

# LECTURE

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## A New Africa Strategy: Expanding Economic and Security Ties on the Basis of Mutual Respect

*The Honorable John R. Bolton*

### Abstract

*The Trump Administration's new Africa Strategy is based on three tenets. The first is advancing U.S. trade and commercial ties with nations across the region to the benefit of both the United States and Africa. The second is countering the threat from radical Islamic terrorism and violent conflict. ISIS, al-Qaeda, and their affiliates all operate and recruit on the African continent, plotting attacks against American citizens and targets. Third, the U.S. will ensure that U.S. taxpayer dollars for aid are used efficiently and effectively. The United States will no longer provide indiscriminate assistance across the entire continent without focus or prioritization.*

I want to extend a warm welcome to everyone who is joining us for this very special event, both here and online. We welcome friends, distinguished guests from the Administration, NGOs, policy experts, business representatives, and the diplomatic corps. I know we have an amazing field of expertise on Africa in the auditorium joining us today.

We've been privileged here at The Heritage Foundation in 2018 to welcome major policy addresses from the highest levels of President Trump's Administration. Earlier this year, we had the honor of hosting Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley. Today, Heritage is honored to continue our contributions to the most important national policy discussions. We welcome the Honorable John Bolton, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs. Ambassador Bolton will speak to us on the Trump Administration's new Africa strategy.

### KEY POINTS

- The United States will respect the independence of other nations in providing humanitarian, security, and development assistance: We are not among those powers that pursue dollars for dependency.
- We draw the line at funding causes that harm our interests and our citizens.
- Around the world, the United States seeks partners who are self-reliant, independent, and strong—nations that respect the interests of their people, the rights of their neighbors, and the principle of fairness and reciprocity in all agreements.
- This strategy is the result of an intensive inter-agency process and reflects the core tenets of President Trump's foreign policy doctrine. Importantly, the strategy remains true to his central campaign promise to put the interests of the American people first, both at home and abroad.

This paper, in its entirety, can be found at <http://report.heritage.org/hl1306>

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America's global role and foreign policy direction are rapidly expanding in new areas and in new ways. Africa is a region that before now has not perhaps received the intense attention of the foreign policy community, but that is changing. Political security and economic developments in Africa now reverberate widely in America, Europe, and Asia. How America and the Trump Administration approach these developments will reverberate equally widely in promoting safety, security, and prosperity on the African continent. Thank you all for joining us here today to hear Ambassador Bolton speak on this important topic and U.S. strategy going forward. We look forward to his remarks and then a discussion afterwards with our Executive Vice President Dr. Kim Holmes.

I think that it is fitting that Dr. Holmes introduce Ambassador Bolton today. Dr. Holmes is a former Assistant Secretary of State and one of our leading experts on foreign policy here at Heritage. In addition to working together over the years, Dr. Holmes and Ambassador Bolton have also been long-time friends. I would now like to invite Dr. Holmes, who has known and worked with the Ambassador for many years, to offer a warm welcome and introduction.

—*Kay Coles James is President of The Heritage Foundation.*

Thank you very much, Kay, for allowing me to introduce my good friend John Bolton and to welcome him to The Heritage Foundation. I'd like to welcome all of you as our guests here this morning. It's indeed a pleasure to have all of you here, and it certainly is an honor to welcome John back to Heritage. As Kay mentioned, he is an old friend. I remember well hosting John many years ago when he delivered remarks at The Heritage Foundation on the Bush Administration's decision to disassociate from the International Criminal Court. It seemed just like yesterday, but it actually was quite a while back. John and I have indeed been in the trenches for a long time. We served together at the State Department during the Bush Administration. And, frankly, I can think of

no one I would rather see advising President Trump on national security than John Bolton.

There is no better advocate for America. He stands up for American interests and American values without apology and without hesitation. Whether defending American interests at the United Nations, as he once did when he was permanent representative to the U.N., or today supporting President Trump's agenda now as National Security Advisor. For John Bolton, as he once said in his book of the same title, surrender is not an option.

John Bolton knows the ins and outs of government like no one else I know. He is a master, not only of details, but of the long plan. You can see his fingerprints all over decisions recently made by the President. And for that, we are truly thankful.

