

Summary of State Department Briefing with Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Ambassador Dr. Jendayi E. Frazer on October 31, 2007

Background: The Constituency for Africa, (CFA), in partnership with the Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State, organized this unique forum to bring together stakeholders and decision-makers from the private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for an in-depth dialogue about the Bush Administration's U.S.-Africa foreign policy agenda, its challenges and accomplishments. The U.S.-African Foreign Policy Roundtable session is framed as an "off-the-record" meeting and includes a frank and open discussion with the U.S. Department of State's Assistant Secretary of African Affairs, Ambassador Dr. Jendayi E. Frazer, on critical topics of discussion to include an overview of the accomplishments in Africa by the Bush administration, her thoughts and reflections on her legacy on U.S.-African foreign policy as well as the role of the African Union (AU) to assist many African leaders in making progress toward promoting democratic values, reducing corruption and improving the governance of their respective African countries.

Prior to Ambassador Dr. Jendayi E. Frazer's appointment as the U.S. State Department's Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, she was the U.S. Ambassador to South Africa, and prior to that appointment she served as special assistant to the President of the United States and was Senior Director of African Affairs at the National Security Council (NSC). Dr. Frazer's resume is augmented by academia as an Assistant Professor at the University of Denver and at Harvard University, coupled with her Department of Defense experience in African Affairs. Her outstanding service during her tenure confirmed the utmost confidence of both President George W. Bush and Dr. Condoleezza Rice, U.S. Secretary of State. Ambassador Frazer has visited twenty-four of the forty-eight countries located in the Sub-Saharan Africa and worked extensively on African issues for more than twenty-six years. During the 2005 Ronald H. Brown African Affairs Series she was presented with the African Advocacy Leadership Award in recognition for their steadfast advocacy in support of a proactive U.S.-Africa foreign policy agenda and for her ongoing accomplishments towards building a positive dialogue between American and African leaders as well as with advocates for Africa from around the world. In 2003, she received the "Constituent of the Year" Award from the Board of Directors of the Constituency for Africa in recognition of her significant contributions to the advancement of U.S.-Africa foreign policy.

This highly informative session is a continuation of CFA's previously successful briefings with Ambassador Frazer in 2005 and 2006. According to Melvin P. Foote, President and Chief Executive Officer of CFA, "*The purpose of this particular meeting is to have a meaningful discussion about U.S.-Africa Foreign Policy agenda amongst key influential*

individuals from within both the public and private sector with the Department of State. Everyone in attendance is a friend of Africa, although some may have differing ideas about how to best proceed with improving upon the Bush Administration's U.S. foreign policy agenda on Africa." A follow-up to this particular forum will be a concept paper on a strategic plan of action for consideration by the next administration with regard to a robust and sustainable foreign policy agenda for Africa, especially as it relates to empowering African-Americans and their African counterparts in accomplishing the goals and objectives of the African Union.

Attendees: Ambassador Shirley E. Barnes (retired), Chairperson of the Barnes Findley Foundation; Cynthia F. Colas, Director of International Affairs, National Council of Negro Women; Julius E. Coles, President of Africare; Vivian Lowery Derryck, Senior Vice President of the Academy for Educational Development and CFA Board Member; Anita R. Estell, Esq., Principal of Polsinelli Law Firm and CFA Board Member; Melvin P. Foote, President and CEO of the Constituency for Africa; Dr. Badi Foster, President of the Phelps Stokes Fund; Dr. Gloria B. Herndon, Chairperson of the American and African Business Women's Alliance; Reginald K. Ingram, Jr., Chief Development Officer of Church World Service; Crispian Kirk, President of BANTU Consulting; Katrin A. Kuhlmann, Esq., President of the Trade, Aid, and Security Coalition; Victoria Mallett, CFA Intern (Guilford College); Dewardric McNeal, Fellow at the Brookings Institution; Dr. Roscoe M. Moore, Jr., President of PHRockwood and CFA Board Member; Dr. Sylvester Murray, Chair of the Africa Working Group of the National Academy of Public Administration; Bernadette A. Paulo, President of The Africa Society; David J. Saunders, Program Director of the Constituency for Africa and AAUC Secretariat; Frank Stewart, President of the American Association of Blacks in Energy; Judge Mary A. Terrell, Chairperson of the African Judicial Network; and Walker Williams, President of Education Africa, USA.

Walker Williams, acting on behalf of the CFA delegation as the moderator of the meeting, offered sincere greetings to Ambassador Frazer for her willingness to once again host this special gathering of the Africa-focused NGO community in order to have a constructive dialogue on U.S.-Africa foreign policy. He then asked everyone to briefly introduce themselves (see the above list of attendees). Afterwards, he asked for Ambassador Frazer to provide her opening remarks.

