



# THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION RECORD IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

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## 1. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

### 1993

When the Clinton Administration took office in January of 1993, U.S. efforts in Africa were largely focused on responding to the ongoing war and famine in Somalia. Widely televised images of mass starvation had deeply moved the American public and led the Bush Administration to launch "Operation Restore Hope" in December of 1992 to bring relief to the Somali people. But despite its success in ending the famine, the losses the United States was to experience there, including the October 3, 1993 killing of eighteen American soldiers in Mogadishu, resulted at least initially in a more cautious U.S. approach to UN peacekeeping generally and conflict resolution in Africa specifically.

Even so, with Assistant Secretary of State George Moose leading the Bureau of African Affairs, the Clinton Administration moved early in 1993 to erase the last vestiges of Cold-War influence on U.S. policy in Africa by recognizing and establishing formal diplomatic relations with the government of Angola. Up to that time, U.S. policy toward Angola had remained influenced by the U.S. support for the UNITA rebels during the Cold War, and the Government of Angola had been kept at arm's length. By joining other friend and allies in recognizing the Angolan government, the U.S. clearly demonstrated that the days of viewing Africa through the prism of Cold War competition and patron-client mentality were over.

### 1994

In 1994, three major events took place that defined the evolving nature of the U.S. Government's engagement with Africa. The first was the genocide in Rwanda resulting in up to one million deaths. As President Clinton and Secretary Albright have acknowledged, the U.S. was not attentive enough to the early warning signs of genocide and failed to respond with others quickly and effectively enough when the killing began. As a result of this experience, however, the Administration determined never to allow genocide to repeat itself in the region and moved to set preventive mechanisms in place. These included creating the Office of the Ambassador at Large for War Crimes Issues, the Atrocities Prevention Interagency Working Group, and the Africa Crisis Response Initiative.

The key second event was the election and inauguration of President Nelson Mandela in South Africa in May 1994, to which the U.S. responded by substantially increasing U.S. assistance and engagement with the Government of South Africa. The Administration put into place a three-year, \$600 million aid package to assist in the transition to post-apartheid South Africa. At the same time, we moved to establish the U.S.-South Africa Binational Commission, which has proved to be a vital tool in strengthening all aspects of the U.S. bilateral relationship with South Africa.

The third event in June was the first-ever White House Conference on Africa. It began to set a tone and focus for an invigorated and focussed, post Cold-War U.S. policy on Africa. It was the beginning of an effort to look at Africa broadly -- not only on a country by country, crisis by crisis, and conflict by conflict basis. The objective was to formulate

a comprehensive policy towards the continent that was based on mutual interests and Africa's own possibilities. As President Clinton stated at the time, his Administration would develop a policy "to unleash the human potential of the people of the African continent in ways that (will) lead to a safer and more prosperous world. A better life for them and a better life for us."

## **1995**

In 1995, the Administration undertook new approaches in its dealing with Nigeria and Sudan, Africa's most populous and largest countries respectfully. In the wake of the executions of the Ogoni 9, including author Ken Saro-Wiwa, the U.S. imposed additional sanctions on the military regime in Nigeria. And the Administration took steps to toughen its approach to the Khartoum regime when after the assassination attempt on Egyptian President Mubarak it became clear continued efforts to promote change through dialogue had failed. They were to include working with member states of the United Nations to impose Security Council sanctions on Sudan in 1996, imposing comprehensive U.S. unilateral sanctions in 1997, and leading the efforts at the United Nations to defeat Sudan's bid for Security Council membership in 2000.

Also in 1995, the late Commerce Secretary Ron Brown led a substantial U.S. private and public sector delegation to the Africa-African American summit in Dakar, Senegal. There he pronounced that the United States would no longer concede the African market to former colonial powers. In doing so, he inaugurated a new strategy and approach to the United States' economic relationship with Africa which would advance American commercial interests through an invigorated emphasis on trade and investment.

Secretary Brown's visit was an historic moment, signaling to Africa and Europe in the clearest terms the Clinton Administration's resolve to redefine the U.S. relationship with Africa as a mutually beneficial partnership based not only on common interests but mutual respect.

## **1996**

In 1996, the Administration was focused on keeping the simmering ethnic violence in Burundi from boiling over and safeguarding Americans in Liberia, which was riven by civil war. In the Congo, Laurent Kabila and his partners marched across the country to depose the corrupt Mobutu regime. And because of concerns over Rwanda and Burundi, the Administration undertook to implement the Africa Crisis Response Initiative to train African troops to deploy rapidly and effectively peacekeeping and humanitarian operations.