Today, we welcome him to Heritage yet again to discuss the Administration's policy and strategy toward Africa. Africa is a vast, beautiful, and complex continent filled with a rich culture, a rich history, and an entrepreneurial spirit, but it is also experiencing many difficult changes and challenges. Some of these are old and echoes of the past. They've been around for a very long time. But some of them are actually quite new.

Radical Islamist groups are destabilizing the region. Refugee movements in the north and health emergencies in the central regions are contributing to instability. There are concerns, as well, over the influence of external powers such as China and Russia on the economic and political life of Africans, and about the security of the continent. Now, the foreign policy team at The Heritage Foundation follows these developments closely, and so we—as well as all of you, our distinguished guests here this morning—are greatly looking forward to Ambassador Bolton's address on Africa. So, please now welcome Ambassador John Bolton, the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs.

—*Kim R. Holmes, PhD, is Executive Vice President of The Heritage Foundation.*

## A New Africa Strategy

I'm delighted again to be here at Heritage, an institution that really has contributed so much to the public policy debate for many decades now in the United States. And I'm particularly pleased to be here to unveil the Trump Administration's new Africa Strategy, which the President approved yesterday and which the Administration will begin executing immediately.

This strategy is the result of an intensive inter-agency process and reflects the core tenets of President Trump's foreign policy doctrine. Importantly, the strategy remains true to his central campaign promise to put the interests of the American people first, both at home and abroad. The White House is proud to finalize this strategy during the second year of President Trump's first term, about two years earlier than the prior Administration's release of its Africa strategy.

We have prioritized developing this document because we understand that lasting stability, prosperity, independence, and security on the African continent are in the national security interest of the United States.

### A Three-Pronged Approach

Under our new approach, every decision we make, every policy we pursue, and every dollar of aid we spend will further U.S. priorities in the region. In particular, the strategy addresses three core U.S. interests on the continent:

- First, advancing U.S. trade and commercial ties with nations across the region to the benefit of both the United States and Africa. We want our economic partners in the region to thrive, prosper, and control their own destinies. In America's economic dealings, we ask only for reciprocity, never for subservience.
- Second, countering the threat from radical Islamic terrorism and violent conflict. ISIS, al-Qaeda, and their affiliates all operate and recruit on the African continent, plotting attacks against American citizens and targets. Any sound U.S. strategy toward Africa must address this serious threat in a comprehensive way.
- And third, we will ensure that U.S. taxpayer dollars for aid are used efficiently and effectively. The

United States will no longer provide indiscriminate assistance across the entire continent without focus or prioritization. And we will no longer support unproductive, unsuccessful, and unaccountable U.N. peacekeeping missions. We want something more to show for Americans' hard-earned taxpayer dollars.

Under our new Africa strategy, we will target U.S. funding toward key countries and particular strategic objectives. All U.S. aid on the continent will advance U.S. interests, and help African nations move toward self-reliance.

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### Economic Ties

Our first priority, enhancing U.S. economic ties with the region, is not only essential to improving opportunities for American workers and businesses, it is also vital to safeguarding the economic independence of African states and protecting U.S. national security interests.

Great power competitors, namely China and Russia, are rapidly expanding their financial and political influence across Africa. They are deliberately and aggressively targeting their investments in the region to gain a competitive advantage over the United States. From 2016–2017, China's foreign direct investment toward Africa totaled \$6.4 billion dollars. And over the past several years, China has devoted considerable state-directed and state-supported financing to projects in the region.

**China.** China uses bribes, opaque agreements, and the strategic use of debt to hold states in Africa captive to Beijing's wishes and demands. Its investment ventures are riddled with corruption and do not meet the same environmental or ethical standards as U.S. developmental programs. Such predatory actions are sub-components of broader Chinese strategic initiatives, including "One Belt, One Road"—a plan to

develop a series of trade routes leading to and from China with the ultimate goal of advancing Chinese global dominance.

In Africa, we are already seeing the disturbing effects of China's quest to obtain more political, economic, and military power. The nation of Zambia, for example, is currently in debt to China to the tune of \$6 to \$10 billion dollars. China is now poised to take over Zambia's national power and utility company in order to collect on Zambia's financial obligations.

