

SUPPLANTING CHINESE INFLUENCE IN AFRICA: THE U.S. AFRICAN DIASPORA

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SUPPLANTING CHINESE INFLUENCE IN AFRICA: THE U.S. AFRICAN DIASPORA

by

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ABSTRACT

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China is Africa's latest benefactor. With capital investments, trade, developments in agriculture, infrastructure and education exceeding \$107 billion as of 2009, China is effectively captivating the hearts, minds, and allegiance of the African continent. China has garnered the trust and confidence of most African leaders by adopting a pragmatic strategy based on perceived mutually beneficial trade, investment in infrastructure and energy programs, while circumventing politics and human rights issues. Long term, Chinese engagement in Africa could adversely affect U.S. influence in the region, its access to the continent's mineral resources, and its agenda for African democracy. Many scholars and policy practitioners advocate that the U.S. should respond to the growing Chinese influence in Africa; however, recommended solutions are varied. Results of numerous U.S. programs and financial aid to Africa have had limited impact. Therefore, the U.S. should explore a novel strategy that voluntarily transplants the African Diaspora back into the continent as agents of change. This strategy will benefit Africa, advance U.S. national interests, and accommodate China's needs for mineral resources.

SUPPLANTING CHINESE INFLUENCE IN AFRICA: THE U.S.AFRICAN DIASPORA

In the 21st century, there is no need to view trade, commerce or economic growth as zero-sum games, where one country always has to prosper at the expense of another.

—President Barack Obama¹

Over the past decade, while the U.S. has been engaged in achieving its end state in Iraq and Afghanistan, China quietly lit the fuse that could ignite the second Cold War - the race for influence in Africa. With capital investments, trade, developments in agriculture, infrastructure and education exceeding \$107 billion as of 2009, China is effectively captivating the stomach, hearts, minds, and more importantly, allegiance of the entire African continent. More critically, by adopting a pragmatic strategy based on perceived mutually beneficial trade, investment, and energy programs, while circumventing politics and human rights issues, China has garnered the trust and confidence of most African leaders, particularly those engaged in dubious practices.

Since 2006, China has doubled the number of scholarships it grants annually to Africans from 2,000 to 4,000. China has also pledged to train an additional 15,000 African professionals per year over the next ten years. At current projections, it will take China five more years to train 150,000 African professionals. The strategy of dispersing thousands of Chinese trained and educated Africans throughout Africa could set off a change revolution in the region. Since these professionals are trained by China, they would likely be sympathetic to Chinese interests. What is clear is China zealously protects its own national interests and has determined access to African mineral resources and markets is in its best interests. Therefore considerations for good governance, human rights and regional stability do not rate as highly for China as they

do for the U.S. In contrast to China's strategy of training 15,000 African professionals each year, over 1.4 million Africans presently reside in the U.S. A majority of these Africans are already educated, trained and employed by the U.S. government and other organizations. Integrating some of these Africans in the Diaspora will facilitate implementation of U.S. policies in Africa and supplant Chinese growing influence in the region. The African Diaspora is defined in this paper as Africans who have emigrated from the continent in order to seek education, employment, and overall better standards of living.

Left unchecked, long-term Chinese engagement in Africa could adversely affect the influence of the U.S. in the region by hindering access to the continent's mineral resources, and setting back the U.S. agenda for African democracy, growth and development.² Unlike advocates for aggressive U.S. containment of Chinese growing influence in Africa, this project introduces a novel approach aimed at accommodating all parties' interests through cooperation and collaboration, while sustaining the U.S. agenda of promoting good governance and democracy, achieving economic independence, resolving health issues, conflicts and other transnational issues on the continent.

The Rich Welfare Continent

Africa is a continent of extremes – extreme poverty, hunger, corruption, disease, while lacking basic infrastructure and good governance. However, it possesses abundant natural resources which should be harnessed to attain economic prosperity. The World Economic Forum indicates that “ten percent of the world's poor were African in 1970; by 2000, that figure has risen to 50 percent.”³ Africa is endowed with a majority of the world's most sought after minerals and precious metals including 90% of the

global phosphate, 64% of manganese, 50% of gold, 40% of platinum, 30% of uranium, 13% of copper, 12% of natural gas and 8% of known petroleum reserves. The continent is also blessed with abundance of coca, timber, diamond, iron ore, chromium, coltan, and 40% of the world's potential hydro electric power supply.⁴ No other continent is blessed with such abundance of mineral resources, yet it depends on charity for survival. With its population forecasted to surpass 1.7 billion people by 2050, nearly 20% of the world population, Africa has enormous potential in global trade, commerce, security and enduring democracy.⁵

