

# **SUMMARY OF CONSTITUENCY FOR AFRICA AND AFRICAN AMERICAN UNITY CAUCUS POLICY BRIEFING WITH AMBASSADOR DR. JENDAYI E. FRAZER, U.S. ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS – JANUARY 8, 2009 AT U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE**



**Ambassador Jendayi E. Frazer  
Assistant Secretary, Bureau of African Affairs  
U.S. Department of State**

Ambassador Dr. Jendayi E. Frazer is the Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of African Affairs, position to which she was appointed by President George W. Bush in June 2005. She was sworn in and began her tenure as Assistant Secretary on August 29, 2005. Prior to becoming Assistant Secretary, Frazer served as the United States Ambassador to South Africa from August 3, 2004 to August 26, 2005. Among Frazer's key achievements as United States Ambassador were the oversight of rapid expansion of HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and treatment programs under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, and the promotion of a new era of cooperation in regional peacekeeping through signature of a bilateral agreement with the South African Government under the Africa Contingency Operations Training Assistance (ACOTA) program.

Ambassador Frazer was Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for African Affairs at the National Security Council from February 22, 2001, until her swearing-in as Ambassador in June 17, 2004. She came to the NSC from Harvard University, where she was serving as an Assistant Professor of Public Policy at the Kennedy School of Government. As a Council on Foreign Relations International Affairs Fellow, she served as a political-military planner with the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the Department of Defense, and as Director for African Affairs at the National Security Council. She is a graduate of Stanford University, where she earned a B.A. in Political Science and African and African-American Studies, M.A. degrees in International Policy Studies and International Development Education, and a Ph.D. in Political Science. Dr. Frazer was a visiting fellow at the Center for International Security and Arms Control at Stanford University; a research associate at the Institute for Development Studies at the University of Nairobi, Kenya; a member of the faculty of the Graduate School of International Studies, University of Denver; and editor of the journal *Africa Today*.

Today's meeting was a gathering of almost forty members of the African American Unity Caucus (AAUC) as a continuation of an annually scheduled U.S.-Africa Policy Briefing that has been hosted by Ambassador Frazer as a part of the Ronald H. Brown African Affairs Series since 2005. The AAUC Coordinator, Ms. Jeannine B. Scott, Senior Vice President of Africare and the AAUC Policy Committee Chairman, Mr. Crispian Kirk, Consultant, National Medical

Association (NMA) led the AAUC delegation. Ms. Scott provided greetings and opening remarks on behalf of the AAUC delegation. She expressed her utmost appreciation with Ambassador Frazer for agreeing to host these important policy briefings during her tenure as the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs. She also applauded Ambassador Frazer specifically for her remarks on the legacy of the Bush administration with regard to Africa and asked that during her prepared remarks today if she would also provide some suggestions for the incoming Obama administration.

Ambassador Frazer thanked everyone for attending today's meeting. She expressed her utmost appreciation for the continued support of the AAUC constituency during her tenure and stated that she was very proud of the Bush administration's accomplishment and legacy on its Africa Policy record. She also stated that she has gained tremendous experience over the last eight years and has managed to build some great relationships and partnerships in the process. While she is very proud of her overall record she believes that several initiatives impacting Africa have met with great success to include:

(a) President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) which significantly impacts the health of African mothers and children as well as encompasses an approach to improving public health on the African continent. She added that the incoming Obama administration needs to continue the success of PEPFAR by empowering health professionals to be the lead response to combatting disease and poor health care in Africa. In other words, leverage science and public health policy in order to effectively deal with Africa's public health challenges;

(b) Liberia has emerged as a successful model on the African continent to move from the removal of a dictator to the free and fair election of the first woman president of an African nation. She was very proud to have been involved in seeing this progression from a stage of conflict resolution to a democratic transformation. With regard to the incoming Obama administration the next step in Liberia should be to focus on economic growth and development; and

(c) Role of the Military is very essential in Africa to generate progress in democracy and protection of the rule of law. For the incoming Obama administration, Zimbabwe, Sudan, Congo and Somalia will be African nations that will require ongoing effort. Interestingly enough, she commented that America's foreign diplomacy on the African continent is still not enough and in her opinion the "value of black life" remains discounted at best. She also stated that Nigeria has the potential to become a real challenge for the United States due to residuals from recent flawed elections.

