Special Issue: Progressive Africa Action for a New Century

Introduction to the Special Issue, or a Brief Note on Issue Framing

Caleb Bush

Over a year ago in 1998, I sat in the back of the room at the annual ACAS membership meeting. This meeting was my first taste of ACAS as well as the larger African Studies Association, heady days for a young academic in training. At that meeting, a number of folks made impassioned calls for a counter-summit to the National Summit on Africa (NSA) -- an attempt to put issues on the table and in a manner that the Summit was unable and unwilling to do.

Like probably everyone in that room and nearly everyone in attendance at the larger ASA meeting, I had received numerous flyers, letters, and other material from the Summit asking for my attendance at a number of its important events. The ACAS membership meeting was my initial exposure to those who had taken part in the Summit process, some from its earliest days. The disappointment felt by many with the Summit was and still is an important point in and of itself. The series of exchanges that conclude this special issue speak to that fact and address concerns with the Summit from any number of angles.

Yet, more importantly for ACAS, the discussion ensuing at that 1998 membership meeting and culminating in the Progressive Africa Action Workshop, November 10-11, 1999 in Philadelphia exposes the important critical role ACAS and its many members have played and continue to play in ways too numerous to count. ACAS' and its members' ability to engage Africa policy and issues at a critical level provides the organization one of its most important and widely identifiable images. As a member of the "younger" generation, I can attest to the power this progressive, critical stance of ACAS holds with a large number of 'concerned Africa scholars,' many of them at the earliest stages of academic and/or professional careers, who very well may not be a part of the Association, yet.

Attesting to this progressive stance by ACAS, the documents from the Progressive Africa Action Workshop have been reproduced in this special issue. These include important background papers by: (1) William G. Martin on the future of Africa action in the U.S., (2) Charles Geschekter and Meredeth Turshen on the health/AIDS/drugs debates and the controversy around AIDS in Africa, (3) Leon Spencer on trade legislation and the policy debates still swirling around Africa-U.S. trade relations, (4) a discussion note which bridges similar issues while also tackling African debt cancellation, and finally, (5) Jim Cason on the changing face of intervention and military aid in Africa. Accompanying each background paper, the lively discussion they inspired at each respective session has also been reproduced. Wherever possible, the discussion notes have been checked and checked again to ensure an accurate and full reproduction of the discussion. As with any such effort, the discussion summaries can offer only a partial sense of the discussion that went on at the workshop.

This may come as little surprise but the overarching theme of these papers and the discussions they inspired rests on ACAS' progressive, critical stance on a variety of issues and policies for Africa. This goes without saying. However, two related themes cut across these documents as well -- the construction or 'framing' of the issues and the ways in which such issue framing can be used to reach new constituencies and activists for Africa in the post-apartheid era.

My concern with issue 'framing' (for examples, see Snow, Rochford, Worden and Benford 1986; Tarrow 1992. Hunt, Benford and Snow 1994; McAdam 1997) stems from my own work on social movements. Quite simply, the ways in which issues are framed and the type of issues taken up make a difference in who identifies with an organization, who potential allies may be, and who may be more

antagonistic to an organization and its issues. The issue of framing cuts across the background papers and session discussions -- from Martin's open concern with reaching potential activists for Africa to Geschekter and Turshen's concern with the ways in which health issues in Africa are framed to Cason's call for building alliances with other communities and movements around a forward-looking agenda for aid and intervention in Africa. Readers who pay particular attention to the discussion summaries will find repeated interest in what issues are chosen to address and how they are constructed. For example, the trade, aid, debt, and investment discussion was driven by friendly debate over the terminology used to describe and link issues. The choice of phrases like 'free market fundamentalism' over 'neoliberalism' speaks volumes about the importance of framing.

A second related theme stems from issue framing -- the importance of new constituencies for future Africa action. Here I will be a bit less 'academic' and speak to the 'youth issue' that was a repeated theme in the session discussions. Aleah Bacquie's comments and reflections from the closing session centered on ways to "articulate our vision to today's youth" and the essential nature of younger generations of Africa activists. I could not agree more (and as someone, identified as a member of this younger generation, this should be a heartening point for many readers!).

Yet, as Meredeth Turshen points out in her presentation on the Summit for the workshop plenary session, youth were notably absent from Summit proceedings. And I might add notably absent from much of the Workshop proceedings we reproduce here. I believe an important part of this absence stems from the issues addressed and the ways they are addressed by different organizations today. Quite simply, and this point was repeated throughout Workshop discussions, issues form a part of any organization's identity. Choose the right issues, or articulate them in the right way, and people, including youth, will identify with the organization. A progressive outlook and a desire for change is not lacking amongst younger generations (despite media constructions).

However, a distrust of the organizational nature of much action often accompanies such a progressive outlook amongst many of the younger generations -- a fact recognized in much movement literature as the divide between 'old' and 'new' social movements and forms of organizing (see Arrighi, Hopkins and Wallerstein 1989). I believe this goes far to explaining the lack of participation by youth in the Summit and perhaps ACAS as well. Yet again, this is not because the desire is missing amongst younger generations; such desire is there. It is up to organizations, including ACAS, to reach out to 'youth' and other constituencies (a point repeated in Workshop discussions). The fact that new constituencies, including youth, were even a concern at the Workshop is a tremendous, positive step -- one that must be followed up on in the coming months and years ahead.

ACAS' Top Ten List of Progressive Priorities, in its latest permutation, is one way ACAS can put forth or frame the issues that drive it and its members. Reproduced here, the Top Ten embraces a number of policy issues with all sorts of opportunity for alliance-formation and activist-building. Likewise, the Mumia petition, reproduced here, and the larger issue already display the power of progressive action today, especially amongst younger generations. A quick glance of the signatories of the petition will reveal a large number of names belonging to younger academics, professionals, etc. of an often progressive, activist stripe.

Yodit Bekele's contribution to the ongoing 'Aids: Tuskegee Two' debate reinforces this larger progressive concern amongst today's students. Driven by a palpable concern for the well-being of Africans, women, children, and others oppressed, Bekele tackles the latest round of drug-testing in Africa and asks difficult questions of the pharmaceutical industry and its motives and concerns.

This issue concludes with an extended exchange concerning the National Summit on Africa. Quite obviously, the concerns raised in 1998 at the ACAS meetings have only strengthened and multiplied as the Summit process moved forward and culminated in the national meeting earlier this year in Washington, DC. Perhaps culminated is the wrong word,

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since efforts appear to be underway to institutionalize the Summit as a permanent, ongoing organization. This point, along with a number additionally raised by Summit participants and/or observers in the included contributions, point to the important role of critical, progressive engagement on Africa and Africa-related issues and organizations. This issue of the Bulletin looks to further the debates and push the issues for a new century of Africa action and for new generations of Africa activists.

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Introduction to Progressive Africa Action Workshop Documents

William G. Martin

This section of the Bulletin contains the core materials from the Progressive Africa Action workshop ACAS held on November 10-11, 1999 in Philadelphia. The approximately 35 people who attended the workshop included ACAS members as well as persons from almost all the progressive organizations working on Africa-related issues. Participants shared a common commitment to progressive action, and a longstanding involvement in campaigns that engaged a broad spectrum of the US public.

The origins of the workshop go back to 1998, when discussions among ACAS members -- most notably at our annual membership meetings -- stressed the need for greater discussion and collaboration among progressive academics and activists. This was set against, it was noted, ongoing efforts and debates surrounding the National Summit on Africa, and even longer but most often isolated efforts by many solidarity organizations to remold their work in the post-apartheid period. Even as Africa has became more visible in Washington -- as indicated by Presidential and Cabinet ministers' trips, new legislation and the Summit effort--the commitment of real resources to Africa and particularly progressive action seemed to be faltering.