The year also saw the Administration's first substantive engagement with Congress on early versions of the proposed African Growth and Opportunity Act, sponsored originally by Representative Jim McDermott. The Administration welcomed this legislation as a critical, concrete step towards enhancing the trade relationship with Africa in order to provide major economic benefits to African and Americans alike.

## **1997**

With the beginning of the Administration's second term in 1997, President Clinton, Secretary of State Albright, and National Security Adviser Berger offered strong support to create institutions to embody and implement this new approach to Africa. As the outcome to deliberations within the Administration on how to actually put into place the economic and trade strategy envisioned by Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown, the President's Partnership for Economic Growth and Opportunity in Africa was

launched, a sweeping economic policy initiative to accelerate Africa's integration into the global economy.

This initiative underscored the Administration's resolve to press for a multi-faceted economic and trade strategy that was more than just support for the African Growth and Opportunity Act. It made a wide and sustained effort to engage all the Agencies involved in commerce and economic policy in a revitalized interagency process. The results included the appointment of a U.S. Assistant Trade Representative for Africa and more energetic engagement from the Export-Import Bank, the Trade Development Agency, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, USAID, and the Treasury Department to make increased developmental assistance and debt relief important components of the overall policy taking shape. While trade and investment were taking on greater prominence, the Administration also acted on the recognition that Africa still required substantial developmental aid to raise living standards and achieve integration into the global economy.

A clear signal of the higher profile Africa policy was taking in the Administration was First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton's first visit to Africa in 1997. Almost every Cabinet official was to follow suit by visiting Africa at least once during the Administration.

With the arrival of Dr. Susan E. Rice as Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs in October of 1997, the Administration concentrated intensively on two over-arching, long-term policy goals in keeping with the Administration's recognition of Africa's increasing importance as a trading and strategic partner.

The first was to accelerate Africa's integration into the global economy by promoting economic development, democracy, respect for human rights, and conflict prevention and resolution. The second was to address the security threats emanating from Africa as from the rest of the world, including terrorism, international crime, trafficking in drugs and armaments, environmental degradation, and disease. This additional focus on combating security threats in Africa was unprecedented but deemed essential by the Administration in view of their increasingly trans-national character.

In December 1997, Secretary Albright made her first trip to Africa as Secretary of State to strengthen the growing U.S. partnership with Africa, visiting Ethiopia, Uganda, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. A major focus of her visit was reaching out directly to people, especially the youth.

## **1998**

1998 marked President Clinton's first trip to Africa, the first comprehensive journey to the region by a sitting American President. From March 23 to April 2, he visited Ghana, Uganda, Rwanda, South Africa, Botswana, and Senegal. During his trip, the President launched a number of new initiatives for Africa, which build on his Partnership for Economic Growth and Opportunity.

They included the Education for Development and Democracy Initiative, which is investing at least \$120 million to improve the quality of and technology for education for Africa for the 21st century; the Great Lakes Justice initiative, which is helping to break the cycle of impunity in central Africa by creating impartial, credible, and effective judicial systems; and the Safe Skies for Africa initiative, which is improving aviation and airport safety in eight African countries. All these initiatives have received bipartisan support in Congress and have been virtually full funded.

But 1998 also witnessed renewed conflict and humanitarian disaster in Africa. A border dispute triggered war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, at least seven African nations took

sides and sent troops to the Congo civil conflict, and the Angolan civil war resumed. Meanwhile, famine and humanitarian disaster punctuated Sudan's ongoing civil war. Then, on August 7, the U.S. Embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam were bombed by terrorists, killing 253 persons, including 12 Americans.

Critics of the Administration began questioning whether the vision and aspirations President Clinton had articulated for Africa were justified and whether the region merited further U.S. efforts and attention. In response, the Administration renewed its resolve that its engagement with Africa was for the long term and not optional. Our involvement and continued efforts were and must remain based on a clear-eyed understanding of United States' interests, which remained substantially at stake in Africa.

## **1999**

In March 1999, the Administration launched the "U.S.- Africa Ministerial: Partnership for the 21st Century," hosted by Secretary of State Albright, which brought together over 180 ministers from 43 African countries, nine U.S. cabinet officials, the President, and others to devise a blueprint for America's further engagement with its African partners on a full range of issues, from economic development to political reform. The U.S. also launched the Joint-Economic Partnership Committee with Nigeria, the U.S.-Angola Bilateral Consultative Commission, and the U.S.-Southern African Development Community Forum to deepen and accelerate the pace of its engagement with key countries and institutions in the region.