Factors contributing to Africa's persistent under development are numerous. They run the gamut from pervasive corruption, unstable and dysfunctional governments, to weak economies. Other critical factors include: inadequate basic infrastructure, high unemployment, rapid population growth, diseases, insecurity, and ungoverned spaces that could give harbor to terrorists, pirates, and narcotics, human and other illicit smuggling. In essence, the majority of Africa's issues stem from a lack of fundamental structural programs anchored in education, innovation, technology, and the respect for human rights and rule of law. The erosion of intellectual capital due to migration is equally distressing, but presents an opportunity worth maximizing in achieving the objectives of the U.S. for stable and representative African states that are self sustaining.

United States Interests in Africa

It is in the United States' national interest to remain engaged in Africa. During Secretary Clinton's confirmation hearing on 13 January 2009, she outlined the United States foreign policy objectives in Africa as being rooted in security, political, economic and humanitarian interests. Other objectives for Africa include "combating al-Qaida's

efforts to seek safe havens in failed states in the Horn of Africa; helping African nations to conserve their natural resources and reap fair benefits from them; stopping war in Congo; [and] ending autocracy in Zimbabwe and human devastation in Darfur.”⁶ Later in an August 2010 speech to the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) forum, Secretary Clinton refined the United States objectives in Africa. She stated the United States “is taking a new approach in Africa rooted in partnership, not patronage.”⁷

Secretary Clinton highlighted four critical challenges that are hindering African development and prosperity – inadequate infrastructure, political instability and corruption, lack of good governance, and regional integration. Her remarks reinforced comments made to the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) on 11 June 2009 by Mr. Johnny Carson, Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, which highlighted five U.S. focus in Africa – the promotion of democracy, crisis and conflict prevention and resolution, fighting poverty, and dealing with transnational issues such as narcotics trafficking, pollution and environmental issues. The goal is to promote positive actions by African countries⁸, vice dwelling on the negative.

The poor conditions in Africa mentioned above are causing mass migration outside the continent, particularly amongst professionals. The Migration Policy Institute reported in its 2009 edition that “the number of African immigrants in the United States grew 40-fold between 1960 and 2007, from 35,355 to 1.4 million.”⁹ The report indicated that the African Diaspora tends to be more educated compared to other immigrants with about two out of every five African foreign-born adults holding a bachelor or higher degree.¹⁰ Many of these immigrants work in manufacturing, construction, resource extraction, medicine, pharmacy, nursing, and engineering fields; critical skills that could

help develop African infrastructure and improve health-care. There are over five thousand African-born personnel who are either honorably retired, separated or currently serving in the United States Armed Forces. These service members' unique cultural expertise on Africa can facilitate the United States mission on the continent.

Ineffective Financial Aid

The practice of giving grants and other financial assistance to Africa has been ineffective. According to BBC News, "in spite of the more than US\$1 trillion in aid to Africa over the last 50 years...most African countries are poorer today than they were at the time of their independence from colonial powers."¹¹ Various statistics show that 31 out of 54 African countries are listed on the top 60 of the world's poorest countries. Over the last decade, from 2000 to 2010, official United States development assistance to Africa exceeded \$40 Billion. Going ahead, the United States has pledged to double its aid to \$25 Billion per year from 2010 through 2015. Despite the huge developmental aid Africa has received over the past decade, 26 African states are ranked in the top 50 failed or failing States in the July/August 2010 edition of the Foreign Policy Magazine. Indeed, 13 of the top 21 failed states are African.¹² It was not until President George W. Bush's administration that the United States finally embarked on a serious pragmatic strategy and resolved to combat the vagaries of issues confronting Africa. It could be argued that the U.S. earlier passive or limited engagement strategy, except for major humanitarian assistance, paved the way for China's emerging influence in Africa.

Financial aid and other improvised programs have not produced any substantive and sustainable improvements in Africa. While bad governance, corruption, crime, and simple incompetence account for the majority of the woeful results, the fact is the United States and other Western countries need to institute a different strategy. The same

tried and failed practice of setting lofty but unrealistic goals such as eradicating poverty in the world by 2015 has failed. Demanding structural changes and linking financial aid to the adoption of western democracy instead of recognizing the varying shades of enlightenment for an emerging democracy, has equally being ineffective.

