

## OBAMA AND AFRICA: MATCHING EXPECTATIONS WITH REALITY

Princeton N. Lyman and Kathryn A. Robinette

The election of Barack Obama as president of the United States has aroused expectations around the world, but nowhere as much as in Africa. Obama inherits a record of achievement on the continent from George W. Bush that will be hard to match, if not exceed. He will also be far more heavily engaged elsewhere in the world than in Africa, with wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the nuclear threat from Iran, problems encompassing Russia and the worldwide economic crisis. Yet, Obama has singular potential to make his mark on Africa as neither his immediate nor earlier predecessors were able to do—that is, to carry his message of personal and political responsibility, which was emphasized in his inaugural address to African leaders. In addition, he can help empower the institutions of Africa's governments and civil society that can demand accountability, service and democracy where Africa has lagged and been held back. These steps will make American aid and trade programs—on which he can draw from an impressive Bush legacy, and which he must still improve—all the more effective.

Obama will face serious crises in Africa that the Bush administration was not able to resolve. Five years after Bush's designation of the crisis in Darfur as a genocide, the region remains in conflict, with millions still living in precarious refugee shelters and the perpetrators of the violence still at large. In Somalia, failed U.S. counterterrorism policies have left the country in turmoil, with the threat of radical extremists taking control and over a million people in desperate need of humanitarian aid. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Africa's most costly war, with more than 5 million casualties, remains barely resolved.<sup>1</sup> Militias still roam free, threatening the peace and challenging international peacekeepers. Rape and other horrific human rights abuses go unpunished, and the rich mineral resources of the country remain a source of both international intrigue and local fighting. Finally, the United States has lost the support of much of Africa in global trade negotiations—a development that is not in either party's interest. Fashioning

a wholly new trade policy with Africa will not only help the continent break away from dependency, but also strengthen the U.S. position in the Doha round of World Trade Organization negotiations.

### **ACHIEVEMENTS OF BUSH POLICY IN AFRICA**

President George W. Bush, who declared in the presidential debates of 2000 that Africa was not of strategic importance to the United States, confounded his critics by making Africa one of his strongest legacies. Under the Bush administration, aid to Africa more than tripled. Bush's signature program, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), not only transformed the worldwide response to the AIDS pandemic, but also can take credit for moving nearly two million people—mostly in Africa—from facing certain death to leading active lives through access to anti-retroviral treatment.<sup>2</sup> Initiatives on malaria and tuberculosis have revived attention to these devastating diseases. The Africa Education Initiative (AEI) gave special support to that sector. Another Bush initiative, the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA), provided the first clearly designated funding for those countries governing well—regardless of their political or strategic importance—and provided substantial, multi-year funding for their own development priorities. Aid to Africa was \$2.3 billion in 2000; it was \$6.6 billion in 2006, and Bush pledged to raise it to nearly \$9 billion by 2010, for which the United States is on target.<sup>3</sup> That is a hard act to follow.

Obama inherits more than this rise in U.S. attention to Africa. He also inherits a bipartisan approach to Africa that began in the Clinton administration and was reinforced by the Bush administration. During the Clinton administration, Republican and Democratic leaders in the Congress fashioned the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which opened the door to African countries for tariff-free exports to the United States. Under both Clinton and Bush, AGOA has been steadily improved to include more liberal rule-of-origin provisions (loosening restrictions on where materials used in products can come from). In addition, AGOA has been offered to more African countries. Non-oil African imports to the United States more than doubled from 2001 to 2007. Even the Democrat-led Congress has enthusiastically supported PEPFAR and reauthorized it for the years between 2009 and 2013 at more than triple the original five-year amount.<sup>4</sup> U.S. support for UN peacekeeping in Africa has been steady during a steep rise in the cost of such programs. Today, nearly half of UN peacekeeping operations are in Africa, and the largest—in the DRC—has just been enlarged. The U.S. share of UN peacekeeping funding contributions is now over \$1 billion a year.

## **CHALLENGES IN DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE**

According to some polls, President Bush left office with approval ratings as high as 80 percent in Africa, largely because of his aid initiatives. Yet, in spite of these great strides in U.S. policy towards Africa, there are lingering challenges in U.S. assistance strategy, which will become increasingly urgent for the Obama administration. One is to maintain the commitment made by President Bush to double aid to Africa by 2010. It is likely that, with disbursements from the already appropriated funds of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) and those from PEPFAR, the 2010 target will be met. However, whether an Obama administration can maintain such levels, having already stepped back from the campaign pledge to double aid, is questionable. If aid levels are static, other problems will become more formidable. These include food security, climate change, controlling the costs of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, meeting the Millennium Development Goals and improving basic infrastructure on the continent. Many of these challenges overlap and reinforce one another, demonstrating the need for comprehensive strategies and coordination of efforts across the bureaucratic agencies designated to work on these issues. One of Bush's legacies, with which Obama must deal, is the proliferation of agencies and programs operating in Africa and elsewhere. PEPFAR was established separately from United States Agency for International Development (USAID), as was the Millennium Challenge Corporation. Dozens of cabinet departments and offices are now engaged in foreign assistance, as are hundreds of contractors and NGOs. Of special concern has been the rise in foreign assistance administered by the Department of Defense (DOD), increasing from 3.4 percent of U.S. official development assistance in 2000 to 22 percent in 2008.<sup>5</sup> Obama may well be able to contribute more to the effectiveness of aid through careful reorganization, better cross-cutting strategies and improved coordination in the field than through large increases in funding as he deals with the issues discussed in the following sections.

