



Policy Brief

July 2009

U.S. Presidential Trips to Sub-Saharan Africa

"The 21st century will be shaped by what happens not just in Rome or Moscow or Washington, but by what happens in Accra, as well."

*President Barack Obama
2009*

Barack H. Obama, July 10 – 11, 2009 (2 days)

Main Goals:

- To raise support for and attempt to explain AFRICOM
- To outline administration Africa policy
- To highlight four policy focal points: democracy, opportunity, health, and peaceful conflict resolution
- To affirm that many Bush-era Africa policies will continue
- To present Africa as a foreign policy priority

Quotes:

- *"The 21st century will be shaped by what happens not just in Rome or Moscow or Washington, but by what happens in Accra, as well."*
- *"I'll focus on four areas that are critical to the future of Africa and the entire developing world: democracy, opportunity, health, and the peaceful resolution of conflict."*
- *"Aid is not an end in itself. The purpose of foreign assistance must be creating the conditions where it's no longer needed."*
- *"Wealthy nations must open our doors to goods and services from Africa in a meaningful way."*
- *"Building on the strong efforts of President Bush, we will carry forward the fight against HIV/AIDS. We will pursue the goal of ending deaths from malaria and tuberculosis, and we will work to eradicate polio."*
- *"I have directed my administration to give greater attention to corruption in our human rights reports. People everywhere should have the right to start a business or get an education without paying a bribe."*
- http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-the-President-to-the-Ghanaian-Parliament/ (full text of speech)

Countries Visited: Ghana

George W. Bush, February 16 - February 21, 2008 (5 days)

Main Goals:

- To highlight Bush administration Africa aid programs for infrastructure, education, clean water, and health (all countries visited have benefited from U.S. aid).
- To announce new policies to fight malaria, AIDS, and tropical diseases. (AIDS program was abstinence only)
- To bring Tanzania into the Millennium Challenge Corporation Threshold Program.
- To deny that the U.S. is pushing a military base in Ghana, but is considering building a U.S. "office" of some kind.
- To reaffirm that the situation in Darfur is genocide.

Quotes: Administration helping African leaders *"lift up their nations and write a new chapter in their history...The United States wants to partner with leaders and their people, but we're not going to do so with people who steal money, pure and simple..."* (In Benin)

"We've seen that conditions on the other side of the world can have a direct impact on our own security...We know that if Africa were to continue on the old path of decline, it would be more likely to produce failed states, foster ideologies of radicalism and spread violence across borders." (From a speech given at the Smithsonian just prior to departure)

"One of the lessons of the genocide in Rwanda was to take some of the early warning signs seriously." (In Rwanda)

"The purpose of this is not to add military bases. I know there's rumors in Ghana, 'All Bush is coming to do is try to convince you to put a big military base here.' That's baloney. Or as we say in Texas, that's bull....Mr. President made it clear to me. He said, 'Look, you're not going to build any bases in Ghana.' I said, 'I understand. Nor do we want to.' Now, that doesn't mean we won't develop some kind of office somewhere in Africa. We haven't made our minds up." (In Ghana)

"It's easier to tear a country down than it is to rebuild a country. And the people of this good country must understand the United States will stand with you as you rebuild your country." (In Liberia)

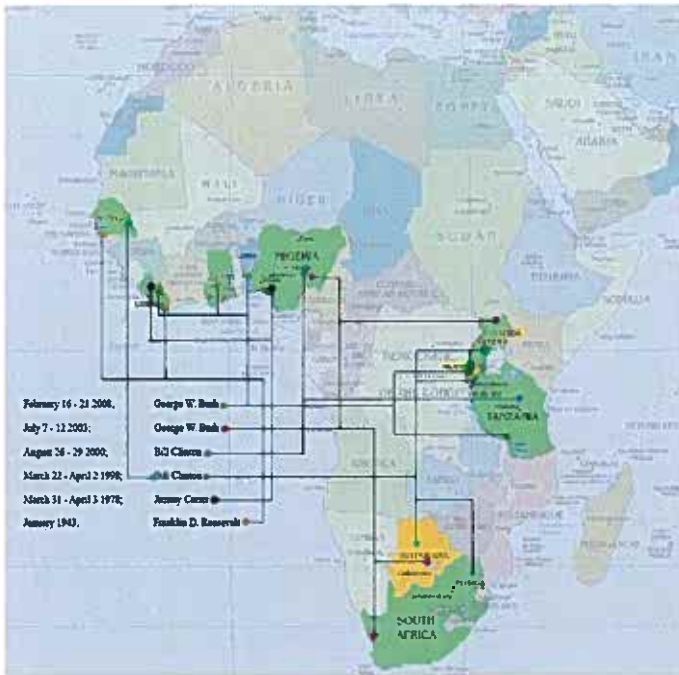
"In Darfur, the U.S. will continue to call the killing what it is -- genocide." (In Rwanda)

Countries Visited: Benin, Tanzania, Rwanda, Ghana, Liberia

George W. Bush, July 7 - July 12, 2003 (5 days)

Main Goals:

- To highlight proposed \$15 million program to fight AIDS on the continent
- To strengthen U.S. - African relations
- To highlight a \$100 million plan to fight terrorism in East Africa
- To highlight a \$600 million education initiative



- To rehabilitate opinion of the U.S. in Africa
- To promote genetically modified food for preventing malnutrition and hunger

Quotes: *"I'll be carrying a message to the African people that, first, America cares about the future of Africa...It's in our national interest that Africa become a prosperous place; it's in our interest that people will continue to fight terror together; it's in our interest that when we find suffering, we deal with it."*

"There was kind of an attachment to the word 'America' with war...What they're going to find out, the word 'freedom' and 'America' are synonymous. That's what we believe. We believe in freedom."