Effective Chinese Strategy

China views Africa as a source for its raw material, especially hydrocarbon, to sustain its enormous domestic growth. China's industrialization requires massive sources of raw material as well as markets for its products, goods and services. Chinese interests in Africa extend beyond acquiring mineral resources and include markets for Chinese products, jobs placement for its population through infrastructure and agricultural developments. With the world's highest population, estimated at over 1.3 billion people, job creation for its citizens is not only a civic responsibility but assures China's economic stability and political survival. According to the February 25, 2009, Congressional Research Service report to the U.S. Congress,

One of the most important ways in which the People's Republic of China (PRC) has bolstered its economic presence and garnered international goodwill has been through its offers of financing or concessional loans for infrastructure projects, large economic investments, and the signing of trade agreements. Many observers have praised Chinese aid and investment as filling unmet development needs, particularly in countries that have been relatively neglected by major aid donors. Others have criticized China for failing to promote democracy, equitable and sustainable development, and environmental preservation in these countries. Some U.S. policy-makers and others have expressed frustration that because of China's policy of providing foreign assistance without conditions, they are losing the ability to influence the behaviors of aid recipients regarding human rights and economic reforms.¹³

Chinese history reveals decades of interference by outside states, which possibly has shaped China's non-interference policy in Africa's domestic affairs. China therefore portrays solidarity with African states and points out that "as far back as the fifteenth

century when Admiral Zhen made his famous voyage to the East Africa coast, China has never sought to subjugate, colonize, or enslave.”¹⁴

China represents itself to African countries as one of their own – a Third World country – and has thus shaped its policy in Africa to counter perceived American hegemony and interference in African domestic affairs.¹⁵ From most African leaders’ perspectives, China and Africa complement each other in meeting each other’s needs. Africa lacks capital investments and needs to develop infrastructure and stimulate its economy. China on the other hand has substantial investment capital and is liberal in providing loans and grants to Africa without the usual constraints imposed by the United States and Western institutions.

Democracy, accountability, transparency, and human rights are of little importance to China, which suits many corrupt African regimes. China’s policy of non-interference in domestic affairs has effectively diminished the influence of the U.S in trying to alter the behaviors of African governments by imposing conditions on aid and other subsidies.¹⁶ According to a report compiled by the Congressional Research Service, China’s aid projects to a large extent serve its own development needs, by facilitating the export of raw materials to China and requiring fifty percent of materials and services sourced in the PRC. Africans are beginning to realize that the fifty percent of materials and services mandate also extends to labor. Consequently, the anticipated jobs bonanza associated with partnering with China is not being realized. Indeed, the impact of using mostly Chinese labor has substantially increased unemployment in many sectors. At the same time, local merchants and manufacturers are unable to favorably compete against Chinese products that are flooding the African market. Many

of these indigenous enterprises are forced to scale down and some completely went out of business; thus increasing the already huge number of unemployed labor. By contrast, the foreign aid programs of most other major aid donors including the U.S. and European countries are not directly or strongly linked to their own economies. However, they often include objectives or conditions related to political development and democratic reform.¹⁷

Since 2006, China has doubled its aid to Africa, set up a five billion-dollar development fund, provided another five billion in preferential loans and buyer's credits, cancelled all government debt that matured by the end of 2005, and trained over 15,000 African professionals.¹⁸ Various news media and policy professionals speculate that China may have given more loans and grants to African countries over the past decade than the World Bank, IMF, U.S. and Western countries combined. Based on its non-interference policy, China limits its activities to commerce, economic development and building alliances, except for arms sales and peace keeping missions in support of the UN. China is also investing heavily in education and has doubled the number of scholarships granted annually to Africans from 2000 to 4000 students and pledged to train 15,000 African professionals per year. It has built schools, hospitals, malaria treatment centers, and sent over 100 agricultural experts and 300 youth volunteers to the continent.¹⁹ China is also building language training centers that will teach Mandarin to Africans, in order to facilitate their operations in the region.

The development aid and infrastructure projects that China has brought to African countries are usually seen as a plus for its poor trading partners. The Chinese demand for natural resources has pushed up the prices of many commodities, providing

a boon for African economies.²⁰ China's engagement in Africa could be summarized as mostly economic empowerment (feed, train, educate, employ) and little importance placed on security, fighting terrorism and domestic politics, including human rights abuses. Indeed, China's approach is resonating with many African countries, particularly nefarious leaders engaged in dubious practices such as in Sudan and Zimbabwe.