Similarly, from 2014 to 2016, Djibouti's external public debt-to-GDP ratio ballooned from 50 percent to 85 percent, with most of that debt owed to China. In 2017, China established a military base in Djibouti that is only miles from our U.S. base, Camp Lemonnier, which supports critical U.S. operations to counter violent terrorist organizations in East Africa. In May, U.S. officials accused China of using military-grade lasers from this base to target and distract U.S. pilots on 10 different occasions. Two of our American pilots suffered eye injuries from exposure to laser beams.

And soon, Djibouti may hand over control of the Doraleh Container Terminal, a strategically located shipping port on the Red Sea, to Chinese state-owned enterprises. Should this occur, the balance of power in the Horn of Africa—astride major arteries of maritime trade between Europe, the Middle East, and South Asia—would shift in favor of China. And our U.S. military personnel at Camp Lemonnier could face further challenges in their efforts to protect the American people.

**Russia.** Russia, for its part, is also seeking to increase its influence in the region through corrupt economic dealings. Across the continent, Russia advances its political and economic relationships with little regard for the rule of law or accountable and transparent governance. It continues to sell arms and energy in exchange for votes at the United Nations—votes that keep strongmen in power, undermine peace and security, and run counter to the best interests of the African people. Russia also continues to extract natural resources from the region for its own benefit.

In short, the predatory practices pursued by China and Russia stunt economic growth in Africa, threaten the financial independence of African nations, inhibit opportunities for U.S. investment, interfere with U.S. military operations, and pose a significant threat to U.S. national security interests.

## Countering Violent Threats

Equally concerning at this time, the lack of economic progress in the region has accompanied the proliferation of radical Islamic terrorism and other forms of violent conflict across Africa. Countering these serious threats is the second priority under our new Africa strategy. In recent years, ISIS, al-Qaeda, and other terrorists operating in Africa have increased the lethality of their attacks, expanded into new areas, and repeatedly targeted U.S. citizens and interests.

In Mali, JNIM (Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin)—which describes itself as an al-Qaeda affiliate—is increasing in strength and has killed and wounded scores of peacekeepers, partner forces, and innocent civilians, in addition to kidnapping Westerners and threatening U.S. allies. In Libya, the local ISIS-affiliate has found fertile ground to recruit new terrorists and plot attacks against the United States. In South Sudan, an ongoing civil war has ravaged a young nation, displaced millions, and led to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people.

The continuing threat from terrorism and other violent conflicts across the region puts American lives at risk and drains vital American resources. Between 2014 and 2018, the United States provided approximately \$3.76 billion dollars in humanitarian aid to South Sudan and refugees in neighboring countries. This number represents only a small amount of the total aid that the United States devotes to Africa.

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## The United States will not tolerate this longstanding pattern of aid without effect, assistance without accountability, and relief without reform.

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In fact, in Fiscal Year 2017, the Department of State and USAID [United States Agency for International Development] provided approximately \$8.7 billion dollars in development, security, and food assistance to Africa. In Fiscal Year 2016, we provided approximately \$8.3 billion dollars. Between 1995 and 2006, U.S. aid to Africa was roughly equal to the amount of assistance provided by all other donors *combined*.

Unfortunately, billions upon billions of U.S. taxpayer dollars have not achieved the desired effects.

They have not stopped the scourge of terrorism, radicalism, and violence. They have not prevented other powers, such as China and Russia, from taking advantage of African states to increase their own power and influence. And they have not led to stable and transparent governance, economic viability, and increasing development across the region.

From now on, the United States will not tolerate this longstanding pattern of aid without effect, assistance without accountability, and relief without reform. Instead, we are pursuing a new path, one that, we hope, finally gets results.

### **Efficient and Effective Aid**

Americans are a generous people, but we insist that our money is put to good use. Our third priority, therefore, is ensuring that all U.S. assistance dollars sent to Africa are used efficiently and effectively to advance peace, stability, independence, and prosperity in the region.

Here are some of the specific, bold actions we will take under our new strategy to address the three priority areas I have just highlighted.

**Prosper Africa.** To expand our economic relationships in the region, we are developing a new initiative called “Prosper Africa,” which will support U.S. investment across the continent, grow Africa’s middle class, and improve the overall business climate in the region.

In addition, we will encourage African leaders to choose high-quality, transparent, inclusive, and sustainable foreign investment projects, including those from the United States. We will leverage our expanded and modernized development tools to support access to financing and provide strong alternatives to external state-directed initiatives.