The year also witnessed the end of the repressive military regime in Nigeria and the election of President Olusegun Obasanjo. To support this transition to democracy, the Administration increased its assistance from \$7 million in 1998 to close to \$170 million dollars in fiscal 2000 when the cost of training and equipping five Nigerian battalions for peace-keeping duties in Sierra Leone was included. These battalions are to complement the peace-keeping personnel already dispatched to Sierra Leone by Kenya, Mali, and Tanzania.

## **2000**

The year 2000 began with the first-ever "Month of Africa" at the United Nations hosted by Security Council President and UN Ambassador Richard Holbrooke to draw greater international attention to African issues.

Later in 2000, the milestone African Growth and Opportunity Act was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Clinton, ushering in a new era of trade relations with Africa.

President Clinton made his second trip to Africa to underscore U.S. support for the transition to democracy in Nigeria and the peace process in Burundi.

The Administration obtained full funding for the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Country Initiative (HIPC) launched at the G-8 Summit at Cologne in 1999, which has the potential to forgive \$70 billion worth of debt for top African reformers. \$435 million was appropriated by Congress for the U.S. participation in HIPC in FY 2001.

In addition, the Administration substantially increased its assistance levels to Africa in fiscal 2001 to \$935 million. This figure is markedly up from the previous high of \$813 million and the low of \$670 million in 1996 and fulfills a commitment by President Clinton during his first Africa trip to restore U.S. aid to Africa to its historic levels. This aid is in addition to the high levels of assistance the U.S. has extended in responding

to humanitarian disasters in Africa, including over \$1 billion in humanitarian assistance to Sudan during the past decade and \$200 million for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of flood-ravaged Mozambique.

The year also saw the signing of the peace agreement facilitated by the United States and the Organization of African Unity to end the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Representing the United States at the peace agreement ceremony in Algiers as part of her fourth and final tour of sub-Saharan Africa, Secretary of State Albright hailed the cooperation that produced the agreement as a model for other conflict resolution efforts. Earlier in South Africa, she had highlighted the need for more world attention to the AIDS epidemic.

Also in 2000, as part of its ongoing counter-terrorism, counter-crime, and counter-narcotics strategies for Africa, the Administration signed an agreement with Botswana to establish the International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) for Southern Africa. The Academy will provide training in core law enforcement skills for southern Africa's police forces as well as their judiciaries.

But many serious problem areas remained in Africa. In Sierra Leone, a fragile cease-fire between the Government and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) overseen by 13,000 UN peacekeepers was in effect. Earlier in the year, in a major setback to the United Nations and the international community, the RUF had broken the peace agreement it had signed in July 1999 and took hundreds of UN peacekeepers hostage. Furthermore, Zimbabwe was on the verge of economic collapse as political instability and the erosion of the rule of law was dashing tourism and business confidence. And in the Ivory Coast, a military coup resulted in an unstable transition to a new civilian government and exacerbated ethnic tensions.

Nonetheless, the Administration concluded its tenure by sending an important signal of American resolve to remain closely engaged with the continent. Seven Americans will be observers in the UN mission to Ethiopia/Eritrea to oversee the implementation of the peace agreement. This is the first time since Somalia that the U.S. has put Americans under a UN blue helmet in Africa.

## **2. ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES**

To implement its goal of broadening and deepening its engagement with Africa, the Administration has re-oriented and re-energized the U.S. Government. In 1993, only the Africa bureaus at the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development were involved on a daily basis with Africa. By the Administration's second term, virtually every U.S. Government agency had active, innovative Africa programs and staff, including the Department of Defense, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Labor, the Department of Transportation, the Export-Import Bank, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, and the U.S. Trade Representative's Office.

At the same time, officials at the very highest level of the Administration took an unprecedented interest in African issues. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright visited Africa every year as Secretary and 7 of the last 8 years since joining President Clinton's cabinet. Vice President Gore made four trips. It is not an exaggeration to say that no Administration has devoted more time, effort, or attention to Africa.

## **3. KEY LEGISLATION**

Working with Congress, the Administration succeeded in obtaining passage of the

African Growth and Opportunity Act, AGOA, in May 2000, a landmark piece of legislation which will boost trade with reforming African nations and benefit Americans and Africans alike. The Act's eligibility criteria serve to recognize and reward countries that show a commitment to economic, social and political best practices. It has the potential to increase significantly U.S.-African trade and investment.