Ambassador Frazer thanked Mel Foote for organizing this briefing and commended him for his commitment to building a broad-based constituency of individuals and organizations that are concerned about Africa. She spoke about how she greatly appreciates the opportunity to reach out to the Africa-focused NGO community in an effort to increase awareness and support of President Bush's initiatives towards Africa. Ambassador Frazer also stated that she

would like to comment on the impact of her legacy as the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs. In particular, she mentioned the “transformation of economies” from a reliance on foreign assistance to debt relief to the growth and development of free market partnerships; a greater emphasis on institutional development and resources in people; as well as an enhanced focus on peace and security for the African continent. She also mentioned that First Lady Laura Bush has been very influential in her support of the Africa Education Initiative (AEI) headed up by Dr. Sarah Moten which grew from \$200 million to \$650 million. Currently, AEI provides much needed scholarships for many girls and young women, essential teacher training and more than four million textbooks being published with the assistance of HBCUs - - all of which have added value to Africa’s sustainability.

In addition, she mentioned that she has pushed for the extension of education being tied into the World Bank’s fast-track system headed up by Bobby Pittman. Foreign assistance has quadrupled since 2001 when President Bush set the goal of \$1 billion with foreign assistance now at \$5.6 billion. She acknowledged that trade and investments have gained momentum but that much more needed to be done as well as highlighted the success of the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) which is an innovative foreign assistance program designed to “reduce poverty through sustainable economic growth”. While the MCC has called for a new compact for global development and given some eighteen African countries access to targeted grants estimated at \$2.4 billion, unfortunately, it appears that it may lose its efforts to obtain the necessary funds from the US Congress to fulfill its commitment to Africa. She suggested that it was especially important that civil society advocate on behalf of MCC by creating demand based on this success model for development funding. Currently Liberia, Mauritania, Uganda, Zambia and Malawi are up for consideration of MCC funding assistance.

She also mentioned that the Bush administration’s progress on addressing HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis has met with success. She stated she was pleased that the Bush administration has been very successful in doubling the total funding allocations for PEPFAR to \$30 billion over the next five years. In addition, in the area of peace and conflict resolution, there has been great success with the civil unrest situations in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Burundi, Southern Sudan, Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. She agreed that there is still much more work to be done with the crises in Darfur, Somalia and Zimbabwe and the Bush administration is seeking to resolve these through a commitment to African partnership such as the African Union. Overall she stated that she was pleased with the fact that her legacy on Africa will show that the Bush administration has done a lot for Africa but that there is still much more that needs to be done.

Moreover, she suggested that there really needs to be a change in attitude about Africa. A good example of this is in Rwanda where change for the better was brought about because of

changes in government, private sector and civil society. She stated that the Chinese have put it well when they suggested that “Africa is still not organized enough” and that in her opinion an attitude towards shaping the destiny of Africa was needed. As you can readily agree corruption and the lack of transparency in government leads to a short term view on Africa that addresses the mindset of “getting yours while you can with no concern about others”. Young African people see this dysfunctional behavior as detrimental to Africa’s emergence into the 21st century and are beginning to demand a change in the status quo. She re-emphasized that “we’ve done a lot...just not enough.” She also said that the key towards sustainable success was institution building and changing the attitudes of the African people from the perception that “the West is responsible for them to the reality that they are responsible for themselves”. In conclusion, she suggested that her legacy towards Africa should be remembered for her contributions which have paved a way for a more positive and pro-active change in attitude towards Africa both from an American and African perspective.

Next, Walker Williams moderated the question and answer session as follows:

Julius Coles asked Ambassador Frazer to expand on the looming Liberian debt issue after recovering from a long and convoluted civil war. *Ambassador Frazer responded that the US government has called upon various countries to come up with a creative solution to close the debt gap through debt relief commitments.*

Dr. Badi Foster expressed his concern about the lack of the talent pool of African-Americans in key positions within the US Agency for International Development (USAID). He asked Ambassador Frazer what should be the strategy to retain this momentum? *Ambassador Frazer stated that during her tenure she has championed the need to pass the baton by increasing diversity in internships and entry level positions within the agency as well as encouraging mentorship initiatives.*

Anita Estell followed-up on this matter by suggesting that perhaps Ambassador Frazer could expand on this by building a relationship between USAID and historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) for internships in the Foreign Service community. She stated that is very important that the leaders of today create ways to link-up with the future leaders of tomorrow.