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### **America’s vision for the region is one of independence, self-reliance, and growth—not dependency, domination, and debt.**

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America’s vision for the region is one of independence, self-reliance, and growth—not dependency, domination, and debt. We want African nations to succeed, flourish, and remain independent in fact and not just in theory.

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**Trade Agreements.** In the coming years and months, we also intend to pursue modern, comprehensive trade agreements on the continent that ensure fair and reciprocal exchange between the United States and the nations of Africa. We will begin these negotiations on a bilateral basis and focus on creating mutually beneficial partnerships. Our new economic initiatives in Africa will help support American jobs and expand market access for U.S. exports, while promoting sustainable growth in African countries.

**Strategic Partnerships.** We will focus our economic efforts on African governments that act with us as strategic partners and which are striving toward improved governance and transparent business practices. As our partner nations develop economically, they will be better prepared to address a range of security threats, including terrorism and militant violence.

Under our new strategy, we will also take several additional steps to help our African friends fight terrorism and strengthen the rule of law. We will assist key African governments in building the capacity of partner forces and security institutions to provide effective and sustainable security and law enforcement services to their citizens.

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### **Our goal is for the nations of the region to take ownership over peace and security in their own neighborhood.**

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Our goal is for the nations of the region to take ownership over peace and security in their own neighborhood. The G5 Sahel Joint Force, comprised of Mauritania, Niger, Chad, Burkina Faso, and Mali, which the United States supports, is a great example of the enormous potential for African joint security cooperation. The G5 Sahel Joint Force is seeking to build regional capability to combat terrorism, transnational organized crime, and human trafficking in the Sahel. As this force gains capacity, G5 countries must remain in the driver’s seat: This initiative cannot be outsourced to the U.N. for funding and other support. We want to see more cooperative regional security organizations like these emerge around the world.

**Re-evaluate U.N. Peacekeeping.** As part of our new Africa strategy, the United States will also

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re-evaluate its support for U.N. peacekeeping missions. We will only back effective and efficient operations, and we will seek to streamline, reconfigure, or terminate missions that are unable to meet their own mandate or facilitate lasting peace. Our objective is to resolve conflicts, not freeze them in perpetuity.

And we will not provide legitimacy to missions that give large payouts to countries sending poorly-equipped soldiers who provide insufficient protection to vulnerable populations on the ground. The sexual exploitation and abuse by U.N. peacekeepers of the very populations that they were sent to protect has been, and remains, completely unacceptable. Continued malfeasance without consequences damages the integrity of the entire U.N. peacekeeping system. If we are truly committed to protecting innocent life in conflict zones, then we must insist on accountable, robust, and effective peacekeeping operations.

In April, the United States did just that regarding the decades-old U.N. peacekeeping mission in Western Sahara. We demanded a six-month (rather than annual) renewal period for the mission, and we insisted on a stronger, more effective mandate tied to substantive political progress. Because of our actions, the parties to the conflict and key neighboring countries agreed to meet for the first time since 2012. Last week, the U.N. envoy hosted these talks in Geneva, and the participants agreed to hold additional talks early next year.

**Regional Stakeholders.** Moving forward, we will also ensure that bilateral U.S. security assistance targets nations that act as responsible regional stakeholders—and nations where state failure or weakness would pose a direct threat to the United States and our citizens. We want to use American dollars in the most efficient way to protect the interests of the American people. Accordingly, we will make certain that *all* aid to the region—whether for security, humanitarian, or development needs—advances these U.S. interests.

**Assistance Requirements.** Countries that receive U.S. assistance must invest in health and education, encourage accountable and transparent governance, support fiscal transparency, and promote the rule of law. The Administration will not allow hard-earned taxpayer dollars to fund corrupt autocrats, who use the money to fill their coffers at the expense of their people or commit gross human rights abuses.

For example, the United States is now reviewing its assistance to South Sudan to ensure that our aid

does not prolong the conflict or facilitate predatory behavior. We will not provide loans or more American resources to a South Sudanese government led by the same morally bankrupt leaders who perpetuate the horrific violence and immense human suffering in South Sudan.