### **Food Security**

Soaring food prices resulted in a global food crisis in 2008. Many countries experienced protests and even rioting. Numerous factors have been identified as having led to the shortage. These factors include rising demand for food as a result of a growing middle-class in rapidly developing countries like China, India and Brazil, increased bio-fuel production, higher oil prices and drought. While oil prices have declined sharply since then, food prices have not dropped to previous levels, adding millions to the list of the world's hungry. The crisis brought to the surface several questions about the effectiveness and efficiency of emergency food aid—specifically, the impact of shipping U.S.-produced food on U.S. transport, rather

than drawing on nearby supplies in developing countries themselves. Most other donors have shifted to the latter policy.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the crisis brought into focus the extraordinary decline in agricultural assistance by both the United States and the World Bank, which fell some 90 percent in the 1990s and is only beginning to be restored.<sup>7</sup> One issue to be thrashed out with European partners is the role that genetically modified organisms (GMOs) can play in overcoming Africa's chronic food shortages. Europe has warned African countries that their exports to Europe could be curtailed if they adopt such crops. However some experts, including most recently Paul Collier, Director of the Centre for the Study of African Economies at the University of Oxford, argue that GMOs are an absolutely essential tool in meeting Africa's food and nutrition needs.<sup>8</sup> U.S. aid programs and U.S. companies are poised to help develop such crops.

### **Controlling the Costs of the HIV/AIDS Pandemic**

Bush leaves behind an incredible legacy of engagement on the continent with respect to combating the spread of HIV/AIDS. Sub-Saharan Africa is home to approximately 67 percent of the total world population infected with HIV and 72 percent of total AIDS-related deaths.<sup>9</sup> PEPFAR, authorized at \$15 billion over five years, is "the largest commitment by any nation to combat a single disease in history."<sup>10</sup> In 2003, PEPFAR authorized funds for the treatment, care and prevention of HIV/AIDS for only 50,000 people living in sub-Saharan Africa. Today, nearly 2.1 million people are receiving anti-retroviral drugs, the vast majority of them in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>11</sup>

However, this progress has not come cheap. The Emergency Plan's expenditures in its first five years actually totaled \$18.8 billion; Congress has authorized \$48 billion for the second five years.<sup>12</sup> Worldwide, UNAIDS estimates that funding for HIV services will need to reach \$15.4 billion by 2010.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, while instrumental in curbing AIDS-related deaths, neither PEPFAR nor other programs have been as successful in preventing new infections. For every two persons added to treatment, there have been five new infections.<sup>14</sup> This poses the prospect of a major and steadily increasing long-term responsibility for tens of millions of individuals who will become dependent on continued U.S. and other international funding over their lifetime, potentially driving out funds for other development needs. Health advocates are urging the Obama administration to develop a broader, global health strategy that will strengthen developing countries' health infrastructures and address to a greater extent the social and cultural roots of the spread of this disease. As a beginning, the Obama administration has reversed the Bush policy of restricting U.S. assistance only to organizations that agree not to promote or perform abortions, a policy which has not only limited participation in the

program, but has also helped divide HIV/AIDS programs from those addressing reproductive health. However, that does not address the underlying issues. Investments in health surveillance, vaccine development and programs addressing tuberculosis, malaria, bird flu and other diseases will make demands on any new global health strategy, furthering the competition for scarce aid funds.

### **Sustainability of the MDGs, Broadening the Dialogue**

In an effort to close the gap between rich and poor countries, world leaders convened in September 2000 to adopt the United Nations Millennium Declaration. Its eight goals, known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), include commitments to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality and empower women; reduce child mortality; improve maternal health; combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensure environmental sustainability; and develop a global partnership for development—all by 2015.<sup>15</sup> These laudable ambitions have not been immune to criticism. Critics charge that the global, rather than regional or national benchmarks unfairly obscure the more limited but still appreciable progress of poorer countries and make achievement of the stated goals nearly impossible for those countries starting from a much lower baseline.

Critics also point out that the MDGs do not include other fundamentals of economic growth, such as investments in infrastructure, improvements in trade opportunities and stronger governance. Africa faces a massive infrastructure deficit. Lack of transport networks, adequate energy supply, irrigation systems, clean water and sanitation—coupled with incredibly high service costs—cripple long-term efforts of poverty alleviation. It is more expensive to ship a ton of wheat from Mombasa, Kenya to Kampala, Uganda than it is to ship it from Chicago to Mombasa.<sup>16</sup> Infrastructure development is essential for expanding trade and encouraging private investment, and it has also been shown to increase agricultural income as much as 10 percent, all of which results in long-term development and growth. Even in South Africa, which has been the largest recipient of private funds for infrastructure development, the need is daunting. Estimated costs of redressing the infrastructure deficit are around \$75 billion, which includes construction, operations and maintenance.<sup>17</sup> The Bush administration had begun addressing infrastructure needs through the MCC, but that program lacks strong support in Congress.