How and where, members asked, can progressive activists recast their work in this climate, particularly in order to reach groups outside Washington? How might we confront new, neo-liberal policies and organizations, as past massive anti-apartheid support has waned away and yet public interest in Africa seems high? What are our common priorities? And our key campaigns -- and who might lead them? How do we learn from missed oppor-tunities, and work together? What kinds of supporters, in what communities, can be mobilized?

From these kinds of questions emerged the workshop. An opening plenary sessions sought to cast these issues widely and yet forcefully -- and used persons noted for strong and active work in this area. Background papers were charted in key policy areas for greater, in-depth discussion. Our aim here was not to target these issues alone, but to use key issues as ways to explore how we might forge new priorities and coalitions. A concluding session sought to pose anew the questions of the day. Our aim here, as elsewhere, was not to seek a single line of agreement or action, but to stimulate new thinking, approaches, and, most importantly, more common understandings and engagements. In this, as most participants would attest, we were successful indeed.

Plenary Session, Background Paper:
Africa Action After Apartheid: Constitutents or Activists?

William G. Martin

Ten years after Mandela walked out of prison, it is now possible to see new outlines and possible futures for Africa policy and activism. Gone are the mass-based campaigns, locally inspired and organized, and facilitated by national organizations (see Johnson 1999); most anti-apartheid organizations have fallen away or transformed themselves. Indeed, it is possible to imagine quite soon the demise of the few remaining national progressive organizations, and a narrowing of such activity to Washington, DC-based lobbying, NGO, and service organizations -- including new organi-zations such as the National Summit. Under these conditions, progressive activity on Africa could spiral down to intermittent participation in broader campaigns, led by non-African focused organizations (e.g. campaigns on debt, child soldiers and labor, etc.).

While rarely pitched in such stark terms, progressive scholars and activists have, over the last five years, debated in private, and occasionally in public, the new range of activities that have emerged since 1990. Yet few of these discussions have been sustained, much less made their way into print or the world-wide-web.   In order to provoke and deepen discussion of such possibilities, two polar models of Africa advocacy work, each with two variations, are sketched below: (1) constituency building from above, and (2) movement building from below, especially black, radical-based projects.   Each model provides examples of the organization(s) involved, central political position(s) and group(s), and the model's potentials and pitfalls. These characteristics are *accentuated* to sharpen differences and the implications for progressive work, most notably grassroots-supported campaigns dedicated to justice, equality, and well-being in Africa and at home.

(1) Constituency building

This effort seeks to mobilize a broad multi-racial, multi-class national constituency for Africa based primarily on appealing to persons who "care" about Africa. Its origins clearly lie among the major foundations and African-American-led, Washington-based, NGOs, although discussions have been organized by APIC (see Countess et al. 1997).   A first variation and the prime example is the largest African-related effort of the past decade: the National Summit for Africa. The Summit seeks to cover all Africa-related issues and has held regional meetings, chartered detailed issue papers, and is to conclude with a national meeting in Washington D.C. early next year -- with ambitions to become a dominant, permanent national organization thereafter. It is supported by all major academic, NGO, service, and lobbying organi-zations.

The strengths and the promise of the Summit are also its limits. It emerges from elite political and corporate groups based in Washington, who seek supporters from across the nation; the analogy is indeed politicians in Washington and their constituents in the hinterland. This gives it significant support   -- over $3 million dollars have been committed directly and as much as $10 million indirectly so far -- and access to key political, foundation and corporate leaders. Such an effort may indeed raise Africa's profile within Washington and, possibly, around the country.

As critics of the Summit (see Martin 1998, Horne 1999) have argued, however, these efforts are designed primarily to give the illusion of inclusiveness, while imposing an elite agenda defined by former US government policymakers and their allies.   There is little space for progressive policies that are critical of corporate or US actions in Africa, despite the heavy involvement of many progressive scholars. The Summit is thus unable to mobilize those driven

by concerns with injustice, racism, or corporate exploitation. To be blunt, the Summit threatens to construct a fictitious national consensus in support of those working for and with the US government, the Pentagon, and corporate America.

A second variant of constituency-building emerges primarily from the deliberations of older anti-aparthied groups. It assumes, as presented at an APIC workshop, the permanent demise of politically-inspired "conscience constituencies" that work on behalf of a groups elsewhere, and targets instead groups whose work is directly tied to operations with or in Africa, i.e. a self-interested, "beneficiary constituency" (see McAdam 1997:14-15). Minter (1997) has argued the case most persuasively, calling for a focus on those with direct, usually institutional ties, with Africa, while warning against expecting broad, movement-like support, even from African Americans. Examples range from NGO-supported appeals for increasing aid, to retaining the Africa Development Foundation, to support for educational linkages with Africa, etc.

This model contains the possibility of formulating policies and campaigns that retain a critical, progressive edge. Yet it faces limits very much like those of the Summit effort: its core constituency, and its core funders, remain constrained to those who align with (and usually depend for their livelihood upon) the concerns of the US government, US corporations, the major foundations, etc. A key example here is the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (see the Public Citizen web site, among others), which few DC-based organizations were willing to mobilize vigorously against (indeed even New York-based Africa Fund took no position on the bill). Supporters of course would reply: one needs to be realistic, we are way past 1968 and 1990, and must move on to achieve the possible.

(2) Post-Apartheid Movement Models?

Past progressive actions assumed of course otherwise. Is this still possible? Small indications are provided by the most successful African-related political campaigns of the last ten years, for these are invariably supported not by the US state or constituency-building organizations, but rather movement or "conscience" communities and organizations. The examples, it must be noted, are most often campaigns that cover the Third World as a whole, with Africa often playing a prominent part: the Campaign to Ban Landmines, the Campaign to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, Jubilee 2000, and campaigns against the World Bank/IMF/MAI such as 50 Years is Enough. These efforts primarily depend upon roots in and responses from movement-based groups, such as church, environmental, or labor organizations. From this foundation they seek to engage a broad, multi-class, multi-racial public against practices that are hard to legitimize--and usually supported by the US state. Successful direct Africa campaigns also fit here, such as the Africa Fund's Nigerian campaign which is driven by a strong link to the environmental movement, or even the attenuated push for Jesse Jackson Jr.'s alternative to the Africa trade bill, an effort backed by labor unions and selected African-American organizations.

How these efforts stand out from constituency building from above reveals their attraction and limits: clearly progressive actions are possible, yet these are rarely African-centered and have yet to produce any broad, younger, direct grassroots support for continuing progressive action on Africa. The criteria for the selection of campaigns can also all too easily be constrained to liberal sensibilities -- as is shown in the success of the landmines and child soldier campaigns -- and the far more difficult effort against the World Bank/IMF/structural adjustment. Neverthe-less, as the Nigerian and Jubilee campaigns illustrate, broad support is possible for campaigns related to issues of justice and exploitation -- and indeed pushing this model may reveal many missed opportunities.

This raises a critical question: is there a core progressive base across the country for Africa action? If not, then at best very small progressive Africa actions would be possible. Here we would point to one surprise of the 1990s: despite Africa's increasingly marginal role in world economic and military affairs, and the demise of the mass solidarity movement, Africa in the 1990s became increasingly visible in both popular culture and in Washington. As ACAS board member Michael West (1999) has

argued, this can be understood as a response to a new, fourth wave of black nationalism, a factor ignored or explicitly rejected by many scholars and activists. The evidence ranges from the vibrancy of Afrocentrism and hip-hop, through numerous local efforts to change Africa's place in the K-12 curriculum, including African-centered schools in Detroit, Milwaukee, Chicago, etc., to the symbols and speeches of the Million Man and Million Women Marches, to survey data on black attitudes, to the formation and meetings of the Black Radical Congress.