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The Administration is also developing a new foreign assistance strategy to improve the effectiveness of American foreign aid worldwide. American foreign assistance was originally designed to counter the Soviet Union during the Cold War—and most recently to fight terrorism after 9/11. Today, we need to make adjustments to address the pressing challenge of great power competition and to correct past mistakes in structuring our funding.

In developing our strategy, we are revisiting the foundational principles of the Marshall Plan. The Marshall Plan furthered American interests, bypassed the United Nations, and targeted key sectors of foreign economies rather than dissipating aid across hundreds of programs. Our new foreign assistance strategy will ensure that all U.S. foreign aid, in every corner of the globe, advances U.S. interests.

Our goal is to move recipient states toward self-reliance and prevent long-term dependency. Structural reforms will likely be critical, including practicing fiscal responsibility, promoting fair and reciprocal trade, deregulating economies, and supporting the private sector. We should emphasize bilateral mechanisms to maintain maximum American control over every American dollar spent. Less needy recipients should graduate from foreign assistance, and assistance should decline to countries and organizations making poor policy choices.

**Maximum Impact.** In addition, we should target resources toward areas where we have the most impact to ensure efficient use of taxpayer dollars. Countries that repeatedly vote against the United States in international forums or take action counter

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The United States will respect the independence of other nations in providing humanitarian, security, and development assistance: We are not among those powers that pursue dollars for dependency. However, we draw the line at funding causes that harm our interests and our citizens.

### Conclusion

Around the world, the United States seeks partners who are self-reliant, independent, and strong—nations that respect the interests of their people, the rights of their neighbors, and the principle of fairness and reciprocity in all agreements.

Under our new Africa Strategy, we will expand economic ties on the basis of mutual respect. We will help African nations take control of their own economic destinies and their own security needs. And we will ensure that all U.S. foreign assistance in the region gets results for the American people.

I am honored to have had the opportunity to highlight the details of our plans here at Heritage today, and I look forward to taking your questions.

Thank you very much.

—*The Honorable John R. Bolton is the U.S. National Security Advisor.*

### Questions & Answers

**Dr. Holmes:** Well, thank you very much for that, John. When we first heard that you were actually working on a larger Africa strategy, we were very pleased to hear that because we've long argued here that Africa does not get the attention it needs. Or, when it does get the attention from the Administration, the result is often pursuing policies that not only do not improve things but actually in some cases make them worse. And so tackling Africa from the point of view of the principles that you outlined was

something we really welcome and makes us doubly happy that you decided to come here and share the President's new strategy at The Heritage Foundation. While we are here, if there are any points you wish to elaborate on or extrapolate on, this is your time. So, you can jump in at any moment.

To get things started, I thought I would ask you to comment a little bit more on the strategic competition you mentioned regarding China and Russia. Particularly, the approach of China is multifaceted. It's cutting across the entire range of national and international security and economic policy trade—foreign aid and the like. And, so, as you rightly pointed out, we need a broad, holistic response to that. If you could say a little bit more about all the tools you have at your disposal for U.S. policy, but if you also could at some point talk about what is the impact on U.S. military activities, military presence, and military security—even in terms of the assistance that we provide to some of the countries, either for military or counter terrorism purposes.

**Ambassador Bolton:** One of the reasons that I've been interested in Africa for some time is my first real job in the government was at the U.S. Agency for International Development in the Reagan Administration. And I traveled among other places to Zimbabwe just a few years after the real independence of Zimbabwe. The end of white rule and the beginning of self-government there. And it was a fascinating time. It didn't work out so well for a lot of reasons. Hopefully we're in a new era now. But the continuation of these kinds of governance problems was something that always drew my attention.

As I was mentioning to you and Kay a little bit earlier, being at the U.N. in New York and talking to African ambassadors about their vision for their own countries and for Africa was something that also I found quite fascinating. But within the U.S. government, it is fair to say—whether it's Republican or Democratic Administrations—it's often been difficult to get people to focus on it. There are always competing priorities. But now I think, precisely because of the very well thought out, very comprehensive intervention of China in the continent of Africa—and other places around the world, too—with a program that is very systematically designed to tilt whole regions of the world, and particularly mineral-resource-rich areas, in China's direction, that this is a very important point for the United States and the West as a whole to wake up to.