The Obama administration will need to develop a new development framework and a new paradigm for international consensus when, inevitably, it becomes apparent that the economic slowdown, the global food crisis and Africa's low starting base all but ensure that none of the MDGs will be met in sub-Saharan

Africa. The new paradigm will not only need to convince Congress, but will also have to inspire international commitment to a new set of goals perhaps more realistic, but nevertheless surely expensive.

### **Climate Change**

The new paradigm will need to address another phenomenon not taken into account in past or present aid programs. Climate change will have a drastic impact on Africa. Decreases in water availability and the risk of more droughts are high, particularly in areas of southern Africa.<sup>18</sup> Water shortages, in turn, will impact current crop yields. With crop yield reductions projected as high as 50 percent in some countries by 2020, food insecurity, already a serious issue, will become an even greater problem.<sup>19</sup> The heightened levels of ozone will greatly impact human health in central and southern Africa.<sup>20</sup> Researchers already believe that the average higher temperatures in East Africa are to blame for the increasing prevalence of malaria-carrying mosquitoes.<sup>21</sup> Experts predict these changes will cause massive migration from the more vulnerable zones to an already overburdened southern Africa and the teeming cities of the coasts. Most likely, there will be even greater pressures than today from illegal migration to Europe, aggravating the social and political issues of assimilation already prevalent there. Within Africa, conflicts over land and water will likely intensify, as has already occurred in Nigeria's middle states, the eastern DRC and Darfur. The Obama administration will need to look hard at every aspect of existing development strategies to see if they properly address these changes by preparing the right means, technologies and other scientific advancements for minimizing their effects and strengthening the capacity of African governments to accommodate what could be massive shifts of both population and production potential.

### **Conflicting Proposals for Structural Reform of U.S. Assistance**

The dramatic increase in foreign assistance sparked an internal debate within the Bush administration about the structure of U.S. foreign aid and led to efforts to strengthen coordination within the State Department. The Obama administration will face more pressure in this regard from some of its most ardent supporters and from Congress. The proliferation of agencies and programs, coupled with an ever expanding foreign assistance authorization bill, has led many to advocate a major overhaul. But recommendations vary considerably, and each has potential costs in terms of time management, political competition and bureaucratic struggle. Most of the recommendations reflect a feeling that development was too linked to security and short-term political objectives in the Bush administration and needs greater visibility and political support in an Obama presidency. Some go so far as to

advocate a cabinet-level development department, similar to the UK's Department for International Development. This would rightly raise development alongside defense and diplomacy as a central tool of U.S. foreign policy and guarantee more resources for foreign aid. However, there would likely be substantial resistance to this, particularly domestically and within Congress. Others believe that USAID should still lead foreign assistance programs, but that it should be restructured and greatly strengthened. It would be responsible for leading all foreign assistance programs, as well as coordinating with other agencies who engage in development work. Bringing the various assistance programs under one roof has its own set of issues. A program like PEPFAR may run the risk of absorbing too much of the agency's time and resources. A program like MCC, which rewards funds based on good governance rather than on need, may be compromised by the need to direct assistance towards poorer countries and those that are weak or failing.

Still others believe that foreign assistance should be seen as part of an overall national security strategy. It is argued that in an era of weak and failing states that could nurture terrorism, close coordination between aid agencies and the departments of State and Defense is critical to meet the demands of post-conflict reconstruction in countries like Iraq, Afghanistan and African countries such as the DRC and Somalia. While not inconsistent with the desire to have long-term development playing a more central role in U.S. policy and indeed seeing it as a major element in national security policy, this approach nevertheless stresses closer connection of aid agencies to the Department of State, rather than greater independence, and would disappoint many of the other development advocates.

What priority should be given to this question by the Obama administration? Any reorganization would demand considerable time and attention of senior officials, require mediation among competing power structures within the executive branch and need extensive consultation with Congress. The need for reorganization is undoubtedly great and many of the proposals have merit. But given the economic crisis and many competing foreign policy priorities, a major reform may prove too daunting for the present administration. Less sweeping and more ad hoc arrangements may be the path Obama will follow.

## **SECURITY CHALLENGES**

### **Conflict Resolution**

Undoubtedly, one of the first orders of business for the Obama administration in Africa is to address three major conflict situations. First, the Bush administration led an international effort to secure peace in Sudan's long-running civil war. That peace process, however, is precarious and is further complicated by

the ongoing violence in Darfur. Despite naming two successive special envoys for the Darfur conflict, the Bush administration was unable to end what it had designated as genocide. Second, the Bush administration played a smaller role in securing peace in the DRC, supporting a robust UN operation and helping forge a working group of the DRC, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi to bring peace to the eastern border region. Since fighting broke out again in that region in 2008, the United States has not been nearly as active as the UK, France and the UN. Third,

**An early test of the Obama administration's seriousness about bringing peace to Africa will be the dedication of high-level staff and resources.**

in Somalia—as discussed in more detail below—the Bush administration gambled heavily on a military solution to counter the rise of an extremist Islamic movement in Somalia, a policy that has contributed to a major humanitarian crisis and a resurgence of the very movement the United States opposed.