Is this the basis for new coalitions and campaigns focused on Africa? Clearly no progressive black organization has yet emerged capable of carrying forward popular campaigns focused on continental Africa. Here the latency of the "fourth wave" and especially the black youth interest in Africa comes to the fore. It is obvious to many ACAS members, for example, that a strong vindicationist perspective reverberates in our classrooms, yet this has yet to be translated into political action. In part this reflects the successful conservative attack on Afrocentrism, designed to exclude any political motivation related by Black heritage or pride.

The challenge for those advocating a focus upon youth, and especially black youth, is thus easily posed: would campaigns focused on such vindicationist concerns as reparations, miseducation, slavery, racism in health care, or the repression of African youth find a response? Can these campaigns be African-centered and still engage non-black organizations and publics? And who might lead such campaigns?

An Example: Education and Africa

Let me give one example. Most obvious would be support for reparations/restitution campaigns, or the repression of youth (see Green 1997). But let me take another, related to the work of many ACAS members': Africa and education. The National Summit's "Working Paper on Education and Culture" deftly analyses continental Africa's needs and deficiencies (see http://www.africasummit.org/themes/educate/educate.htm). It proposes in its "Draft Policy Plan of Action" that policymakers launch major new initiatives of "aid as development" to help Africa enter the new technological age (see http://www.africapolicy.org/featdocs/sumed.htm

, and quotes the President of the World Bank on the necessity of doing so in partnership with Africans. It is hard to draw any other conclusion than that the problem is clearly African, and the beneficiaries and problem solvers are clearly US educational and NGO organizations that can organize aid flows, educational linkages, etc. Little here is thus new, despite nods to "indigenous cultures" and U.S. educational stereotypes about Africa; certainly no grassroots constituency can be mobilized on this basis.

Imagine instead an analysis and educational campaign that linked Africa's problems and ours: from the imperial demands that have forced African states and poorer school districts in the US to cut educational (as health) budgets, through the US-dominated educational network that is designed to miseducate US students and Africans alike, to the way education constantly reinforces a global racial order. Might not a radical analysis have a younger, core Black constituency and leadership, reflecting the fourth wave? Would not our students respond favorably, seeing direct links to their own lived experiences? Would progressive educators of quite different backgrounds and locations respond positively? Could this not be linked to longstanding, local communities' struggles over Africa at the K-12 level, or the new, internet-linked campus organizers' networks? Is it possible to imagine small national organizations funding an organizer to push this forward? Is there a missed opportunity here?

Summary Recommendation

If we desire to remain capable of being critical of the US state, corporate capital, and racism, and want to engage a broader public, then we have only one choice: to promote and lead when possible (1) African-focused campaigns based on coalitions that (2) engage issues relevant to both the United States and Africa, and (3) assume a strong appeal to radical movements, especially those based in the African-American community which is increasingly becoming the central constituency for progressive Africa action. This conclusion would obviously dictate the choice of leadership, issues, and campaigns that we should engage in -- and also dictate the grounds for cooperative actions.

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Origins of this Meeting – Why are We Here?

ACAS Political Action Co-Chair Jim Cason explained that the workshop is an outgrowth of an ACAS membership decision, made at the general meeting in 1998, that the organization and its allies need a clearer sense of what policies we should be mobilizing around. The ACAS Executive formulated this workshop as an attempt at dialogue to discuss such "Progressive Africa Action" for the future. What do we understand as progressive activism, policies, and principles? What might be some progressive policy stances for us to take? We must note that we are not people concerned simply about what is happening 'over there' in Africa, but rather are activists seeking progressive change in the United States, too -- who understand that we also have allies in Africa. The limited focus on Africa by the Clinton Presidency, as well as the character of the National Summit on Africa process, demonstrate that progressives are not articulating policies-- but should be.

Finally, we have gathered here as progressives to talk about what we want and what may be achievable – two different things. Also, what can we do in Washington and around the country, and how do we achieve balance between the two? What are the new constituencies for Africa?

Plenary Session -- More Attention to Africa but With What Politics?

(Explanatory note: The sections immediately following presents short summaries of five successive presentations that introduced the plenary session and the workshop. After these five short presentations, discussion ensued based on the many issues raised. This general discussion is also summarized.)

In order to facilitate open discussion, the ground rules of this meeting were agreed as:

notes would be taken on discussions, but there would be no attribution of particular points to individuals.

Clinton in Africa
(Discussion led by Salih Booker)

There is much more attention to Africa now than ten years ago, but the question is: with what politics? For instance, in an historical visit pitched as "African Renaissance," President Bill Clinton made the first extended trip to Africa by any U.S. President, and his cabinet officers have repeatedly been to the continent. But the Clinton administration has no single Africa policy, although it has articulated a new policy framework involving an economic piece, a security piece, a political/ democratization piece and a health care piece. Thus, a simple, coherent policy on Africa seems unlikely, but a solid framework is possible.

In the first four years of the current administration, the government ran from Africa, from Somalia, from the Africa described by Kaplan, from Rwanda and then from investing political capital in the Republican Congress to deliver on Clinton's promises in Africa. The U.S. had an Assistant Secretary of State for Africa whose view was to be successful you had to keep Africa off the desk of the Secretary of State.

That changed in the second four years, and the countries selected for the president's trip reflected the themes that his administration believes are important -- the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act, the importance of debt (the president got 'an earful' on this issue during the trip), the security challenge, and demo-cratization.

What happened in Africa in the months following the trip? The Ethiopian/Eritrean War; Abacha and Abiola both die; the G7 meeting where Clinton drops his pledge to bring up debt reduction; War in DRCongo; U.S. embassies

bombed; U.S. bombed Sudan. These and other events exposed some of the problems of the new policy framework.

The economic piece is marked by a continued reliance on the Washington consensus, efforts to integrate Africa into U.S. mercantilism and unwillingness to seek significant economic resources for Africa. The security piece is marred by the problem of continued U.S. military and intelligence involvement in Africa that fail to contribute to ending conflicts. The democratization piece provides no new mechanism to achieve political objectives, only a part-time special envoy for the promotion of democracy with no clearly stated goals.

The National Summit in the U.S.
(Discussion led by Meredeth Turschen)

At last year's ACAS meeting, calls went out for a counter-summit, and this workshop emerges from much the same energy. The current Top Ten list [see later this issue] represents efforts to prioritize our Summit recommendations. Frustrations with the Summit being well known, and while it was wonderful to meet and talk with people at the regional meetings, the whole process lacked transparency, was undemocratic and driven by the agenda of the Washington leadership.

The National Summit on Africa demonstrates the potential, the desire of people to engage. Three groups took part in the Summit – (1) African-Americans, (2) European-Americans working on particular issues such as the environment, and (3) recent African immigrants with strong ties and real interests in U.S. policy. A fourth group, young people, were notably absent. The "deliberative process" has engaged hundreds of people in developing recommendations, and there is energy. But, the Summit process was a "missed opportunity." There are core groups wanting to do something, and ACAS should reach out to such groups.

Progressive Communities at Loggerheads
(Discussion led by Imani Countess)

A key questions here is: Who are the progressives in Washington, DC? There aren't many ("half are around this table!"), and the environment is extremely difficult to work in, at least in part, because of Congress. The current Congressional environment makes progressive work difficult. For example, what was the Congressional response to Clinton's historic trip to Africa? They slashed every development assistance account directed toward Africa. Domestically as well in the past five years there has been a very conscious, deliberate dis-mantling of the progressive network and social policy work.

How do progressives work in such an environment? The main mechanism for moving ahead on issues is coalitions. There are not many Africa specific groups, but there are many organizations that have a staff person or part of a staff person's time devoted to Africa.