In addition to a strong diplomatic presence in Africa, senior Chinese leaders have increased their frequency of visits to Africa. President Hu Jintao, and Premier Wen Jiabao have personally made over 15 visits to African states since 2003. More importantly, these visits are not limited to only the mineral rich states "but have included visits to Seychelles, Central Africa Republic, and Madagascar, none of them likely destinations for U.S. leadership."²¹ These senior level visits simply tell Africans that China does care and are "thus significant in shaping perceptions and partnerships."²²

While some in the United States view China's policy towards Africa as more of appeasing Africans, the pragmatism of "business now, and politics later"²³ approach appeals to the needs, pride and greed of some African leaders who would do anything to hold on to power. In 2000, China established the Forum on China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) and hosted the third forum in November 2006, bringing together forty-eight African delegations and forty-one heads of state in the Chinese capital.²⁴ Recognizing that solutions to Africa's numerous issues will take literally a generation, China has instituted a 50-year development plan for Africa. The United States strategy on the other hand is focused on five to fifteen years or a function of fulfilling pledges made during presidential elections. China has also used its influential position to call for

reforms of the United Nations to give Africa a permanent seat on the Security Council.²⁵

While an obvious political ploy, it nonetheless signals Chinese commitment to Africa at the world stage. The bottom-line is that China is achieving its desired effects on the African continent through an engagement strategy that is resonating with Africans because the results are tangible and immediate.

Refining United States Africa Strategy

Instead of reframing the issues, a new solution set that leverages existing programs, encourages regional, multinational and non-profit and non-governmental organizations' cooperation and collaboration, must be explored. Most scholars agree that China's emerging dominance and strategic partnership with many African countries could portend adversely on the goal of the U.S. for a free and economically vibrant Africa. There is growing consensus that Chinese influence in Africa will eventually hinder the United States access to the enormous untapped African market and abundant raw materials. Many scholars and policy strategists advocate that the United States should respond to the growing Chinese influence in Africa; however, recommended solutions vary. When viewed through a global lens, it becomes obvious China's growing influence in Africa could jeopardize the interests of the U.S, near and long term. China's economy is on course to surpass that of the U.S. in the next decade. It owns nearly one trillion dollars worth of U.S. treasury bills and is investing heavily in upgrading and refitting its military. China recently rolled out a new stealth military jet, years ahead of intelligence estimates. China is also building technologically sophisticated aircraft carriers and making marked advances in cyber technology, as evidenced through its destruction of an orbiting satellite. Therefore, while China

proclaims pure economic interests and non-hostile intentions regarding its activities in Africa, the pattern of its evolving military and economic capabilities suggests otherwise.

The United States has already recognized that China's approach differs significantly from its policy and focus. However, one could argue that the U.S. does not take China's growing influence in Africa seriously. Many policy strategists point to the fact that the U.S. overall financial aid to Africa far surpasses that of China. They also highlight the creation of new programs and organizations since 2000 to sustain and protect the interests of the U.S. on the continent.

Although policy practitioners may be factually correct that U.S. aid to Africa is substantial, the fact is China has profoundly increased its engagement in Africa over the past decade. Chinese government firms have invested billions of dollars in foreign exchange and have used Chinese engineering and construction resources on infrastructure for developing oil, gas, mineral, and other natural resources in dozens of African countries.²⁶ Therefore, the aggregate Chinese financial assistance could equal or surpass that of the U.S. The real issue is not the amount of assistance, but rather the effectiveness of current programs in stimulating African economic development and growth, building infrastructure and strengthening regional security and capacity while protecting U.S. interests.

Without a pragmatic and unique strategy to complement existing United States African policy, China will effectively erode the progress already attained and impose its form of governance on the continent. Even though China painfully makes the case that its interests in Africa are peaceful, the reality is their enhanced status in the long run will eventually compete with U.S. interests in the region.