In each of these situations, the Obama administration should learn from past experience that serious peace efforts require more than part-time envoys and minimal diplomatic back-up, as was the case with Darfur. The Bureau of African Affairs at the Department of State is the smallest bureau despite covering forty-eight countries and managing several major crises. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's "transformational diplomacy" was supposed to strengthen postings in Africa and other non-European embassies, but in fact few resources were devoted to Africa under this program, and staffing overall was drained away by the demands of Iraq and Afghanistan.<sup>22</sup> An early test of the Obama administration's seriousness about bringing peace to Africa will be the dedication of sufficient high-level attention, staff and resources. Darfur may be the first test of this, as U.S. Ambassador to the UN Susan Rice is on record calling for strong action to bring this crisis to an end.

**AFRICOM**

One of the most controversial decisions of the Bush Administration regarding Africa, announced in 2007, was the creation of a single U.S. African Command (AFRICOM) to address U.S. security interests in Africa. Previously, those concerns were addressed through three separate commands—U.S. European Command (EUCOM), U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) and U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM). The creation of a single African Command reflected an awareness that Africa was of growing strategic importance for the United States.

However, AFRICOM was met with fierce criticism in Africa. In large part, AFRICOM was a victim of its own effort to be something new and different—



something other than a traditional “combat command.” Those charged with explaining AFRICOM stressed that it did not envision Americans being involved in combat in Africa, but that it would work with other U.S. agencies, like USAID and the departments of State, Commerce and others to promote stability, democracy and development.<sup>23</sup> The problem was that, to African ears, this suggested that all of the U.S. African policy would become “militarized”—i.e., that all programs of development, democracy and humanitarian relief would henceforth be directed through the lens of American security interests.

The problem was compounded by AFRICOM’s stated desire to find a headquarters on the African continent. To African leaders and pundits, always suspicious of American security interests and historically wary of foreign military bases on the continent, this was a red flag. Several African countries, including heavyweights Nigeria and South Africa, formally announced their opposition to AFRICOM, and no country but Liberia evinced any interest in having it headquartered on its soil.<sup>24</sup>

The initial controversy over AFRICOM was unfortunate because it was timely for the United States to recognize the growing strategic importance of Africa and to be able to address serious security issues there with more focus and efficiency. The Obama administration can help overcome African concerns with AFRICOM by addressing these issues squarely and sensibly and by linking them to Africa’s own priorities and needs. Some of these issues do demand closer integration of Defense, State and USAID strategies, but not as much as the special circumstances of Iraq and Afghanistan. In fact, it would be a mistake to incorporate the combat-related approach of those theaters to Africa. It would also be a mistake for AFRICOM to insert itself directly into programs supporting democracy or basic development. AFRICOM would do well to concentrate on several real security priorities that threaten both African stability and American interests. There are signs that AFRICOM leaders are already narrowing their focus, but it will be important for the Obama administration to guide this new entity toward the issues elaborated below.

### **Securing Energy Supplies**

The oil-rich region of West Africa is the source of 15 percent of America’s oil imports and likely to become an even greater source of energy as more offshore production is exploited and liquefied gas plants come online.<sup>25</sup> However, this region is plagued by unrest. In Nigeria’s Niger Delta, attacks on oil facilities stop as much as 10 percent of the country’s oil production, and perhaps as much as US\$5 billion is being stolen annually to buy arms and fuel corruption at local and higher levels of government.<sup>26</sup> Piracy in the Delta disrupts the entire Gulf of Guinea region,

where Africa's other key oil-producing states such as Angola, Equatorial Guinea and Cameroon are located.

The problems of the Niger Delta and the larger Gulf of Guinea region, where deep local grievances exist, cannot be solved by military means alone. However, there is no question that improved naval and coast-guard capacity along with greater regional cooperation among the countries of the gulf are necessary ingredients. Once African governments are prepared to address the social and political roots of the problem, AFRICOM can provide badly needed technical and material assistance. U.S. Africa Command is already providing training to future military leaders in the region and demonstrating optional means of maritime control. It is fostering cooperation among the countries of the gulf, none of which individually can afford to address the security of their offshore facilities. AFRICOM, together with the Department of State and USAID, can offer Nigeria and other oil-producing states in the region comprehensive assistance in addressing a problem that robs them and the world community of badly needed resources.

### **Counterterrorism**

Africa is not free from the scourge of terrorism any more than other parts of the world. American embassies were blown up in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, exposing the presence of a series of al Qaeda cells on the east coast of the continent. Osama bin Laden once operated freely in Sudan, and radical Islamists are threatening to regain control of Somalia following a bloody insurgency against Ethiopian troops, despite American efforts to stop them. In West and Central Africa, the threat of radical Islamist movements is less prevalent, but not entirely absent. For the western region of the Sahel, the area between the Sahara to the north and the savanna belt to the south, the threat is caused by a spillover from North Africa. With the spread of radical Islam and the expansion of terrorist recruitment and operations, it difficult to deal with the threat of terrorism. AFRICOM obviously has an important role in countering these threats, but it is through military restraint as much as military activity that it can be most effective.