However, broad coalitions can push policies through. One example is the coalition around the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act trade bill. Many voices have been critical, and a coalition was able to work on the bill. Yet with Public Citizen this was another way to fight the NAFTA battle, and someone at TransAfrica also decided AGOA was "NAFTA for Africa." But these debates, and the divisions they generated, simply sidestepped the Africa groups that had been meeting and discussing Africa trade policy for several years.

It is not a problem that people disagree, but rather when the arguments in support or against a piece of legislation are overblown or polarize the community, particularly in the hostile environment that exists in the Congress, that makes it even more difficult to operate.

Toward a Virtual Coalition for Africa?
(Discussion led by Jennifer Davis)

A "virtual coalition" – what is it? It's there, but not, as only a loose coalition. So, how do we look at the overall direction and thrust of where we want to go without falling apart over the details? Early coalitions could draw strength

from the liberation movements and connections with folks on the continent. Today, we have to accept that we have to sell the issues and politics to the people that we want to work with -- there is no absolute truth. We have to worry about the overall thrust of our politics. At the same time, it is dangerous to try to work too closely in and with Washington. If you worry about what happens the next day in the committee room, you can't make progress around the country.

But there can be a coming together around overall direction, particularly if we identify select bold demands that people can connect with and that can thus mobilize support. The boldness of our concerns is key to mobilizing constituents at the grassroots; it is important to find issues that matter at the local level. We also have to remember the political and cultural differences between us academics and the grassroots. We have to work as real allies.

Progressive Africa Action:
Constituents or Activists?
(Discussion led by Bill Martin)

What's 'left'? What's the 'new left'? Is there one? A key, interesting paradox is clear – things look grim, but a wide interest in Africa is evident (perhaps never more so). But, is there an emerging progressive constituency? If so, evidence is yet wanting, we haven't been able to link passionate interest around the country with action on Africa.

Thus, in the post-apartheid era, what are the issues? Where is the support, and who will act on behalf of Africa? Two possible new clusters seem clear – (1) a constituency from above (e.g. the corporate and other institutional interests expressed through the Summit process) with little transparency, and (2) what some have called a conscience constituency. The second constituency has disappeared in a sense, but the last five years have seen movements against landmines and against child soldiers, as well as the Jubilee 2000 and Nigeria Campaigns. These and others successes in mobilizing are worthy of discussion.

Finally, the youth response in the 1990s is also notable, including the Million Youth March. There is suggestive evidence before us,

therefore, for optimism. It is up to us to examine and learn from the successes and, importantly, be bold.

Summary of Discussion

The Africa community has not worked as closely with the black church or religious community as it could. One of the things Public Citizen did very well was bring together a group of black clergy against the AGOA, noted one participant. Another participant later countered that Public Citizen never had Africa on the agenda and simply used the issue as another way to confront NAFTA.

People respond to moral challenges, morality resonates, and debt and reparations provide moral issues, offered another person. One of the key mobilizing handles, particularly with campaigns like Jubilee 2000, has been the moral challenge. Jubilee also demonstrates a new kind of global campaign that involves Africa and that also raises North-South tensions. Do we inadvertently undercut negotiating campaigns for the South?

This led to the observation that we need to find a way to fund a network, and both its poles, in order to bring our agenda to the table. One participant who works in Washington interjected: we need work in Washington and outside of Washington. We also need to find a way, it was noted, to move ahead on a positive agenda. The folks in Public Citizen are great at saying no, but what is the agenda to move forward?

These are not simple relationships organized vertically, said another participant. We are talking about relationships among a wide variety of social forces and individuals. At the same time, the issues are all over the map and are never ideologically coherent. After apartheid, there is no easy, obvious enemy to target. Apartheid covered up divisions amongst movements that remain still.

Part of what we need to do, said another person, is figure out how to translate these issues, that are national, in ways that people can relate. Students care and people more generally are interested and concerned about slavery, human rights, etc., but you need to do the labor

intensive work to engage them and start forming relationships. As one person stated, sometimes the people I've been working with for fifteen years can not work with me on a particular issue, but I need to keep in touch with them.

This led to the observation that the real answers are in coalitions. We have to talk to people, convey our vision of where we need to go from here. In this as well, relationships with people in Africa are very important, someone else contributed. Groups like women, the poor, youth, progressives in Africa want and need solidarity. But who responds to issues today? Is this different from 10 years ago? We also need to identify a few things we can do something about before we worry about coalition-building.

From my perspective, said another participant, DC is no longer the center at least for students. Students don't care about Washington since the action is not there and D.C. doesn't listen. There is a tremendous amount of alienation -- we should thus focus on bringing corporations down instead. Another participant then countered: how can we expect to change policy if we don't focus on Washington?

It was then noted that there are campaigns that don't just work in DC -- landmines, Jubilee – and many issues that are really bigger than Africa. Student interests are easier to link to local issues. Another participant said landmines were key and talked about a local organizing campaign that mobilized and engaged people. In this sense, we don't have to look just toward Washington, and a real part of the Africa activist community that is not interested in focusing on the state or Washington. This contentious point raised several objections that stressed the ongoing importance of Washington for policy formation.

A generational shift and locational shift are at work, another person asserted, and yet the mainstream Africa organizations don't really have the youth or other new constituencies engaged. New constituencies like recent African immigrants and the wider African diaspora present complex and important organizing issues.

With the last word in the discussion, a final contributor noted how much there is that we still don't know.

Finally, six summary points/problems from the presentations and discussions were then put forth:
1) identifying and working with new constituencies not focused on state power
2) relating to the youth problem and bigger generational shifts
3) translating the moral challenge into effective work
4) recognizing the tension between Washington and outside
5) paying attention to new cross-continental campaigns, new diasporas
6) discerning smoke and mirrors, missed opportunities (e.g. the cabinet in Africa, but budget cuts for Africa across the board).

Health, Drugs, and AIDS, Background Paper: Deconstructing the Health/AIDS/Drugs Debates

Charles Geshekter and Meredeth Turshen

AIDS is a grave health hazard for Africans, but will it cause the holocaust that some journalists and AIDS workers predict? A typical report reads: "One in eight South Africans, one in seven Kenyans, and one in four Zimbabweans has HIV/AIDS. U.S. Surgeon General David Satcher has likened the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Africa to the plague that decimated Europe in the fourteenth century."[i] In this briefing paper we challenge the accuracy of media portrayal of AIDS because we believe that racism, medical mystification, and a lack of journalistic skepticism have resulted in a misleading account of the epidemic and of the economic, social and public health problems underlying it. ACAS members should reconsider the evidence and recommend a public health policy based on an analysis rooted in a political economy of Africa.

The Numbers

To deconstruct the claims, which we believe are exaggerated, ACAS members should re-examine what is being counted and ask why this scenario is accepted. WHO uses a different definition of AIDS in Africa, one based on a set of common symptoms (severe weight loss, chronic diarrhea, fever, and persistent cough), not the presence of HIV anitbodies. This vague definition, which applies to many conditions common in Africa, was proposed by the Centers for Disease Control and adopted at a 1985 conference convened by WHO in Bangui.