Harmonizing Available Means

No single solution can holistically address the numerous problems confronting Africa. Several U.S. agencies are already devoted to orchestrating various projects in Africa. They include the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), United States Africa Command (USAFRICOM), Intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). While many of these U.S. agencies and organizations have been active for decades in various projects in Africa, the single area often overlooked is Africans in Diaspora. These Africans in Diaspora have vested interests in the region's development. Indeed, many of them emigrated with good intentions of eventually returning to Africa to create a better society. Therefore, creating roles for them in existing U.S. organizations will accelerate achieving the objective. Many of these Africans in Diaspora have the will and time required for short and long term projects. However, they lack the necessary capital and technical expertise required for the major projects occurring in Africa.

Trust, respect, and collaboration are the crucial foundation in building relations with African nations. To some extent, African nations view the ideals of democratic values the United States is promoting as paternalistic and hypocritical. Africa's formative years following independence were in the context of the cold war. This necessitated the United States, in containing communism, to justify channeling billions of dollars in development aid to repressive regimes around the world, including many in Africa, and turning a blind eye to their brutal treatments of the opposition.²⁷

In subsequent years however, the United States has engaged Africa through the adoption of several substantive programs. President Bush introduced the President's

Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) in 2003 and allocated nearly 50 Billion dollars over several years to transform healthcare in Africa.²⁸ Generally acknowledged as an effective program, the biggest drawback of PEPFAR in combating HIV/AIDS epidemic in Africa was restricting funding to only programs that advocate sexual abstinence. Portions of PEPFAR were executed through faith based organizations that were hostile to prostitutes and homosexuals.²⁹ China on the other hand had no such restrictions in providing medical aid to Africa.

In comments to the CSIS on 11 June 2009, Mr. Johnny Carson, Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, outlined four methods the United States will adopt or sustain in its African relations. He stressed early and frequent engagement instead of the usual annual grand tour by senior elected officials. According to Mr. Carson, engagement with Africa will be a mainstream policy involving routine dialogue and assessment. Complementing engagement will be a renewed focus on food availability and security. Over 70 percent of Africans depend on agriculture and 70 percent of the continent's GDP is based on agriculture.

The creation of the United States Africa Command (USAFRICOM) is perhaps the strongest message to date of America's resolve to preserve its African ties and address Chinese growing influence. AFRICOM "has administrative responsibility for U.S. military support to U.S. government policy in Africa, to include military-to-military relationships with 53 African nations"³⁰ (except Egypt, although it is consulted on issues). The USAFRICOM posture statement clearly articulates the complex and challenging environment of Africa but more importantly, demonstrates resolute purpose and delineating strategy in eventually achieving stability, security, and suppressing

transnational threats.³¹ In 2010, General William Ward, Commander, U.S. Africa Command, clearly stated that attaining U.S. objectives entails multinational and bilateral approaches and more importantly, at the direction and partnership of the State Department.

Working in concert with other U.S. government agencies and international partners, the mission of AFRICOM is “to conduct sustained security engagement through military-to-military programs, military sponsored activities, and other military operations to promote a stable and secure African environment in support of U.S. foreign policy.”³² USAFRICOM only acts “in support of U.S. foreign policy objectives and its activities only occur with the input and approval of U.S. Chiefs of Mission” in the region.³³ While USAFRICOM has a clearly defined theater security cooperation plan, success may be attained more easily if the command is headquartered in Africa instead of Europe. Unfortunately, many African States view AFRICOM with suspicion, as an extension of America’s imperialism. As a result, none of the major influential countries have granted permission for AFRICOM to be headquartered in its country.

The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), another Bush African initiative, provided hundreds of millions of dollars in aid to the African continent to improve electricity, water supply, roads and other basic infrastructural projects.³⁴ Funding for the initiative however pales in comparison to the billions of dollars in aid, grants and loans, as well as technical support that China provides to Africa.

The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) was enacted to offer developing African nations an opportunity to export their products to the United States duty-free. Specifically, AGOA provides trade preferences to countries that are making progress in

economic, legal, and human rights reforms.³⁵ Working in concert with the African Global Competitiveness Initiative (AGCI), over \$200 million was devoted towards promoting the export trade and competitiveness of African countries.³⁶ The overall intent of AGOA and AGCI is to offer opportunities for African countries to build free markets and increase foreign investments that promote economic growth, create jobs, and raise living standards. However, thus far, excessive restrictions have resulted in the programs' limited success.

Finally, the United States Feed the Future program, established by President Obama has the potential to immediately address near term hunger and food security issues in Africa while laying the foundation to accelerate its agricultural sector growth. Sustaining the Feed the Future Program will go a long way in eroding the advances China has made through its technical assistance engagement program.