Somalia is the most serious counterterrorism situation facing the Obama administration in Africa. It is where U.S. policy has become the most engaged militarily, as well as diplomatically, and where these policies have largely failed. Somalia existed without a government for more than twenty years. During this time of warlords, roadblocks and internal fighting, an Islamist movement—not dissimilar from the early Taliban movement and included on the U.S. list of known terrorist groups—won the support of the business community and other tribal leaders. In 2006, the Union of Islamic Courts took power and provided a greater measure of security and freer commerce. With tacit support from the United States, Ethiopia

invaded in December 2006 and dislodged the Islamic government, an intervention that only led to a long and costly insurgency, forcing hundreds of thousands from their homes and creating a massive humanitarian emergency. During this period, U.S. missiles struck suspected militants in Somalia, fueling anti-American sentiment. As Obama assumed the presidency, the last of the Ethiopian troops were withdrawing from Somalia, leaving behind only a weak African peacekeeping presence in a country that is descending once again into civil war with the radical Islamic movement threatening to return to power.

The Obama administration will need to develop an entirely new policy for securing American interests in this region. Obama should rely less on direct military action and instead support a UN-led political process in Somalia. Additionally, the administration should help rebuild a coalition of African states to cooperate in containing any terrorist threats.

Today, AFRICOM and, previously, EUCOM have helped foster cooperation among countries within northern and Sahelian Africa to contain the activities of al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)—a terrorist organization from Algeria. This group has used the vast and sparsely populated Sahel region, which contains such poor states as Mali, Mauritania, Chad, Senegal and Niger, to escape from Algerian pursuit, to recruit and to train. It has also kidnapped foreigners for ransom. Following an earlier EUCOM program in the region, the State Department now directs—with AFRICOM playing a major role—the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership, which seeks to bolster the capacity of Sahelian states to control their borders. This partnership addresses the needs of the high number of dissident populations in the area and helps apprehend AQIM operatives.<sup>27</sup> The Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership is a good example of where interagency cooperation is needed in the security arena.

A successful counterterrorism program in this region will need not only better security forces, but also improved governance on a broad scale and notable economic development. It will only succeed on the U.S. side if aid agencies like USAID receive sufficient resources to enable these poor states to make a significant difference in the lives of their northern populations.

### **Peacekeeping**

The African Union (AU) was launched in 2002 and immediately pledged to take an active role in conflict resolution. It sent peacekeepers to Burundi, Darfur and, through the Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS), to Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia and Sierra Leone. But the AU soon ran into serious difficulties. It was never able to reach its full promised strength in Darfur and acted with such a weak mandate and poor equipment that it had hardly any impact

on the devastation taking place there. A subsequent joint UN/AU peacekeeping force is facing similar difficulties. The AU pledged 8,000 peacekeepers to replace Ethiopian troops in Somalia, but it failed to obtain more than 4,000. Now that Ethiopian troops are leaving, those remaining peacekeepers feel exposed and are threatening to leave.<sup>28</sup> The African Union commitment to peacekeeping has thus been badly weakened, presenting a serious problem for both the United States and the UN, which depend on African participation in Sudan, Somalia and the DRC, as well as other African conflict situations.

The AU originally sought to have five ready brigades for peacekeeping, but has not met that level of commitment. AFRICOM would do well to make the training and equipping of such forces one of its top priorities. Moreover, the Obama administration should act decisively to provide essential equipment to the beleaguered UN/AU force in Darfur. These are priorities that African leaders have sought. Active support by Obama would give AFRICOM instant credibility on the continent and erase much of the earlier controversy.

### **Narco-States**

A new threat is developing in Africa. Drug syndicates in Latin America are developing delivery routes through West Africa to Europe. Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde and other West African states are being infiltrated by this insidious force, with sufficient money to corrupt the leadership of these poor nations and create—as is happening in Guinea-Bissau—whole areas where state control is ceded to the syndicates.<sup>29</sup> Narco-states in Africa would pose a major threat to African and American interests. They would undermine the important trend toward democracy and better governance of the past two decades, they would threaten the stability of the entire West African region—a major source of global energy supplies—and they could well provide for narco-terrorist cooperation in such areas as the Niger delta and elsewhere. AFRICOM has already recognized the seriousness of this threat and the need for inter-agency cooperation in addressing it. Intelligence cooperation, security sector reform, better development programs, support to civil society and the strengthening of democratic institutions must all be part of a counter-narcotics strategy. The Obama administration should seek ample funding for this program, stopping this cancer before it grows deeper roots into the African continent.

### **THE NEW ACTORS IN AFRICA: RUSSIA, CHINA, AND BRAZIL**

President Obama wrote in 2008, “The emergence of China’s influence in Africa is among the most significant developments on the continent since the end of the Cold War.”<sup>30</sup> Indeed, the burgeoning relationship between China and Africa has

received much attention. Yet, the policy implications of this development and of similar new attention to Africa from other countries are far from clear and perhaps less than one might expect.

China has been at the forefront of infrastructure projects in Africa, investing in road and bridge construction throughout the continent. To date, there are more than 800 Chinese companies operating in forty-nine African countries.<sup>31</sup> China receives a significant share of its oil imports from Africa, with Angola being its principal source; Sudan, where China has substantial direct investment in the industry, is another major supplier. It has invested in major mineral mines in Zambia, Tanzania and elsewhere, and is a major importer of timber from Central Africa. China has also become an increasingly important trading partner to Africa with bilateral trade rising from US\$10 billion in 2000 to US\$73 billion in 2007.<sup>32</sup> By 2010, China may surpass the United States as Africa's most important trading partner.<sup>33</sup> China has accompanied its investments and trade with active high level diplomacy, including several visits from the president and prime minister, a growing cultural program and training of thousands of Africans in various fields.