We need to foster, as I said a few moments ago, independence for African countries. The United States—although our adversaries for decades called us an imperial power—we’re probably the least imperial great power in the history of the world. Our interest doesn’t match any prior power throughout history of comparable size and influence. But that’s not the view of some of the great powers we are competing with in the world today.

So, we really have an opportunity here, I hope, for a debate and discussion in the United States about shaping relations with Africa to the mutual advantage of the African countries on the one hand and the United States on the other. It’s a very different view than I think some of our competitors hold. So, whether it’s in the economic field, Prosper Africa is not an aid program. The idea is based on trade and investment in the security field because of the threats that we see, really, across the African continent.

And, in the political space as well, there are some real opportunities here. Now, resources from the U.S. government are constrained, there’s no doubt about it. We’re certainly looking for all the opportunities we can. I think if you’re going to have a comprehensive strategy—and I mentioned our foreign aid review, which is very near completion—that implies changes in allocations and directions. Otherwise, you’re just pursuing the path you pursued the year before endlessly. That doesn’t amount to a strategy; that just amounts to bureaucracy repeating itself. But, hopefully, with the strategy that the President has just approved, we can have that kind of conversation to give Africa the priority in American strategic thinking that I think the Administration believes it deserves.

**Dr. Holmes:** You’ve mentioned the review of the foreign assistance program that is currently happening. Reforming the foreign aid program is something that we here at Heritage have been looking at for decades. We’ve been talking about the importance of having conditionality applied to the aid, focusing more on developing civil society and free markets and economic freedom rather than government-to-government assistance, which ends up propping up corrupt regimes very often. Could you give us a forecast of what is happening with that review? But in particular from our interest here, is there any thought about what will change in terms of the purpose and mission and structure of [US]AID as the main administrator of these programs?

**Ambassador Bolton:** Right. Well, I wish I could say that the foreign aid review was complete and that I could describe it. And when it is, I’d be happy to come back and do it—

**Dr. Holmes:** We could do that too.

**Ambassador Bolton:** We’re close. And, I would expect within a very short period of time we will bring it to a conclusion. I think, again, speaking as an AID alumnus, what we see is that for years things have just proceeded really without this kind of comprehensive review. It’s long overdue. There’s a long history to U.S. foreign assistance programs. The first was a private effort—Herbert Hoover’s famous committee for relief in Belgium during World War I, where really, with no assistance from the U.S. government at all, he developed an enormous program for feeding civilian populations in war-stricken Europe.

But we’ve got to have more effective delivery mechanisms. I think we’re going to look very hard, as I mentioned in the speech, at what is the best way to provide this assistance. I’d reveal my biases again if I said I was an [US]AID alumnus. I understand bilateral programs ... [and] have also been at the U.N. I have my views on that as well, as you know. But look, this is a complex process. If it were easy to do, it’d be done already. But there are a lot of very bright prospects here, and we’re going to be talking to some of the other donor nations, as well, as we conclude our review and see if they might not be up for looking at their programs, too.

**Dr. Holmes:** You mentioned also in the context of the new Africa that you’re taking a strong and hard and close look at U.N. peacekeeping operations in Africa, and you mentioned that the principle of trying to actually bring peace and end the operations rather than freezing the conflict, which very often happens with U.N. peacekeeping operations is a goal and the new strategy. Once again, this is a very laudable goal as far as we at Heritage are concerned.

Beyond the mission of South Sudan, are there any other peacekeeping operations that you are looking at? For example, Monusco in the Democratic Republic of Congo, which is, I think, the second largest peacekeeping operation in Africa. There are others as well. This is really where most of the U.N. peacekeeping operation work is done, in Africa. Can you say a bit more about that?

**Ambassador Bolton:** Right. Well, clearly what has happened in U.N. peacekeeping operations all around the world is that, in an effort to bring an ongoing

conflict to an end, a truce of some kind is arranged and a peacekeeping force is inserted increasingly in recent years with a political component to it. But unfortunately, all too often at the United Nations, establishing the peacekeeping force and deploying it is the end of creative thinking. And, the mandate is renewed almost automatically. The Secretary General Special Representative comes in every year, gives a report, the Security Council rolls the mandate over, and not very much happens. I think there needs to be a lot more focused on resolving the underlying conflict and therefore having success in the peacekeeping mission. Success is not simply continuing the mission *ad infinitum*. And I picked the Western Sahara as my favorite example because when I had the job that we both once held as Assistant Secretary for International Organizations at the State Department in 1991, I participated in writing the mandate of MINURSO [United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara] when it was created 27 years ago.