The cornerstone of the President's Partnership, AGOA, adds 1835 more products from 34 eligible African countries to be exempted from duty under the U.S. Generalized System of Preferences (GSP). This means better access for these African countries to the U.S. market than any other region in the world, aside from the handful of countries with which the U.S. has free trade agreements.

AGOA recognizes that the U.S. trade and investment relationship with the region must be dynamic and evolve over time. Building on the success of the U.S.-Africa Ministerial of 1999, it directs the President to establish, along with other leaders in the region, a U.S.-sub-Saharan Africa Trade and Economic Cooperation Forum for high level dialogue between the United States and countries in the region. High level meetings of the Forum are to occur annually.

In 2000, the United States Senate ratified the Convention to Combat Desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought or desertification, particularly in Africa. The Convention will help countries marshal the resources needed to mitigate the effects of desertification and will enhance the effectiveness of foreign assistance while promoting a strong role for non-governmental organizations and local communities to meet this challenge.

#### **4. CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

The U.S. was instrumental in promoting conflict resolution in many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, working through the United Nations and other multilateral and bilateral fora in support of mediation efforts. The U.S. played key roles in brokering peace in Mozambique in 1994 and in Liberia in 1997, supporting UN peacekeeping operations in each instance.

A high priority of the Administration was to end the two-year border conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea. To that end, former NSC Adviser Anthony Lake, Assistant Secretary Susan Rice, and Senior NSC Africa Director Gayle Smith and others, together with representatives of the OAU and UN, engaged in intense shuttle diplomacy with the Ethiopian and Eritrean governments. They eventually succeeded in brokering the June 2000 cessation of hostilities agreement and the subsequent peace treaty signed in Algiers on December 12, 2000.

The Administration also helped to facilitate the Lusaka accords of July 1999 to create a framework for realizing peace in the Congo, and with the assistance of Presidential Envoy Reverend Jesse Jackson helped to broker the cessation of hostilities agreement in Sierra Leone in May 1999, which stopped the atrocities. The subsequent Lome Peace Agreement, which was the result of regionally sponsored peace negotiations between the government of Sierra Leone and the rebel leadership that were supported by the United States, the United Nations, the United Kingdom, the Organization of African Unity, and others, did not succeed. Nonetheless, for almost one full year the atrocities largely stopped, inaccessible areas were opened, and more than 20,000 combatants were disarmed.

To help restore peace and stability to Sierra Leone, in 2000 the Administration began training and equipping seven battalions of West African troops to bolster the UN peacekeeping forces deployed. It also led, in coordination with the United Kingdom, the

effort at the United Nations to create a special court for Sierra Leone to try Revolutionary United Front leader Foday Sankoh and other rebel commanders for their crimes against humanity.

In Sudan, the Administration sought to achieve a negotiated settlement to its long-running civil war, which has left more than two million dead and millions displaced. It supported the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) as the organ for mediation between Sudan and its principal opposition force, the Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement. In 1999, President Clinton appointed former congressman Harry Johnston as Special Envoy to try to energize the IGAD peace process and draw increased attention to the human rights abuses of the Khartoum regime and the ongoing humanitarian crisis.

With revenue from illicit diamonds fueling the wars in Angola, Sierra Leone, and the Congo, the Administration initiated a program in 1999, in close cooperation with the United Kingdom, the diamond industry, diamond producing states, and the UN's Expert Panel, to create political support for the implementation of a system to curb the "conflict" diamond trade. These efforts resulted in a Ministerial meeting in Pretoria in September 2000, which endorsed the broad concept of an international certification system for rough diamonds. This approach received support in October 2000 from over 35 nations attending a conference in London.

Secretary Albright issued a statement on conflict diamonds at the September 1999 UNSC Ministerial and pressed the issue at the G-8 Berlin Ministerial on Conflict Prevention. In October 1999, the State Department sponsored an international conference focusing on this problem in the context of the war in the Congo. Also in October 1999, Assistant Secretary Rice identified illicit diamond trafficking as a major cause of the instability in Sierra Leone. The U.S. then sponsored UNSC Resolution 1306, to ban the trade in rough diamonds from Sierra Leone unless certified by the government. As a further step, the U.S. imposed visa restrictions on President Charles Taylor and his associates involved in illicit diamond and arms trafficking in Sierra Leone.

Since 1996, through its African Crisis Response Initiative, the U.S. has trained and equipped over 6,000 troops from seven African countries to respond rapidly and effectively to peacekeeping and humanitarian challenges. This effort is complemented by the African Center for Strategic Studies, which was launched by the Department of Defense in Dakar, Senegal, in November 1999 to enable African civilian and military leaders to study techniques in conflict resolution and to improve civil/military relations.