It is not only China that has recognized the tremendous amount of untapped energy and resources that lie in Africa, but also Brazil, Russia and India—together referred to as the BRIC countries. While still far behind the United States and China in terms of assistance levels and trade, Russia has shown clear signs that it is interested in increasing its presence on the continent. In September 2008, Russia's state-controlled gas company, Gazprom, gained concessions for natural gas in Nigeria, and there are plans for a US\$10 billion, roughly 2,700-mile trans-Saharan gas pipeline to Europe.<sup>34</sup> Russia also intends to write off nearly US\$20 billion in debt from African countries and has announced new aid packages.<sup>35</sup> Since President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva took office, Brazil has made a concerted effort to forge closer ties with Africa. During his first three years in office alone, President Lula made five trips to the continent and visited upwards of twenty African countries. Between 2003 and 2007 Brazil opened twelve new embassies on the continent, and bilateral trade doubled.<sup>36</sup> The first Africa-South America Summit (AFRAS) was held in Abuja, Nigeria in 2006, with Brazil playing a leadership role. A second summit is scheduled for 2009 in Venezuela.<sup>37</sup>

African governments have welcomed the growing attention from these countries, reciprocating aid and infrastructure projects with oil and gas concessions and access to their countries' minerals and markets. Some see the BRIC countries as offering an "alternative development model," and alternative sources of aid, particularly when Western aid packages are often seen by African governments as coming with too many strings attached. Africans have voiced concern over China's

practice of importing Chinese labor for many of its projects, and imports of both Chinese and Indian goods have begun to undermine Africa's domestic consumer goods industries. There is also a growing worry over the quality of some of its infrastructure projects, as well as roads and hospitals.

The United States has different concerns about the support being given to Africa's worst regimes. China has come under fire for supplying arms to Sudan and Zimbabwe. Russia has also been accused of arms deals with Sudan, but it has denied these allegations.<sup>38</sup> Both China and Russia have opposed tough UN Security Council sanctions on Sudan's government over Darfur, and both voted against sanctions on Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe. These issues were the principal items on the agenda of the Bush administration. Obama will have similar concerns, especially as he addresses the ongoing crisis in Darfur and as the situation in Zimbabwe continues to descend into a major political and humanitarian disaster. Whether a more proactive approach to BRIC, regarding Africa, is worthwhile for Obama remains to be seen. He will surely resist, as did the Bush administration, hyping China's activities in Africa as a "threat" or a new form of Cold War. There also may be some public relations benefit to joint programs on climate change abatement in Africa and perhaps useful cooperation in agriculture and health projects. But most of all, Obama will need to find common ground on the political differences that will arise in the UN regarding Sudan and Zimbabwe.

#### **AN OBAMA AGENDA: WHAT IS NEW?**

It should be clear from the above that Obama faces more challenges in Africa than new opportunities. He has the advantage of building on Bush's aid achievements and the bipartisan support for them generated over the past eight years. Preserving the Bush gains should therefore be a high priority, even if the programs are, as is often the case, somewhat renamed and restructured. Improving on the assistance programs along the lines discussed will be important substantively and will unquestionably be a major preoccupation of those charged with them. He will need to strengthen the U.S. commitment to resolving the major conflicts in Africa, with special attention and far more staffing and political support devoted to the situations in Sudan, Somalia and the DRC. These efforts will be essential to avoid further catastrophic conflicts and humanitarian emergencies.

These steps, as important as they are, will not produce an Obama legacy in Africa. They are not distinct from the past, and financial constraints will almost surely limit any dramatic new programs on the scale of the Bush administration. If Obama is to have a true legacy in Africa, and meet some of the great expectations of him, he needs to take on two other highly important tasks, for the first of which he is especially suited.

## **INSPIRING A MORAL REGENERATION IN AFRICA**

When Obama visited Africa in 2006, he spoke out candidly and courageously on the need for Africans to root out corruption. This is not a new theme, but Obama can give it more force and momentum than any previous president. He begins his term with enormously high regard in Africa and a record of inspiring change. His message to America has been to restore a sense of personal and institutional responsibility, from the parent, to the society, to the highest levels of government. The same message should be his singular theme with Africa. Africa's democracies are fragile; the institutions of oversight are weak and underfunded; corruption has been endemic and capital flight has undermined much of the development investment of the past. There is, however, promise in the growth of democracy that has taken place—most of Africa's governments are now elected—and civil society has grown stronger in much of Africa. Improved economic governance is on the agenda in most countries and regional institutions. Thus, the environment in Africa is ready for a major push in the right direction.

Obama should back this message with concrete actions. He should continue to emphasize the basic policy behind the MCC of providing substantial resources to governments that govern well. He should increase—at relatively little cost—support for democratic institutions and the rule of law, for training journalists, for election monitoring and transparency and for local government. He should make responsibility and accountability the themes of every visit to Africa, challenging leaders to take tangible steps toward transparency, cleaner government and better use of resources. For example, African governments have pledged to allocate no less than 15 percent of their budgets to health, but few have done so. Likewise, they promised to dedicate 10 percent to agriculture and yet again few have done so. In Obama's HIV/AIDS and other health programs, he should press for these commitments to be met and do the same for programs of agricultural development. His administration should work with institutions that have provided prizes and incentives to African leaders who meet the criteria of good governance, such as the Mo Ibrahim Foundation. He should, in sum, inspire a generation of Africans to demand accountability and make far better use of the resources they have.