Linda Thomas Greenfield stated that it would be a good idea to have the AAUC members meet with Harry Thomas who is the U.S. State Department’s Director for Minority Recruitment. She also stated that the State Department is doing a good job with its outreach with the next generation of Foreign Service officers but that its biggest problem is promoting people from the mid-level stages to the senior level stages.

Frank Stewart asked if Ambassador Frazer was looking for an opportunity to sustain the success of these past few years. Perhaps she could promote target goals and objectives towards the institutionalization of her legacy in particular on the African continent based on such a strategic plan. *Ambassador Frazer stressed that the AAUC must also be involved with this matter by becoming more actively engaged in the U.S. presidential campaigns in 2008. She emphasized that it was extremely important that African-Americans have a voice in the transition process in order to ensure the continuity of the gains made by African-Americans in U.S. foreign policy on Africa during the Bush administration.*

Vivian Lowery Derryck commented that she was pleased to see that Ambassador Frazer's opinion has come around on the position that HIV/AIDS is a security issue and that increased foreign assistance was a critical part of Africa's growth and development. She then asked Ambassador Frazer if she had an opinion about Somalia and the recognition of Somaliland as an independent entity? *Ambassador Frazer thanked Vivian for her remarks but stated that she has not come full circle on the matter of HIV/AIDS being a security matter but rather it remains in her opinion a humanitarian/public health matter. With regard to Somaliland she deferred by stating that this matter was best being taken up by the African Union.*

Sylvester Murray asked about the history of dysfunctional governments and the greater need for capacity development. His organization, the National Academy for Public Administration (NAPA), is all about governance and institutionalization. It appears to him that the U.S. government places more emphasis on policy versus governance. How can NAPA be more useful in this matter? *Ambassador Frazer suggested that the best way to achieve public administration through USAID would be from the American embassies on the African continent. In addition, the MCC could be influential in encouraging African governments to include public administration within their respective compacts.*

Ambassador Shirley Barnes asked about the impact on security with the advent of AFRICOM? *Ambassador Frazer stressed that the United States already has a strong military presence on the African continent and the idea to establish AFRICOM as a means to streamline or unify military coordination while a good idea it is actually nothing new. Unfortunately, AFRICOM has no resources and at the moment is slightly more than an organizational chart. Moreover, both the U.S. media and Americans in general must be careful in their expectations of AFRICOM's impact on the African continent. She also suggested that the AAUC become more involved as a constituency base for AFRICOM's maximum benefit and success on the African continent.*

Dewardric McNeal asked Ambassador Frazer about her impression of a transformation of economies through the increased engagement of China on the African continent? Could she

please elaborate on how the United States is dealing with this matter – through competition, cooperation or a dual approach? *Ambassador Frazer stated that she believes in a dual approach but only if China would agree to fundamentally buy-in to the norms of engagement. This would include donor norms, collective norms, transparency, leadership and partnerships. The Bush administration is actively seeking collaboration with China on infrastructure initiatives for humanitarian services and business development. Regarding competition, the U.S. needs to counter China’s influence in Zimbabwe and Sudan. For the long-term, she stated that “the U.S. has done most of the heavy lifting in Africa and China is basically just taking advantage of our efforts.” African countries must address these dynamics by realizing that China needs the vast resources of Africa in order to fuel their rapidly expanding economy. How Africa will benefit from this new approach remains to be seen.*

Katrin Kulhmann asked about economic engagement and the role of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) since it does not realistically include agriculture and the empowerment of women in business. How can the U.S. better utilize its trade policy to benefit Africa? *Ambassador Frazer stated that while she is not fully knowledgeable on U.S.-Africa trade policy she sees AGOA as primarily a defensive trade policy. In her opinion, governments can only create the appropriate environment but that it is up to the private sector to drive a free market economy system.*

At the conclusion of the question and answer session, Walker Williams thanked everyone for their scope of questions/comments and commended Ambassador Frazer for her outstanding service towards the improved positive perception of U.S.-Africa foreign policy. He then asked Melvin Foote to provide final remarks and close out the meeting.

Mel Foote congratulated Ambassador Frazer on her truly outstanding leadership as the Assistance Secretary of State for African Affairs and suggested that her legacy would be a hard act to follow! He commented that she has truly “raised the bar during her watch” and spoke on behalf of the Africa-focused NGO community that we hope to continue to work closely with her during the remainder of her tenure with the Bush administration and beyond wherever her next career path may take her!

Summary Notes compiled and prepared by Victoria Mallett (CFA Intern) and David J. Saunders (CFA Program Director).