## **5. PROMOTING DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

In addition to providing substantial assistance to support South Africa's first democratic election in 1994 and putting sanctions in place to give moral impetus to the collapse of the military regime in Nigeria, the Administration promoted democracy programs in more than 40 African countries during its eight years in office. These programs help to support elections, train legislators, strengthen the free press, support grass-roots citizens' groups, and develop independent judiciaries.

The Administration also initiated Democracy and Human Rights Funds to be administered by individual Embassies to support local human rights organizations, women's groups, conflict resolution efforts, and voter education programs.

In addition, it established the Africa Regional Democracy Fund, which provided \$6 million in FY 2000 to targeted African countries to strengthen civil society and democratic institutions.

The Administration also developed a broad range of programs to promote respect for human rights in Sub-Saharan Africa and combat trafficking in human beings. The Administration strongly supported the U.S. Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000, which established a procedure to identify those countries making no effort to combat such practices and subject them to possible sanctions.

Since 1998, the U.S. has strongly promoted reconciliation and justice in Rwanda, in part through the creation of the Great Lakes Justice Initiative. This program is designed to promote the rule of law, to strengthen traditional legal practices, and to further ethnic healing following the genocide of 1994. Also, the U.S. has actively supported and funded the Independent Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda to hold those guilty of war crimes accountable.

In November 2000, Assistant Secretary of State Susan Rice became the most senior U.S. official to visit southern Sudan in order to publicly highlight the Khartoum regime's human rights abuses, including slavery and the aerial bombing of civilian targets.

## **6. COMBATING HIV/AIDS**

As the magnitude of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in Africa and other regions of the world increased, the Administration moved to take a leadership role in addressing its humanitarian, political, and economic impact. In March 1999, the State Department launched a diplomatic initiative on international HIV/AIDS to raise its global profile and foster political commitment to combating it overseas. It led to American ambassadors and high level U.S. officials encouraging foreign leaders to increase the level of their engagement in confronting this terrible disease.

In 1999, the Administration implemented a \$325 million "Leadership and Investment in Fighting an Epidemic" (LIFE) initiative to fight AIDS around the world. LIFE focuses on 15 target countries, 14 in Sub-Saharan Africa plus India, with the most severe epidemics and the highest number of new infections.

In January 2000, Vice President Gore chaired an unprecedented session of the United Nations Security Council on HIV/AIDS in Africa. This meeting was the first time that the Security Council addressed a health issue.

In August 2000, the President signed the Global AIDS and Tuberculosis Relief Act of 2000, which authorizes a U.S. contribution of up to \$150 million to a proposed world bank global trust fund for AIDS prevention, care, and education as well as funding for other bilateral projects in this area. Such expenditures have made the United States the largest bilateral donor of HIV/AIDS assistance in Africa and the world.

In the past five years, USAID, through work with host country governments and community groups, has provided intensive education in AIDS prevention to over 25 million vulnerable men and women around the world, mostly in Africa, helping them reduce their risk of infection. To accomplish this task, USAID has trained over 180,000 new, dedicated counselors and educators.

To alleviate the suffering of those living with AIDS, the Administration also worked to make HIV/AIDS treatments more affordable in Africa. In May 2000, President Clinton signed an executive order that enables Sub-Saharan African governments to bring life-saving pharmaceuticals and medical technologies to afflicted populations without undue impediments.

The Administration also recognized the AIDS epidemic for the global threat that it is

with both President Clinton and Vice-President Gore characterizing the epidemic as a national security threat, an unprecedented designation for a disease.

## **7. OBSERVATIONS**

In its engagement with Africa, the Clinton Administration emphasized the following:

1. Clear and consistent policy goals were to be the organizing principles for the Administration's approach to the region.
2. Engagement with Africa across the spectrum of policy needed to be for the long term if it was to succeed.
3. The more Government agencies involved in implementing policy the greater the institutionalization of U.S. engagement with Africa and the chances of generating the critical momentum and needed resources for success.
4. Strong leadership from the White House and a close working relationship between the State Department and the NSC were essential to keep African issues at the forefront.
5. The advancement of U.S. goals on the continent requires building effective partnership with key regional players such as Nigeria, South Africa, and Algeria.
6. Outreach is essential to building the bi-partisan constituencies and support necessary for obtaining the resources and the passage of critical legislation such as the African Growth and Opportunity Act.

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