Ambassador Frazer mentioned that other significant achievements would include Debt Relief/Cancellation, the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA), the Africa Financial Initiative, and the Africa Education Initiative (AEI). In addition, the President's Malaria Initiative was a

good example of bi-partisan support. She also suggested that several “hot spots” on the African continent include the Congo (eastern and northern areas) as well as the Horn of Africa, Sudan and Zimbabwe. She stated that while she was confident in the fact that President Obasanjo is the United Nations’ Special Envoy to Africa and Dr. Susan Rice will be serving as the United States Ambassador to the United Nations – she was optimistically cautious about how to best proceed with dealing with these very urgent security and humanitarian matters on the African continent.

She stated that Dr. Susan Rice at the United Nations will be critical to helping the Obama administration to resolve these challenges to include: (a) Somalia – which unfortunately still provides “flash backs” of the 1990s (i.e. – Black Hawk Down). Although the dynamics have changed there is still some trepidation by the U.S. government. However, she still maintains that progress has been made in the midst of chaos; (b) Zimbabwe – despite the ongoing setbacks, she believes that momentum is shifting on resolving the political situation. However, President Mugabe is very skilled at manipulation with regard to the regional influences. The two key African nations are South Africa and Tanzania but they both must demonstrate the will to close the deal; and (c) Sudan – to include Darfur and the ongoing North-South political situation. This strategic country will become a high priority for the Obama administration but the best strategy is to be pragmatic and not too quick to close-off options. Overall it is a very complex situation.

Ambassador Frazer suggested a three-to-six month playbook for the Obama administration as follows: (a) the role of the AAUC should be to get inside of the political process in order to become more effective. This is not easy but we must be more involved in the decision-making process especially with policy and budget formulation on Capitol Hill; (b) the AAUC must also become more aware of and effective at gaining access to resources for development projects on the African continent. It is very important to be seen as part of the funding process in order to influence key decision-makers; (c) the AAUC should continue to build upon an African Diaspora constituency that can successfully advocate on behalf of Africa as this is extremely important for constructive engagement; and (d) Lastly, the AAUC must hold leadership accountable both in the United States and on the African continent.

Mr. Kirk thanked Ambassador Frazer for her frank and profound remarks to the group and opened the floor for questions and/or comments. He stated that the format would be to ask three people to briefly state their question and/or comments and then ask Ambassador Frazer to respond in-kind before taking any further questions and/or comments.

Mr. Julius Coles, President of Africare. He congratulated Ambassador Frazer for her speech about the Bush administration’s legacy for Africa during the Africare Bishop Walker Dinner. He then expressed his concern that Africa will be overlooked by the Middle East and Eastern European dynamics by foreign policy makers influencing the incoming Obama administration.

Mr. Gregory Simpkins, Vice President of The Leon H. Sullivan Foundation (LHSF). He asked how does the transition mechanism work to stay on target with her successor? He believes that the Obama administration cannot afford to wait three-to-six months for people to be appointed and confirmed.

Dr. Sy Murray, Chairman, Africa Working Group, National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA). He asked her to please clarify the decision-making process – is it more from the White House or will it be perhaps from Capitol Hill?