The exaggeration is due in part to the way AIDS is reported: AIDS is the only disease reported cumulatively rather than annually, with a single total for cases and deaths rather than separate figures for new cases and deaths each year. Compare cumulative totals (1982-1997) of AIDS cases and deaths for South Africa (12,825) and Uganda (53,306) with new AIDS cases for 1996: South Africa - 729, Uganda - 3,021. A second issue is the way estimates of people who test positive for antibodies to HIV

cannot be reconciled with numbers of cases. For example, in 1987, WHO estimated that 1 million Ugandans were HIV-positive; ten years later, the cumulative case/death total was 55,000. A third issue is the way the cumulative AIDS figure is then used to dwarf other health problems when annual data reveal a different situation. Compare new cases of AIDS with tuberculosis and measles in 1996: South Africa reported 91,578 new cases of TB, 6,501 cases of measles, and 729 new cases of AIDS; Uganda reported 27,356 new cases of TB, 26,198 cases of measles, and 3,021 new cases of AIDS.[ii]

There are fundamental flaws in the HIV tests (Western Blot and ELISA): they detect antiviral immunity and identify only antibodies to HIV, not the virus itself, and they are notoriously unreliable in Africa where other conventional microbes produce very high false-positive results. Most predictions of the AIDS epidemic are based on mathematical models that extrapolate from sampled HIV tests of pregnant women, yet pregnancy is one of 64 conditions that can cause a woman to falsely test positive for HIV. The models rarely reveal other assumptions.

Setting the Stage for an Epidemic: Trends in African Health and Health Care

The terrain of widespread civil wars accompanied by massive population dislocation, high rates of unemployment leading to labor migration, and falling real incomes that increase poverty, is the classic breeding ground of epidemic disease. Malnutrition, malaria, tuberculosis, and dysentery are rife in Africa; they result in damaged immune systems and are likely to cause increasing numbers of premature deaths. The epidemiological data still show that malaria and tuberculosis kill larger numbers of women, children, and men than does AIDS, and that war-related violence and land mines cause more deaths, dismemberment, and disability.[iii]

The characterization of AIDS as a consequence of risky lifestyles, which implies that all sex is consensual, is false, and the arguments for rejecting lifestyle etiologies are well documented.[iv] Perpetuating the stereotype that sexual promiscuity drives AIDS in Africa is racist victim blaming, since Africanists have thoroughly debunked the accusation that African sexuality is abnormal.[v] The common depiction of AIDS as a personal, behavioral, and medical issue allows the state to project its responsibilities for public health onto individuals and deflects our attention from how austerity programs reduce the availability of public health services, both directly by firing public sector health workers and cutting health budgets, and indirectly by firing teachers of new generations of health workers and cutting education budgets.

Structural adjustment programs affect health and health services in several ways: in addition to the impacts of austerity measures, SAPs deindustrialize economies, undermine nascent pharmaceutical industries in Africa, affect the ability to import medicines and medical equipment, and lessen the chances that workers receive fair wages and benefits such as health insurance. The worst aspect of SAPs is privatization. The loss of public health services to private practitioners (who serve the elites) and charities (which are unable to serve the entire population) is inestimable. Privatization also means the loss of the public drug sector. The alternative is fake and adulterated drugs, overpriced and outdated products, and availability restricted to the routes of itinerant drug vendors or to commercial sales points that are concentrated in the cities.

The Pharmaceutical Industry: Right Target, Wrong Issue

Claims that AIDS threatens millions of Africans make it politically acceptable to subsidize the enormously profitable multi-national pharmaceutical industry, to use the continent as a laboratory for vaccine trials (UN officials are seeking $500 million for vaccine research), and to distribute toxic drugs such as protease inhibitors that produce grotesque side effects, severe metabolic disturbances, kidney and liver failure, diabetes, and life-threatening changes in blood chemistry. AIDS activists are insisting that pharmaceutical companies provide these drugs at discount prices even though the manufacturers admit that they do not yet know whether taking the drugs will extend life or reduce chances of getting other illnesses associated with HIV.

Pharmaceutical companies urge African physicians to give AZT, a deadly DNA terminator, to pregnant women or their babies—a questionable recommendation since the rate of maternal-fetal HIV transmission is about 15%. After childbirth, mothers who test positive for HIV are advised or forced to refrain from breastfeeding, even though the transmission of HIV through breast milk is possibly only 10%.[vi] Makers of infant formula will benefit from the switch to bottle-feeding.

The dominance of pharmaceutical companies over US policy on compulsory licensing and parallel imports, two means by which countries can make essential medicines more affordable, is undeniable. However, it is wrong to claim that existing treatments could enable many Africans afflicted with AIDS to live relatively normal lives. Without the needed health facilities to deliver care, how will complicated AIDS drugs be delivered and who will supervise treatment?

AIDS drug cocktails cost about $12,000 a year. The reality is that on average, each African spent 14 cents on health care in 1993, half of it out of pocket. What the insistence on drugs for AIDS will do is funnel all available funds into AIDS control and further deprive Africans of the full range of health services they desperately need. Approximately 52% of sub-Saharan Africans do not have access to safe water, 62% have no proper sanitation, and an estimated 50 million pre-school children suffer from malnutrition. During the past 15 years, as external financing of AIDS programs increased, money for studying other health concerns remained static, even as deaths from malaria, tuberculosis, neonatal tetanus, respiratory diseases, and diarrhea grew alarmingly.

Recommendations for US Policy

The latest US government response to the AIDS epidemic is the AIDS Marshall Plan for Africa Act, HR 2765 introduced by Barbara Lee (D-CA), to provide assistance ($200 million per

year) for HIV/AIDS research, prevention, and treatment activities in Africa.[vii] Two more initiatives reinforce the approach in the US government bill: the World Bank announced that it will allocate up to $3 billion annually to fight HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa, and SKB (SmithKline- Beecham) will give $100 million to fight HIV/AIDS in southern Africa. As all of these institutions narrowly define the AIDS problem as behavioral, this approach amounts to health education and condom distribution (and research on how to enforce both). Not one plan touches the essence of the poverty problem or disturbs exploitive US-Africa relations.

What progressive US public health policy for a healthier African public can ACAS recommend? First, cancel the debt, end austerity programs, and reverse the damage of SAPs and privatization. A real Marshall Plan would aid the postwar reconstruction of Africa and put women and men back to work, not subsidize the multinational pharmaceutical industry and international NGOs.

Second, rebuild Primary Health Care For All, the innovative program that Third World countries developed in the 1970s, which favors rural women and children. USAID has consistently undermined this program by insisting that health is about how health care is financed, that governments spend money only on diseases that can be prevented or cured by the pharmaceutical industry, and that the African masses should be content with minimum packages of health services (while the elites get heart transplants and infertility treatments in private hospitals).

Third, ACAS should support a progressive education policy that ensures the training of a gender-balanced African scientific corps, one that can design basic and applied research projects to solve the health problems of African women and men and their communities.

Finally, reinstate the public drug sector, reinforce the essential drugs policy, and stop pandering to the pharmaceutical companies that blackmail African countries which are trying to build their own production facilities or import cheap substitutes.

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[ii] WHO "Weekly Epidemiological Record" November 1998

[iii] C. Murray and A. Lopez, "Mortality by Cause for Eight Regions of the World: Global Burden

of Disease Study" *Lancet,* 3 May 1997, 349: 1269-1276.

iv P. Farmer, M. Connors, and J. Simmons, eds. *Women, Poverty and AIDS: Sex, Drugs and Structural Violence* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 1996).

v B. M. Ahlberg, "Is there a distinct African sexuality? A Critical response to Caldwell" *Africa* 1994, 64(2):220-242; M.-N. Le Blanc, D. Meintel, and V. Piché, "The African Sexual System: Comment on Caldwell et al."
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vi "10% Risk Linked to Milk of Mothers with H.I.V." New York Times 25 August 1999, A20

vii Full text on WOA website, click on legislation, type in HR 2765 on the Thomas page

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Health, Drugs, and AIDS: Summary of Discussion

(Prepared from notes by William G. Martin)

Commentary was opened on a key aim: to displace AIDS and drug policy as the only talking and funding point -- a point which tends to reinforce racism towards Africa -- and demand a broader health care agenda in which Africans lead. The policy environment, it was argued, was considerably more hostile to this than ten years ago. From this and other points, considerable discussion ensued, ranging from particulars of AIDS diagnosis in Africa to health care policy generally.

