arena is to work more closely with other U.S. government and multilateral agencies to find realistic ways in which African governments can clear bureaucratic and legal impediments to regional and international trade, as well as impediments to domestic and foreign investment. Both trade and investment are essential for sustainable economic growth. As part of this effort, we are also looking to engage more local and international private sector partners in our dialogue with African governments to shape a more hospitable business environment. At the same time, we are hoping to improve corporate America's understanding of Africa and appreciation for potential investment opportunities there. "Feed the

Future,” a new initiative focused on food security, is being designed with unprecedented input from African and international partners. The initiative aims to build on existing country-led agricultural development programs to increase food production and reduce rural poverty. Twelve of twenty focus countries selected for this initiative are in Africa, and over \$500 million has been budgeted for the African portions of the program in 2011. Formal strategic engagement mechanisms with Angola, Nigeria, and South Africa are also being established to provide added structure to our collaborative diplomacy, so we are able to engage more effectively in these and the other three priority areas.

Collaborative diplomacy is especially critical for dealing with transnational challenges, the fifth priority area, in a manner that does not compromise our desire for better governance and democracy. “Transnational challenges” encompasses a wide variety of problems that are not specific to individual countries or bound by borders, and often require a multilateral response. Most of these are related to security, such as terrorism, drug trafficking, trafficking in persons, and piracy. But we include climate change in this category as well.

As I suggested earlier, democracy and good governance were too often overlooked during the Cold War, and Africa and the international community have paid a heavy price in terms of the resulting instability, conflict, and economic decline. We are at risk of making the same mistake if we turn a blind eye to undemocratic behavior and poor governance among our counter-terrorism partners, such as Ethiopia and Kenya. There should not be tradeoffs between democracy building and counter-terrorism efforts. Through collaborative diplomacy, we seek relationships of mutual respect that allow us

to work with our partners on security challenges of common concern while also pressing these partners on the democracy and governance agenda in a frank and direct manner.

Reining in corruption is essential for reducing Africa's vulnerabilities to international terrorism, drug trafficking, and other criminal activity. We are using our stepped up engagement with African governments, as exemplified in our formal strategic partnerships with Nigeria and Angola, to press harder on anti-corruption efforts and provide relevant guidance and support when possible. As a final example, our initiatives on climate change, which are partly defined in the Copenhagen Accord, are being designed with significant input from our African partners so that the initiatives are aligned with their needs and priorities.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that developing stable and democratic partners through collaborative diplomacy will be slow, painstaking, and a long-term endeavor. Setbacks are inevitable. As much as we and our African and international partners share common goals, there remain actors who are indifferent or even opposed to those goals. This makes it all the more imperative that we work as closely as possible together. We believe this is the best approach for building African will and capacity to meet the many daunting challenges effectively over the long term.

Thank you again for this opportunity to discuss our policy goals. I look forward to your questions and comments.”