Regional Engagement

Not everyone is pleased with Chinese activities in Africa. A majority of African citizens have remained in abject poverty despite the tens of billions of dollars the political and social elites have received from China in aid, grants and subsidies. As previously noted, China's actions are now exacerbating the poor conditions in Africa. Instead of economic prosperity, local merchants are unable to compete with Chinese products and are being forced into bankruptcy. China is increasingly exporting its labor force to Africa instead of hiring local labor. The result is increased joblessness across all sectors, to the growing dismay of Africans who had hoped for increased job opportunities resulting from China-Africa trade partnerships. China is also locking in prices of energy and mineral resources futures at greatly reduced prices. The potential

impact of this practice is yet to be realized, but will make the Chinese the benefactors of Africa's mineral resources in future years.

A majority of Africa's intellectuals as well as regional media are awakening to the fact that China's interests are insular and serve Chinese economic interests. A columnist in the Nigerian Daily Trust newspaper observed that unless a more balanced approach is adopted, China – Africa trade relationship will be lopsided.³⁷ The article alleges that profits from mining and drilling as well as other industries go to the government, large corporations and a few elites who squander the money on luxuries or on projects that return little value to the average citizen.³⁸ Exposures of this nature show that while the elites accept Chinese financial assistance, a majority of Africans recognize and prefer the U.S. form of government, ideals of freedom, equality and way of life. Yet, if the U.S. does not strengthen its approach and include innovative strategy such as leveraging the African Diaspora, China will sustain its active incursions and would eventually indoctrinate Africa's next generation in Chinese values, business practices and form of government. If African youths become influenced by mainly Chinese systems and practices, they will likely prefer and adopt those processes over time as their sphere of influence increases.

While there has been substantive U.S. engagement in Africa, particularly since the second Bush Administration, a more comprehensive and pragmatic approach is needed. Africa has six main and ten sub-regional organizations that are devoted towards its advancement, eradication of diseases, and promotion of democratic principles, security and stability. The six main organizations are the African Union (AU), Arab Maghreb union (AMU), East African Community (EAC), Economic Community of

Central African States (ECCAS), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). In July 2001, the AU adopted a developmental framework called the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) to pursue new priorities and approaches to the political and socio-economic transformation of Africa. NEPAD's objective is to enhance Africa's growth, development and participation in the global economy.³⁹ The objectives of NEPAD closely mirror that of the United States for Africa. China on the other hand prefers to work through parallel organizations such as the FOCAC, which Beijing established in 2000 as a mechanism to promote its interests in Africa.⁴⁰

A multiplicity of programs and organizations have the unintended consequence of excessive bureaucracy, difficulty in coordination, and do not produce the tangible, immediate and short term results needed in Africa. Both the State Department and AFRICOM recognize the need to cooperate and collaborate with these regional organizations as part of a comprehensive African engagement strategy. Current U.S. strategy encompasses the so called 3Ds - diplomacy, development and defense, which uses a combination of multilateral and bilateral cooperation, and as well as unilateral action.

Multilateral Cooperation. There are 54 countries on the continent with widely divergent policies. While their overarching objective is economic emancipation and security, each country has adopted a different path to accomplish this goal. The United States should engage China and African Countries as well as other nations and organizations, including NGOs and private organizations, in orchestrating a comprehensive development plan for Africa. This plan will cover infrastructure

investment, manufacturing, agriculture, medical treatment, particularly in the areas of HIV/Aids and malaria, stability of financial institutions, and economic empowerment of the populace. The impact of a multinational effort will be profound in addressing these issues. Speaking with one voice through the adoption of a global solution will prevent some African leaders from the current practice of playing the U.S. against China for its personal vice national interests. The multilateral approach recognizes China's growing influence and its valid need for raw materials. It holds China up to international scrutiny in its dealings in Africa and ensures African leaders follow the rule of law and internationally recognized human rights observances. The multilateral approach will also address the plight of the population through education, training, and job creation. The risk of multilateral engagement is excessive waste of time in gaining consensus on a particular plan.

Bilateral Cooperation. While the optimal strategy is a multilateral approach, bilateral cooperation is more of a reality given the large number of states, main and sub-regional organizations and divergence in policy of African nations. Bilateral cooperation recognizes each state's sovereignty and unique requirements and provides tailored aids, grants and loans to address their issues. The principal risk is multiple plans that often conflict and compete against each other.