And I worked with Jim Baker when he was Kofi Annan's personal envoy in 1997 to try and resolve the Western Sahara, where the entire effort had broken down. And he tried it again in 2000 and 2001. And when I got to the U.N. in 2006—2005 or 2006—again we tried to fix. All we want to do is hold a referendum for 70,000 voters. It's 27 years later. The status of the territory is still unresolved.

The new U.N. envoy I think has some very creative ideas, but, honestly, ladies and gentlemen, 27 years of deployment of this U.N. peacekeeping force? Twenty-seven years, and it's *still* there? How can you justify that?

So, I think, over the years, I've gotten to know the Sahrawi people. I have enormous respect for them. I have enormous respect for the government and people in Morocco and Algeria. Is there not a way to resolve this? Because the resources, the time and attention that we're devoting to the peacekeeping forces could much more productively be used in the development and economic betterment of the people of the region. That's why this is important. If you resolve conflicts, you're freeing resources—economic and political—for other purposes. That's what our objective should be.

**Dr. Holmes:** You're right about, in many ways, the way that the mandates are put together for the peacekeeping operations. They're political compromises with the groups in the region and also the countries on the Security Council. And the compromises almost always end up either freezing the situation or not advancing it. When I was Assistant Secretary, I visited Congo and

flew all around. In one case, there was a village that had been re-occupied by some of the militia, who drove out mostly the women and children into the side region of the village. U.N. agencies came in and took care of those children, but they would do nothing about the problem. They told me that this was because of the way the mandate was written, which is basically freezing the conflict. So, this is a very real problem that is built into the way they approach peacekeeping operations.

**Ambassador Bolton:** Let me just say on that point. I'm not blaming the U.N. secretary here. I'm blaming the Security Council. The Security Council sets the peacekeeping forces up. Security Councils should guide the special representatives. The Security Council should press to get the conflict resolved. And it's not enough just to roll a peacekeeping mandate over. They need to be much more involved politically in getting the parties to work out their differences.

**Dr. Holmes:** You mentioned the problem of terrorism in Africa—it is very significant. In some areas, it's even growing. Could you say a bit more about what the United States expects of African countries themselves? And not only cooperating with the United States, but even taking activities and responsibilities on themselves in combating terrorism?

**Ambassador Bolton:** Well, there certainly have been very successful efforts. I think I mentioned the G5 Sahel joint force. There are others that we can envision, others we would support. We're in active conversation in New York and a number of capitals on that score. Look, it's foundational in the U.N. Charter that regional organizations should have much more of a role than they've historically had. I think Africa is a very important place to try and make that principal work. Obviously, there are countries in Africa that have benefited from successful U.N. peacekeeping operations. Namibia is a good example [and] Mozambique. But I think now, it's time for African governments to take the lead themselves and do more of that. We'd love to encourage and support that, if the circumstances are right.

**Dr. Holmes:** The Heritage Foundation is a civil society organization, if you will. And there are many people in this audience from civil society groups who operate and work either in Africa or work on the subject of Africa. I'm sure that many of them are interested in what they could do or should be doing differently in terms of civil society support for helping the African people that would be complementary to what you're trying to do with your new Africa strategy.

**Ambassador Bolton:** Well, I think the most important thing is to look at the geopolitical reality that we're facing. We've already seen some countries—I mentioned a couple of concerns in Africa. But other countries in Asia, some in Latin America, where this what we call debt for diplomacy, debt diplomacy strategy is being pursued very successfully. It's very tempting to get into financial arrangements that seem attractive in the near term, but that then get more and more difficult to get out of.

So, I think because the state directed nature of that kind of approach fundamentally isn't really reconcilable with independent civil society to begin with, I think nongovernmental organizations and others should be aware of that and should be advising their partners in Africa of the risks involved when these kinds of proposals are made. Because not only will it squeeze the independence of African countries, it will squeeze the space available for civil society inevitably.