Ambassador Frazer's Responses: In reality, most people expect President Obama to highlight Africa but this can go either way politically. He can frame Africa as essential to U.S. national interest which would be perceived as positive or he can choose to not allow Africa to be highlighted due to the unfair perception of favoritism which is a negative. She suggested that President Obama acknowledge Africa as a serious foreign policy matter for the United States and should follow the path paved by the Bush administration. Ideology must be inclusive of Africa as a priority of interest. Potential allies in the U.S. government and United Nations must also be forged. With regard to the transition process for the Obama administration she will work closely with providing essential information and strategies to assist with their preparation but unfortunately she does not really know who her successor will be.

Dr. Ron Walters, Political Science Professor at the University of Maryland and Political Commentator. He suggested that while facing a global economic crisis this situation could present a window of opportunity but how will this really impact Africa and the Caribbean nations? He is fearful that with Africa's already fragile economic foundation it could make Africa more dependent and adversely impact the economic gains that have been achieved during the Bush administration.

Dr. Badi Foster, President, Phelps Stokes Fund. He asked how can we improve the pipeline of leadership within the State Department for the next generation? How do we increase the talent pool in order to accelerate their progress on behalf of Africa's interest?

Mr. Okendo Lewis-Gayle, President, Harambee Endeavor. He asked how do we encourage/empower the next generation of African-American and African advocates? There is a tremendous willingness to play a role in Africa's future but the next generation of leaders need more focused guidance and mentoring from current leaders.

Mr. C.D. Glin, Director, MBA Enterprise Corps. He asked if Ambassador Frazer could be more specific on how the incoming Obama administration must deal with the challenges facing Nigeria.

Ambassador Frazer's Responses: She hopes that the global economic crisis will not impact developmental assistance in Africa. However, the apparent lack of access to credit will inhibit

the vast majority of African entrepreneurs seeking access to capital and investors' confidence in the marketplace. This can in turn adversely impact the business climate and community of donors that are involved in infrastructure development on the African continent. It will become even more challenging to make the case for global investments on the African continent. With regard to the talent pool, the State Department is making some gains in the recruitment of African-Americans but keeping them within the system is proving to be somewhat difficult. There needs to be a way to encourage more professional experience at the embassy level in order to qualify them as tenured professionals in the foreign service community.

She added that we must also improve the sustainability beyond the entry and junior levels into the middle and senior levels of the foreign service community. Also need to better communicate the accomplishments of their overseas assignments in order to enhance the retention of senior career diplomats. Regarding the next generation of foreign service personnel, it is very important that we continue to utilize social networking opportunities and make a commitment to connect relationships for influence and networking (i.e. – academia, government, business, non-governmental organizations, etcetera). Must also excel in their work in order to meet the high standards required for success in the foreign service. Concerning Nigeria, she believes that President Obasanjo's ill-fated attempt to secure a third term as president created an unfortunate vacuum in the democratic process in Nigeria. As a result, institutions were damaged and progress stifled if not reversed. Also the Niger Delta is still problematic and the underlying tensions of religious differences in northern Nigeria are both cause for concern.

Mr. Melvin P. Foote, President and CEO of the Constituency for Africa thanked Ambassador Frazer on behalf of the AAUC delegation for her outstanding service in U.S.-Africa foreign policy matters but more importantly praised her for being a true friend over the many years with the AAUC community. He stated that she has "raised-the-bar" on professionalism and performance for her successor and everyone will miss her dearly! He then was joined by Dr. Gloria B. Herndon, Chair of the American and African Business Women's Alliance (AABWA) who presented Ambassador Frazer with a special gift signifying the appreciation of the AAUC community and a group photograph was also taken of the occasion.

*Note: The African American Unity Caucus (AAUC) was established in 2002 and is a non-partisan alliance of committed leaders and organizations of African ancestry focused on challenges, issues and concerns affecting Africa and the African Diaspora. The mission of the AAUC is to marshal human, material and social capital to enhance the overall sustainable development of African people. Through strategic decision-making, the AAUC will initiate and foster actions and forge effective partnerships among public and private entities in Africa and the African Diaspora and impact U.S. foreign policy. The AAUC is a program of the Constituency for Africa.*