Participants expressed ignorance of the details around the over-statement of AIDS protocols and testing in Africa, and expressed a need for quite concrete and proactive briefs to take to constituencies. Can we recast our claims in ways that people can hear them easily, and respond with action? Calls for a Marshall Plan for AIDS, as in the Dellums proposal, several persons noted, were widespread and gaining strength. Others further elaborated by suggesting we say AIDS is indeed serious, rather than an overstated problem, or that drugs are unnecessary, as some seemed to suggest -- but stress it must be put in the larger context of public health. Others suggested in turn that the elaboration of a public health model, based on low-tech, African initiatives, is the most critical element.

Some felt the paper could be read as discounting AIDS as a problem; others stressed yet the differential treatment of Africans and the need for a systematic comparative analysis. The use of statistics to vastly inflate the issue, creating hysteria that permits driving all other health care issues out of discussion, was yet again stressed in return; South African President Mbeki's interest in the debate over drugs was noted here. African agreement with critiques of U.S. AIDS policy at recent meetings in Africa, especially by African women's groups, was noted and pursued in some detail -- as was conflict between the aim of some ACT-UP actions and African health care priorities. Increasing discussions among Africans was matched to the lack of resources by African health organizations, and the need for new methodologies for engaging African communities.

Discussion of "where to go from here" suggested several avenues of work, including: (1) stress investment in public health care, a consensus item; (2) use a new briefing paper for work with key persons and groups in DC who set policy; (3) generate a campaign outside Washington, linked to privatization of public health care; (4) work on ways to appeal to younger activists and black activists.

Trade, Aid, Debt, and Investment, Background Paper:
African Trade Legislation: Progressive Alternatives for U.S.-Africa policy

By Leon P. Spencer, Executive Director, Washington Office on Africa

Background

When Congress approved the Uruguay Round Trade Agreements in 1994, they included a provision calling for the President to develop and implement a comprehensive trade and development policy for Africa. The administration submitted its first report to Congress early in 1996. In it they spoke of five key objectives: Trade liberalization and promotion; investment liberalization and promotion; development of the private sector; infrastructure enhancement; and economic and regulatory reform.

Congress' response was to form a bipartisan Caucus on African Trade and Investment to review the administration's recommendations. The caucus drafted a proposal that later became the basis for the African Growth and Opportunity Act. In September 1996 the bill was first introduced. It was reintroduced in April 1997 in the new session of Congress. AGOA passed the House in 1998 but failed to pass in the Senate.

This year it was reintroduced virtually unchanged in both Houses. The bill declares as its intent to "promote stable and sustainable economic growth and development in sub-Saharan Africa." It establishes eligibility requirements for African nations to secure the benefits of the act, creates an equity fund and an infrastructure fund, sets up a United States-Africa Trade and Economic Cooperation Forum, directs the administration to develop a plan to enter into free trade agreements with African nations, extends the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) for African nations to the year 2008, and maintains the post of Assistant United States Trade Representative for Africa. AGOA (HR 434) passed the House in late July. The Senate Finance Committee removed the detailed and often objectionable eligibility requirements that remain in the House bill, replacing them with a short and general list of criteria. However, they added restrictive textile provisions, by which African textiles, in order to enter the U.S. duty-free, must be made with U.S. thread. It passed the Senate (S 1387) in November and moved to conference committee.

Meanwhile, Rep. Jesse Jackson, Jr. (D-IL) introduced the H.O.P.E. for Africa bill (HR 772) this year. Seen by many as a more progressive alternative to AGOA, it contained substantial debt cancellation provisions. His bill calls for equity and infrastructure funds to be used for basic health services (including AIDS prevention), schools, public transport-ation and rural electrification, with 70% to go to small, women- and minority-owned businesses, with 60% African ownership. He also proposes broader participation by African civil society in OPIC and Export-Import Bank advisory committees. Sen. Russ Feingold (D-WI) introduced a similar bill (S 1636) in the Senate this fall. Both bills languish in committee, with few prospects.

Progressive critiques

Progressives have generally held up the following values as essential for U.S.-Africa trade policy:

- The U.S. must respect the integrity of Africa nations to discern and implement economic policies appropriate to the needs of their people.
- Economic relationships must be mutually-beneficial – any policy that seeks only a U.S. advantage and neglects the concerns and aspirations of Africa is a flawed and ultimately counter-productive policy.
- U.S. policy must juxtapose international trade with continuing development aid and international debt relief if the social and economic hopes of Africa are to be realized.
- U.S. trade policy must be grounded in a concern that economic benefits will accrue not merely to an African elite but also to those in Africa living in poverty.

- U.S. economic policy toward Africa must encourage the active participation of African civil society in decision-making.

Specifically, progressive concerns have focused, first, upon the issue of eligibility requirements. AGOA's rigid market-oriented approach and its embracing of World Bank-IMF-imposed Structural Adjustment Programs seem to most of us to undermine our vision of *fair* trade rather than *free* trade. Second, we have reacted against the suggestions that trade resolves African economic problems, affirming instead that debt reduction and appropriate development aid are essentials to a progressive US-Africa economic policy. Third, we have been concerned about the limited role of African civil society in economic policy decisions. Though AGOA calls for NGO meetings to parallel the annual finance ministers forum, there are no substantive mechanisms for NGO input. Fourth, progressive voices insist that labor and environmental rights must be respected if authentic economic development is to take place in Africa. AGOA makes a gesture in this direction, but unlike the H.O.P.E. for Africa bill, it is little more than a gesture.

Areas of controversy among progressives include, first, whether or not it is right to impose conditions in trade and debt legislation. Rep. Jackson's bill has no eligibility criteria at all. Others believe that the issue is not the existence of conditions but rather their nature. With that line of thinking, adherence to the much-criticized Structural Adjustment Programs is a condition to be opposed, while labor and environmental standards, human rights, health care, education, and poverty reduction are conditions to be supported. It is, in this case, the value related to the condition that is significant.

A second area of controversy has centered upon who is "listening" to African voices. The African diplomatic corps in Washington strongly support AGOA, while a number of African NGOs have indicated support for the H.O.P.E. for Africa bill. Some African NGOs condemn conditions, while others see in *appropriate* conditions a means by which inequalities and injustices might be addressed. As Africa is an immense continent, so its people have diverse views. The task for all of us in progressive advocacy is to respect this diversity and to draw conclusions that affirm our own integrity. The Washington Office on Africa does not find this a productive area for contention.

A third area of controversy has to do with whether all economic concerns need to be addressed in a single bill. Even if we believe that no meaningful economic development will take place without debt relief, need debt relief legislation be incorporated in a "trade" bill? Proponents of the H.O.P.E. for Africa bill say "yes"; others, with equally strong commitments to debt relief, look toward other legislation before Congress, such as the Debt Relief and Poverty Reduction Act (HR 1095 and its parallel Senate bill, S 1690) to address that issue.

A final, and classic, area of controversy has to do with the extent to which we need to acknowledge political realities vis-à-vis advocating the strongest progressive alternative regard-less of prospects. Some progressives argue that the H.O.P.E. for Africa Act has no realistic future in this Congress, and that in contrast AGOA may well be a "first step" toward the United States' treating Africa and its economy seriously. Flawed as the latter may be, they argue, AGOA deserves our support. Others of us have come out in opposition to AGOA, holding that a "first step" that is a step backward is not one to be taken. Some who oppose AGOA have chosen not to support the H.O.P.E. for Africa Act; others who oppose AGOA hold up the H.O.P.E. bill as the only authentic progressive position. In the end, few progressives are happy with AGOA's provisions, though many are engaged with AGOA with the goal of ensuring that increased U.S. economic involvement in Africa will have more of a positive than a negative impact.