**Dr. Holmes:** Well, we've been hearing for many years the mantra toward Africa trade, not aid. And you mentioned both trade and aid in your remarks. There are many U.S. companies that probably would like to invest more in Africa. They're not sure of the trade environment, the legal environment. Most important, they're not sure of the security and political environment. If we wish to try to engage Africa more, not only at a civil society level, but in economic and financial levels in order to counter what China is doing, what can we be saying to American corporations or investors in addition to what you mentioned a minute ago about civil society groups, that you would be working on to try to increase a better, more friendly environment for U.S. investment in Africa?

**Ambassador Bolton:** Well, I think the policy environment is obviously the most important, and I think that really is fundamentally within the control of the African countries themselves. The more open they are—the competitive foreign investment not tied to one country or one particular program—the more likely foreign investors are to come in. In the United States, we've certainly added to our capacity to help American investors through major improvements. I think in OPIC, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, with new authorities, with the Millennium Challenge Corporation. There are lots of possibilities here that didn't exist when I was with AID. And I think those are all things from an American business point of view that really ought to point them in the direction of places where their supply chain can be

safer and less susceptible to political manipulation as it is in many countries where we've invested.

**Dr. Holmes:** Both you and I, in the discussion here, have made reference a couple of times to the different approach that you're trying to take with Africa and how it differs from past approaches. Not to put you on the spot, but maybe I can. What do you think in the past has been the central, conceptual mistake that Administrations have made in the past or Americans make when they look toward Africa? I know there's a lot of different aspects to the policies that you're talking about, but if you raise it to the strategic level, what have we done wrong in the past when we have thought about Africa?

**Ambassador Bolton:** Well, I think too many Administrations—look, it's a bipartisan problem—have looked at Africa and said, they wouldn't necessarily put it this way, but they'd say it's not strategically important to the United States. I can remember an Assistant Secretary of African Affairs in one Administration in which I served—I'll leave that vague so I don't embarrass him—once told me the story about how he had had a consultation with his Japanese opposite number, the assistant secretary equivalent there for Africa. And they had both quickly agreed that in the list of regional bureaus and the foreign ministry in Japan and the State Department in Washington, Africa was the lowest-ranking priority of all the regional bureaus.

And I think if you start with that proposition, the conclusion's pretty obvious. I just think the proposition is wrong. Africa is incredibly important to the United States. If we didn't understand it before, the competition posed by China and Russia, among others, should highlight it for us. Which is why I do think this is a potential turning point in American understanding of what's at stake for us—not just for Africa—but for the United States in African affairs.

So that, as we address this, I think there should be a new openness on both sides to understanding what's at risk here, and why it's to our advantage to update our understanding of what the priority is for the United States.

**Dr. Holmes:** Well, one of the main themes of your speech, and the President makes this point time and time again, is that American foreign policy should serve the interests of the American people and our values. And the interesting thing that at least struck me about the way that you were laying out the strategy is that, yes, it suits our interests. It suits our

values. But it's good for Africans, too. As a matter of fact, it's just more effective in actually combating the problems that the Africans themselves face, whether it's terrorism, economic development, or a lack of freedom.

This has been the formula in my opinion of American genius of our foreign policy over the last decades. It's sort of a re-centering, in the way I see it, of American foreign policy and the traditional way that we have looked at our interests in the past. Can you say about how the, in your conversations with the President and his approach to American interests, he has said elsewhere he's actually talked with our European allies in terms of burden sharing. But this is not really the context that you're putting this in. Can you say a bit more about how the President's own vision of his new foreign policy fits into what you're doing?

**Ambassador Bolton:** Right. Well, I'm sure people in this room probably know the famous alibi lines, I guess, that the people use. It's become sort of a joke when somebody says "the check's in the mail," you know the check's not in the mail. When somebody says, "I'm from the government, and I'm here to help," that's an instant warning that you better put your hand on your wallet.

I think the conceptual mistake that has been made before is that talking about the U.S. relationship with Africa is talking about how we're going to help Africa. I think the President's transactional history of making deals that are mutually beneficial—because you don't make many successful investments unless the people on the other side of the transaction get something out of it, too—is something that should encourage African governments and those that want to see a higher level of relations between the United States and Africa to see what's possible. Because with a little straight talking among friends about what's beneficial on both sides, you're much more likely to get a successful outcome than pretending that it's a one-sided relationship.