One more step would give this theme credibility. Obama should instruct the Department of Justice to aggressively pursue prosecution of companies and individuals who seek to illegally bribe officials in Africa. He should press Europe to take far more action in this direction than they have been willing to date. By recognizing that corruption is a two-way street, these themes will be far less patronizing and far better received as the Obama administration begins to formulate policy. Ultimately, in eight years, Obama could help promote a moral regeneration in Africa. If he succeeds, it could do as much or more as all the aid progress of the past eight years.

## **A NEW TRADE AGENDA**

Less dramatic, but no less ground-breaking, would be for Obama to develop a new trade agenda with Africa. The African Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA) has indeed provided Africa with opportunities, but Least Developing Countries (LDCs) in Africa cannot survive forever on special preferences. This is especially true as LDCs elsewhere with greater capacity, like Bangladesh, demand equal access and as these preferences themselves threaten to create more dependency, rather than generate more trade capacity. Africa may need AGOA for another decade, but in the meantime, it needs to develop trade capacity through sub-regional trade arrangements, technical and material assistance and the opening of markets not only in the United States and Europe, but also in the emerging markets of India, China, Brazil and other rapidly growing countries. Current U.S. and African trade policies do not adequately support these goals.

In recent years, the United States and Africa have parted ways in the Doha round. Led by South Africa, the rest of the continent has thrown its support behind the demands of the BRIC countries, who have resisted opening their markets in return for greater reductions in U.S. and European agricultural subsidies. On this issue, the Doha negotiations have been deadlocked. Yet, Africa would benefit from all markets being opened further, as embodied in a final Doha agreement. Africa is also ill-served by the efforts of the European Union to sign European Partnership Agreements with individual African governments that in effect will undermine the ability of Africa to develop sub-regional trade regimes, through the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) or ECOWAS.

The United States needs to develop a new trade policy for Africa. First, the United States should support a WTO declaration citing Africa as a single trading zone, which would eliminate the distinction between the least developed and other African countries. This will permit further sub-regional trade regimes and their collaborative negotiation of trade agreements with the EU and others that do not undermine that goal. Second, the United States should offer substantially increased assistance to Africa for trade capacity, including infrastructure and needed technical assistance. In return, the United States should reestablish the partnership with Africa that existed at the beginning of the Doha round, where the United States and Africa saw mutual goals in pressing for a successful Doha round. While this will take substantial diplomatic efforts by the United States, especially with leading African countries like South Africa, Kenya and Nigeria, it will also signal a new long-term policy to reduce Africa's dependence on aid and to bring it more into the global economy. For the United States, it could help bring about a successful Doha round for the benefit of the American economy at a most



important time.

In these two ways, Obama could establish his own legacy and meet some of the great expectations that will greet him in Africa. 

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Joe Bavier, “Congo War-Driven Crisis Kills 45,000 a Month: Study,” Reuters, 22 January 2008.

<sup>2</sup> “Rice highlights US success against AIDS worldwide,” Agence France-Presse, 12 January 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Princeton N. Lyman, “U.S. Foreign Assistance and Trade Policies in Africa” (Center For Strategic & International Studies: forthcoming), [http://www.csis.org/component/option,com\\_csis\\_pubs/task/view/id,5217/](http://www.csis.org/component/option,com_csis_pubs/task/view/id,5217/).

<sup>4</sup> *To Authorize Appropriations for Fiscal Years 2009 through 2013 to Provide Assistance to Foreign Countries to Combat HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, and for Other Purposes*, HR5501, 110th Cong., 2nd sess., 2008.

<sup>5</sup> Laurie Garrett, “The Future of Foreign Assistance Amid Global Economic and Financial Crisis” (Council on Foreign Relations: January 2009), 21.

<sup>6</sup> Kathryn McConnell, “Bush Administration Seeks Change in Emergency Food Aid Delivery,” USINFO, 20 April 2007, <http://www.america.gov/st/washfile-english/2007/April/20070420152206AKllenoCcM0.4823572.html>.

<sup>7</sup> Anthony Lake and Christine Todd Whitman, “More Than Humanitarianism: A Strategic U.S. Approach toward Africa” (Council on Foreign Relations: 2006), 119.

<sup>8</sup> Paul Collier, “The Politics of Hunger,” *Foreign Affairs* 87, no. 6 (November/December 2008).

<sup>9</sup> Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, “2008 Report on the Global Aids Epidemic” (report presented at the XVII International AIDS Conference, Mexico City, Mexico: August 2008).

<sup>10</sup> PEPFAR Press Release, “U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR): A Commitment Renewed,” January 2009, <http://www.pepfar.gov/press/107735.htm>.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> “Senate Vote Renews US Government’s Global AIDS Programme PEPFAR”, UNAIDS, 17 July 2008, [http://www.unaids.org/en/KnowledgeCentre/Resources/FeatureStories/archive/2008/20080717\\_PEPFAR.asp](http://www.unaids.org/en/KnowledgeCentre/Resources/FeatureStories/archive/2008/20080717_PEPFAR.asp).