Almost all groups have developed positions on the Africa trade bills. TransAfrica and the Global Trade Watch group within Public Citizen have been the key voices in support of the H.O.P.E. for Africa bill. The Africa Trade Policy Working Group, convened by the Washington Office on Africa, has largely consisted of critics of AGOA who have not endorsed H.O.P.E. for Africa. Key Congressional Black Caucus members have pressed for AGOA's passage, as has the National Council of Churches.

Ultimately, it is fair to say that there is not a great deal in AGOA. The GSP expansion is generally not seen to be a substantial benefit. Textiles – potentially the key benefit to a *few* African nations – are not only hampered by the Senate requirement of U.S. thread; even without that provision, the Congressional Budget Office estimates that the U.S. Trade Representative will declare up to 90% of possible African textile imports to be "import sensitive," thus denying them duty-free entry. The Trade and Economic Cooperation Forum *may* provide African finance ministers an opportunity regularly to be heard, but legislation was not needed to provide these encounters. We are left with an act that symbolically *may* suggest that the U.S. is prepared to take the African economy more seriously, but unless we move beyond the World Trade Organization (WTO) and IMF/World Bank prescriptions for African economies, we certainly will not have addressed root causes of African economic difficulties in the context of a skewered globalization.

Progressive Actions

By the time this paper is before colleagues at the annual meetings of the Association of Concerned African Scholars in November, the conferees may well have met and resolved differences in the House and Senate versions of AGOA. If not, advocacy should focus on the eligibility and textile provisions of the act.

Whatever the status of AGOA, progressive energy needs also to be directed toward other economic justice matters:

- Debt relief legislation. This includes the Debt Relief and Poverty Reduction Act (HR 1095) and other specific debt cancellation legislation, including those concerned specifically with Africa, as well as the supplemental appropriations request from the Clinton administration to fund the Cologne G-7 debt plans and the administration's proposal for 100% bilateral debt cancellation. HR 1095 has just been "marked up" in committee with some encouraging provisions. This matter is urgent.
- The WTO meetings in Seattle at the end of November are critical for Africa and deserve advocacy initiatives. African governments and NGOs have identified key areas of concern, and progressives in the U.S. need to press for a more flexible stance by the Clinton administration.
- Future years and future congresses need to address such crucial issues as the exploitative approaches of multinational oil and mineral companies, international property rights, especially as they affect pharmaceuticals, and the patenting of life forms.
- Development aid is a constant on the agenda, in terms both of amount and approach. Progressives need to press for development aid that is sustainable and that engages African governments and civil society in decisions about priorities, implementation and evaluation.

November 5, 1999

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Discussion Note on Debt Cancellation, Africa, and the Structural Adjustment Institutions

Robert Naiman, Marc Mealy, Jim Cason, and Bill Martin

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The announcement by President Bill Clinton earlier this year that the U.S. will cancel 100 percent of African debt owed to the United States provides a good illustration of the tension and contradictions among progressive (and some would argue some not-so-progressive) advocates for Africa in the United States.

We should place this call in context. Most debts of the poorest nations in the world, mostly made up of African countries, are debts owed to the IMF, World Bank, other development banks, private banks and other foreign governments. In 1997 of the $220 billion in debts of owed by 45 Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPCs), only 3% or $6.9 billion is owed to the US Government. Thus even if the US were to wipe out that debt, the cost of the US debt is minimal ($650 million), and the impact for the developing country is quite small. We should also note that not all of the 45 countries will qualify for debt cancellation, and last but not least most programs require the country receiving debt relief to pay for that little bit of relief, by liberalizing and privatizing their economies.

The organizations in Africa that are grouped together under the banner of Jubilee 2000 have made a clear call for complete "debt cancellation" (not debt relief). Beyond this call, the groups in the South have insisted that debt cancellation be delinked from compliance with IMF/World Bank structural adjustment policies. President Clinton's 100 percent debt cancellation package is linked explicitly to countries following structural adjustment macroeconomic policies and as such is not a step in the right direction.

For progressives who believe in consultation, one political principle must be that any program that attempts to address the issue of debt must not undermine the call from the South, and from Africa in particular, for debt cancellation. If there are disagreements in analysis, then progressives should engage in a public and principled debate on these issues.

The HIPC Initiative

In the United States the debate on how to address Africa's debt has center around whether to support the HIPC initiative of the IMF and the World Bank. The legislation drafted by House Banking Committee Chairman Jim Leach has the practical result of providing U.S. financing for a "reformed" HIPC initiative.

Yet a basic assumption of HIPC is that the IMF and the World Bank cannot, and will not, cancel debt. The institutions concede that the debt owed by poor countries is unpayable. The response of these institutions is that they would be happy to accept additional contributions from member countries such as the U.S. to pay debts to these institutions in lieu of poor countries.

In addition, for the poor country to have its debt paid by the contributions from the rich countries, the poor country must agree to conditionalities. The U.S. Treasury is calling for specific conditionalities that link debt relief to the International Monetary Fund's new Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF). The Congress is calling for conditionalities such as a poor country must create a Human Development Fund plan for how they will use the money saved from debt service relief. The current compromise position is to give a country the choice of being in bed with the IMF or developing their own Human Development Fund.

ACAS should reject the suggestion that U.S. tax dollars subsidize the refusal of the International Financial Institutions to write off bad debts in the same manner as commercials banks.

The IMF, the World Bank and the U.S. Treasury refuse the demand for debt cancellation not because of the cost, which is peanuts to these institutions, but because the current mechanisms keep them in control of the economies of developing countries. If the debt were cancelled, people in these countries would be free to implement their own economic policies, and they would be much less likely to accept the demands of the IMF. Thus, by supporting refinancing the current system, as opposed to

debt cancellation, one supports refinancing the system of oppression.

The proposals for debt relief are further complicated because the U.S. Treasury is linking these proposals to a demand that the Congress allow the IMF to re-value its gold holdings to raise money. Some of the profit would be used to cancel debts, but some of the profit would also be used to finance the IMF ESAF fund. This would make the IMF's ESAF fund a self sustaining entity, freeing the IMF from battles with the US Congress which has sought to use its funding leverage to impose restrictions on their programs.

Until this year there was no reasonable debate about the HIPC initiative. The recognition that most of this debt is simply never going to be paid (combined with the pressure from the South and from activist groups such as Jubilee 2000) has shifted at least the rhetorical focus of some government officials from debt relief to cancellation, but it is still linked to opening up the economies of poor countries.

In addition to the relentless criticism of HIPC by debt cancellation activists, both the IMF and World Bank staff have acknowledged that countries participating in HIPC have not received significant relief from their debt service. The goal of the HIPC initiative from its inception was to reduce the debt burden to a "sustainable level". That means it was to reduce the arrears portion of the debt that a country was unable to service anyway. It would not necessarily do anything to reduce interest or principal. The goal was not to cancel the debt nor was the goal to reduce it to a level where it would allow governments to make a significant increase in the amount of resources used to address issues in society. Simply put, the likely impact on African people of successfully implementing HIPC, would *not* be to reduce the infant mortality rate in a country from 200 to 175, or significantly slow the rate of increase in levels of indebtedness.

The Policy Debate

The debate in the United States about how to address the debt should be focused on whether to support debt reform initiatives such as HIPC, or to support full cancellation of all debt. And whether debt relief should be linked to economic reforms that are said to be good for development but in reality are great for US and Western capital.