Engaging the African Diaspora

With an estimated population of 1.7 billion people, roughly twenty percent of the entire earth's inhabitants by 2050, Africa's potential is simply huge and simply transcends abundance of mineral resources. Most scholars and policy experts agree that unilateral United States action will not succeed in Africa. Neither would a primary focus on fighting Al Qaeda or subverting China's actions yield the desired end result.

Indeed, China will cite any excessive focus on security as self serving by the U.S. China will produce statistics that support their contention that the U.S. consumes much more of the resources from Africa. Therefore, a viable approach would be leveraging the one resource China is presently cultivating and that is the huge number of Africans who are voluntarily classified as in Diaspora in the U.S.

According to the Migration Information Source, of the 1.4 million Africans in the United States, “more than 500,000 have gained lawful permanent residence”.⁴¹ While statistics show a high number of Africans in Diaspora, many of them are prepared to return to their native continent if incentivized. These tens of thousands of African expatriates are engaged in every discipline ranging from medicine, science, agriculture, engineering, civil service, military, to entrepreneurs. A majority of these Africans desire to return to their native land to assist in its development; however, conditions back home, from politics, corruption, and crime hinders them from risking any little savings they have accumulated on starting an enterprise at their native countries. Therefore, a program that provides some level of collateral and preserves their life savings will garner support amongst African expatriates.

Training and voluntarily transplanting the African Diaspora back into the region as agents of progressive change would accelerate the U.S. developmental efforts in Africa. Under this concept, the U.S. will establish a pre-automated program modeled after a franchise plan. Selected individuals or teams will receive intense training and subsequently will be assigned to a geographical area to operate. These individuals may retain their jobs and continue to draw pay as U.S. employees or be provided grants to start businesses in areas and regions specifically approved by the State Department.

Each country will have a minimum of four teams that are specialized on designated programs, depending on its size and cultural complexity. Incentives will be scalable and equitable to levels of performance based on previously approved matrices.

It will take a long time, certainly over a decade, to fully integrate the African Diaspora strategy. Therefore, the approach should be to address critical needs first, feeding the people. Follow-on phases will address developing agricultural programs, building capacity in manufacturing, education and training. Africans in Diaspora speak their native dialect, understand the endemic complex bureaucracy in the region, and many of them are eager to be involved in developing their continent. Once trained and certified by the USAID or any other government sanctioned program, these individuals will be more effective in replicating the program by training thousands of other Africans. The clout they will gain through job creation by the establishment of factories, medical centers, western style farming with requisite machinery, etc. would set the stage for the United States to connect directly with the local population. More importantly, they will dedicate the required time necessary to grow an enterprise from infancy to enduring stage.

Conclusion

“While America’s attention has been focused elsewhere, China has been busy cultivating the African continent in a myriad of ways.”⁴² Over the last 50 years, various programs aimed at improving the plight of Africans have had limited success. Each new administration would implement its version of developmental programs; accompanied with the financial aids they believe would finally resolve the poverty, lack of infrastructure, corruption, crime, and bad governance that have plagued the African continent. Sadly, the result has been the same. In spite of the over one trillion dollars

in financial aid, grants and loans given to Africa over the past 50 years, statistics show a downward trend, resulting in 31 out of 54 African States classified as failed or failing. Foreign aid has not been effective. Instead, “it works for the winning coalition in the rich country, it works for the donor government of the rich country, it works for the recipient government of the poor country, but it doesn’t work for the poor people in the poor country.”⁴³

The U.S., China, and the rest of the world have an interest in a stable and economically viable Africa with functioning governments. Competition between the United States and China would not bode well for either country as some African leaders will pit one country against the other. Instead, a multilateral, multinational and unified effort will go a long way in eradicating poverty, establishing representative governments, rule of law; security and enable access to the continent’s raw materials are competitive process.

Unlike China, the U.S. interests in Africa transcend access to mineral resources and extend to good governance, democracy and economic development. Therefore, in order to advance its interest, the U.S. should leverage the cultural knowledge and expertise of the numerous Africans in Diaspora. Following focused training, these individuals will be transplanted back into Africa to help engineer developments at the local level, from agriculture, education, healthcare, trade, manufacturing, infrastructure to good governance. Having lived in the United States, these individuals have gained personal experience of how a government and society is supposed to function, believe in human rights and equality, and possess fervent desires to improve their continent.

Endnotes

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