<sup>13</sup> Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, “Financial Resources Required to Achieve Universal Access to HIV Prevention, Treatment, Care and Support” (report, UNAIDS, Geneva, Switzerland: 26 September 2007), [http://data.unaids.org/pub/Report/2007/20070925\\_advocacy\\_grne2\\_en.pdf](http://data.unaids.org/pub/Report/2007/20070925_advocacy_grne2_en.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> Peter Piot, “Uniting the World Against Aids,” (speech, Tsinghua University, Beijing, China: 17 September 2007).

<sup>15</sup> “The Millennium Development Goals Report” (report, United Nations, New York, NY: 2008), <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/pdf/The%20Millennium%20Development%20Goals%20Report%202008.pdf>.

<sup>16</sup> “Network Effects: Connectivity and Commitment Pay Dividends in African Transport,” *Economist*, 16 October 2008.

<sup>17</sup> Vivien Foster, “Overhauling the Engine of Growth: Infrastructure in Africa” (report, Africa Infrastructure Country Diagnostic, The World Bank, September 2008).

<sup>18</sup> Andrew Revkin, “Ocean Warmth Tied to African Drought,” *New York Times*, 24 May 2005.

<sup>19</sup> M. Boko, I. Niang, A. Nyong, C. Vogel, A. Githeko, M. Medany, B. Osman-Elasha, R. Tabo and P. Yanda, “Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change” eds. M.L. Parry, O.F. Canziani, J.P. Palutikof, P.J. van der Linden and C.E. Hanson (Cambridge: Cambridge

University Press), 433-467, <http://www.ipcc-wg2.org/>.

<sup>20</sup> Marlisse Simmons, "High Ozone and Acid-Rain Levels Found Over African Rain Forests," *New York Times*, 19 June 1989.

<sup>21</sup> "Enhancing African Adaptation to Climate Change: Climate Change Adaptation in Africa" (report, International Development Research Centre, Ottawa: 2008), [http://www.idrc.ca/uploads/user-S/12259900281Annual\\_report\\_07-08.pdf](http://www.idrc.ca/uploads/user-S/12259900281Annual_report_07-08.pdf).

<sup>22</sup> Shawn Dorman, "Global Repositioning in Perspective." *Foreign Service Journal*, Washington, DC, January 2009, 18-30.

<sup>23</sup> Stephanie Hanson, "U.S. Africa Command: AFRICOM" (Council on Foreign Relations: 3 May 2007), <http://www.cfr.org/publication/13255/>.

<sup>24</sup> Jonathan Paye-Layleh, "West African Military Chiefs Denounce Africom," *Mail & Guardian*, 7 November 2007.

<sup>25</sup> Todd Pitman, "U.S. Strategic Interests Rise in West Africa's Oil-Rich Gulf of Guinea," Reuters, 7 August 2005.

<sup>26</sup> Andrew Walker, "Blood Oil Dripping from Nigeria," BBC, 27 July 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7519302.stm>.

<sup>27</sup> The United States Africa Command, *The Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership*, Program Overview, <http://www.africom.mil/tsctp.asp>.

<sup>28</sup> "AU Fails to Secure Somali Force," BBC, 31 January 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6312217.stm>.

<sup>29</sup> Ed Vulliamy, "How a Tiny West African Country Became the World's First Narco-State," *Guardian*, 9 March 2008.

<sup>30</sup> "Town Hall: Presidential Candidate's Official Response to Questionnaire: Senator Barack Obama" (speech, Leon H. Sullivan Foundation, Washington, DC, 2008), <http://www.thesullivan-foundation.org/foundation/Town%20Halls/Presidential%20Town%20Hall%20-%20Oct%202007/PresidentialTownHall-Obama.asp> (accessed 16 January 2009).

<sup>31</sup> Akwe Amosu, "China in Africa: It's (Still) the Governance, Stupid" (Foreign Policy In Focus Discussion Paper, Foreign Policy In Focus, Washington, DC: 2007), <http://www.fpiif.org/fpiftxt/4068>.

<sup>32</sup> Stephanie Hanson, "China, Africa, and Oil" (Council on Foreign Relations: 6 June 2008), <http://www.cfr.org/publication/9557/>.

<sup>33</sup> David H. Shinn, "China's Engagement in Africa" (Center For Strategic & International Studies: forthcoming), [http://www.csis.org/component/option,com\\_csis\\_pubs/task,view/id,5218/type,1/](http://www.csis.org/component/option,com_csis_pubs/task,view/id,5218/type,1/).

<sup>34</sup> "Gazprom Eyes Saharan Pipe Plans," *Upstream Online*, 16 April 2008, <http://www.upstreamonline.com/live/article152530.ece>.

<sup>35</sup> "Top Ten Stories You Missed in 2008: Russia Makes a Play for Africa," *Foreign Policy* online, 2008.

<sup>36</sup> Leonardo Calvo Sotello and Gavin Anderson and Company, "Africa-A New Focus of International Interest" (report, IE Business School, Shanghai, China: 2008).

<sup>37</sup> Gilbert Da Costa, "Africa-South America Summit Opens in Abuja," *Voice of America*, 28 November 2006.

<sup>38</sup> Agence France-Presse, "World Briefing: Africa; Sudan: Russian Fighter Jets Purchased," *New York Times*, 15 November 2008, A8.