"The progress we are already seeing in parts of Africa is proof that AIDS can be defeated in Africa..."

"Working together, we can help make this a decade of rising prosperity and expanding peace across Africa...We know that the people of Africa, when given their rights and given their chance will achieve great things on this continent of possibilities."

"The United States will help this vast continent of possibilities to reach its full potential...we will not allow terrorists to threaten African peoples or to use Africa as a base to threaten the world."

Countries Visited: Senegal, South Africa, Botswana, Nigeria, Uganda

Bill Clinton, August 26 - August 29, 2000 (3 Days)

Main Goals:

- To support democracy in Nigeria
- To encourage Africa to face the problem of AIDS
- To discuss potential options for debt relief
- To urge fighting parties in Burundi to try for peace in the negotiations at Arusha, Tanzania

Quotes: *"We want to help you build your economy, educate your children and build a better life."*

"I came to Nigeria to express the support of the people of the United States...We support your democracy."

"Africa matters not simply because 30 million Americans trace their heritage to Africa, though that is profoundly important. Not simply because we have a strong interest in a stable and prosperous Africa, though 13 percent of our oil comes from Africa. And there are 700 million producers and consumers in Sub-Saharan Africa, though that is important. Africa's future matters because the 21st century world

has been transformed, and our views and actions must be transformed accordingly." (From a speech at the National Summit on Africa, held Feb. 17, 2000)

Countries Visited: Nigeria, Tanzania, Egypt

Bill Clinton, March 22 - April 2, 1998 (12 Days)

Main Points:

- To promote the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) pending before Congress.
- To express regret for past focus on Africa as a part of the Cold War conflict and nothing more, but not to offer an apology for slavery.
- To introduce Africa onto the national stage after a 20 year absence.
- To celebrate countries working toward democracy
- To communicate desire for U.S. - African relationship building
- To express intent to boost aid to Africa

Quotes: *"It is as well not to dwell too much on the past, but I think it is worth pointing out that the United States has not always done the right thing by Africa."*

"...very often we dealt with countries in Africa and in other parts of the world based more on how they stood in the struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union than how they stood in the struggle for their own people's aspirations to live up to the fullest of their God-given abilities."

"...perhaps the worst sin America ever committed about Africa was the sin of neglect and ignorance."

"I came here to listen and to learn...to offer my help and friendship and partnership."

"I want to listen and to learn. I want to build a future partnership between our two people, and I want to introduce the people of the United States through my trip to the new face of Africa. From Kampala to Cape Town, from Dakar to Dar-Es-Salaam, Africans are being stirred by new hopes for democracy and peace and prosperity."

"First, we want to work with Africa to nurture democracy...Second, democracy must have prosperity...Third, we must allow democracy and prosperity to take root without violence...Fourth and finally, for peace and prosperity and democracy to prevail, you must protect your magnificent natural domain." Full speech: <http://www.library.yale.edu/~fboateng/bill.htm>

Countries Visited: Ghana, South Africa, Uganda, Senegal, Rwanda, Botswana

Jimmy Carter, March 31 - April 3, 1978 (4 Days)

Main Goals:

- To explain and spread American values in Africa
- To understand African problems and experiences
- To explore black Africa

- To witness Nigeria-Benin transborder cooperation treaty in Lagos, Nigeria,

Quotes: *"I set out on this journey to explain our own American values proudly and clearly to our friends and to understand their opinions and their concerns. My greatest ambition will be to represent the people of my Nation truly and well. And that ambition, if realized, will ensure the success of my mission."* (Upon departure to Latin America and Africa, March 28 1978)

Countries Visited: Nigeria, Liberia

Note: Also visited Egypt, but not in the context of visiting Africa.

Franklin Roosevelt, 1943

Main Points:

- To meet with Edwin J. Barclay, then President of Liberia.
- To affirm Liberia's importance to the war effort.
- To praise Liberia's democracy and founding by freed slaves.
- To contemplate sending one of his most trusted advisors to represent U.S. interests in Liberia.
- To explore British Gambia and look at the conditions of the people there.
- To attempt informal discussion with Churchill on behalf of the citizens in British Gambia (reportedly).
- To refuel his plane.

Countries Visited: Liberia, British Gambia.

Note: Visited troops in North Africa, but that visit was unrelated to Africa policy issues.

Theodore Roosevelt

Never visited as President, but went hunting on the continent while not in office.