The practical impact of support for the Leach legislation will be to fund the continuation of HIPC and the continuation of IMF-World Bank structural adjustment policies in Africa. The U.S. Treasury has insisted that this legislation be linked to demands that Congress continue to support and link debt relief initiatives to structural adjustment policies, but late last week progressives in the U.S. Congress had attached to that legislation a provision that would mandate that whatever debt relief policies are approved be delinked from structural adjustment programs. The final text of this measure was still being negotiated as of the writing of this piece.

If the provisions delinking this debt relief package from structural adjustment programs survive the legislative process then some progressives will undoubtedly argue that the Leach bill is now a step in the right direction. But without this provision, which was only added by opponents of the Leach bill last week, there is no question that this legislation is one step in the wrong direction.

There is a progressive alternative. Several pieces of legislation currently before the U.S. Congress, including the legislation sponsored by Representatives Saxton and Dennis Kucinich and the legislation sponsored by Representatives Cynthia McKinney and Rohrabacher, would require the IMF to cancel debts owed to them by the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (with the addition of Haiti) as a condition of receiving future funding from the U.S.

The legislation sponsored by Representative Jesse Jackson, the HOPE for Africa Act, also requires the U.S. cancel debts owed to it by sub-Saharan African countries and advocate for the same policy at the IMF and the World Bank.

Those who support the principle that people in developing countries have the right to run their own affairs may find faults with the McKinny bill, Saxton-Kucinich or the HOPE bill. But there can not be any reasonable debate among progressives about which legislative approach is more consistent with the principle that people in developing countries have the right to freedom.

The arguments in Washington generally focus on what "is possible" or which legislation "is going to be considered" this year. Several groups, including the Jubilee 2000 USA coalition, have strongly supported the Leach legislation as the only debt legislation that is possible to approve this year. The Jubilee 2000 USA coalition further argues that the major creditors in the Group of 7 agreed to a modest, but important first step in Cologne Germany to begin debt relief. If the Leach legislation is not approved, they argue, then all debt relief from the G-7 countries will be put in question.

Yet the activists in the Jubilee 2000 movement from Africa and from the other countries in the global South have condemned the Cologne initiative. They argue the main purpose of this initiative is to maintain the HIPC program largely as a "scheme of the creditors, by the creditors and for the creditors."

With this analysis in hand, ACAS should reject the original Leach legislation out of hand and shed no tears if it is not approved this year. The goal must be full cancellation of the debt and a rejection of any linkages of debt cancellation to implementation of neoliberal structural adjustment programs. This position is probably not even progressive, as it has won the support of Harvard economist Jeffrey Sachs and the Pope himself. Nonetheless, this position is the best position not only for real debt relief but also for building campaigns here in the United States.

A postscript: The changes made in the Leach bill last week that delink debt relief from structural adjustment initiatives are a small step forward and there will be progressives that will be tempted to support the legislation because of this linkage.

Trade, Aid, Debt and Investment: Discussion Summary

(Prepared from notes by Jim Cason and William G. Martin)

Considerable discussion and debate surrounded the issue of how to frame and understand brutal economic categories. Thus one participant summarized much feeling by arguing that it is not helpful to frame the public debate using terms like neoliberalism or structural adjustment; these simply don't allow us to see the connections between domestic and international issues. One participant suggested the term "free market fundamentalism" as a definition of the Washington consensus. By the same token, in discussing foreign assistance, rather than terming it "foreign assistance" can we talk about public investment or some other term that is a better definition of what this is?

Turning to trade, one participant asked: what is our vision and how do we cast economic relationships with Africa? How do we make contact and with what groups in Africa on this issue -- noting that "civil society" is not necessarily representative or progressive. Can we speak of democratizing economies, of poverty reduction strategies? Can we redefine the public interest? Thus in addressing trade, the IMF, the World Bank issues, etc. should debate *not* be centered on legislation in the U.S. Congress, or rather on democratizing these institutions? Another participant then suggested making these institutions and programs accountable. Could we, it was asked, also pick up on the agendas that will be raised at Seattle, such as the discussion led by Africa for Trade Related Intellectual Policy Issues?

This discussion spread to considerations of who might support action on these issues. A strong case was made for engaging trade and economic policy on moral grounds, to redefine the issue so it can appeal, for example, to churches, particularly the black church community. Can we speak of fairness, equity, morality? In discussing trade in Africa, we have to remember that 80 percent of the people in Africa are not part of the trading economy, another participant noted. Trade thus ignores 80 percent of the people.

This general recommendation to move from a focus on specific legislative issues to subjects that might engage those outside Washington was pursued, including examples of local actions in the US and discussions going on in Africa regarding the IMF as a poverty creator -- calling for mobilization around what happens to people.

Summary comments recalled the above by noting a range of possible ways to proceed, including

- Framing economic issues to the public with greater clarity,
- Stressing public investment: promote and defend it,
- Forcing a definition of the public interest that includes democratization and public institutions,
- Using a moral approach that mobilizes a larger group,
- Thinking of campaigns along the above lines, by stressing for example fair exchange, free market fundamentalism, free market dictators, ending immoral debts, anti-slavery corporate campaigns, democratize or end the IMF/World Bank, etc.

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Humanitarian Intervention, Military Aid and Security Assistance

Jim Cason

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Introduction:

The contrast between the Clinton administration's speedy military response to the crisis in Kosovo and the lack of any similar response to repeated humanitarian emergencies in Africa has generated substantial criticism and suggestions of a racial bias in U.S. foreign policy. Yet there is no agreement among progressive organizations about U.S. military/security policy toward Africa: some progressive human rights advocates have called for direct U.S. military intervention in Africa, while others propose a ban on all aid or interventions.

The reality is the U.S. does intervene regularly in African countries, supporting the Moroccan government or imposing sanctions and bombing Libya, while refusing to impose strong economic sanctions on former allies such as Mobutu in Zaire or nations where the U.S. has substantial economic interests such as the Abacha dictatorship in Nigeria. The discussion of security policy is too often seen in a vacuum, rather than as a logical outgrowth of long term U.S. security interest and actions in Africa. One recent report suggested that of 43 African countries where the U.S. has provided military training, more than half could not be classified as democratic. If we examine the de facto goals of U.S. policy in Africa, rather than accepting the rhetorical frame offered by policymakers, it is evident that promoting democracy is often considered less important than other economic or strategic goals.

The U.S. record in Africa -- even in the past few years -- is such that progressives have no choice but to call for an end to all U.S. arms sales and training in Africa, including the current African Crisis Response Initiative (see below). The unilateral manner in which U.S. initiatives have been implemented, and the unwillingness of the U.S. government to subordinate short sighted military strategies to longer term democratic development should lead

ACAS to call for an end to all U.S. military activities in Africa. Unilateral military strikes or the introduction of U.S. combat troops should always be opposed, but as William Minter has argued[i] progressives will inevitably have to make judgments on a case by case basis about emergency situations where representative Africans are calling for U.S. logistical support or the provision of non-lethal military equipment for OAU or United Nations approved military actions.

The Current U.S. Policy

The Clinton administration has gradually become more involved in Africa over the past few years, providing training to military officers from 36 countries[ii] in 1999 alone and approving the export of more than $20 million in arms to Africa in 1998[iii]. But the U.S. has refused to send troops for peacekeeping operations since the killing of U.S. Marines in Somalia and rhetorically adopted a policy of supporting African initiatives (although in private American government officials acknowledge that, as a practical matter, most of these programs are run from the outside by the U.S. or other former colonial powers because of a lack of capacity in most of Africa).

In the 1990s, the U.S. military has provided trainers and equipment for demining operations, has dispatched Special Forces troops for training programs with African forces and has supported regional peacekeeping exercises. The Pentagon has also developed an African Center for Strategic Studies, administered from Washington with logistical support from MPRI, that is designed to discuss issues such as the importance of civilian control of the military and transparency in military budgeting as a way to reduce regional tensions. The center will hold its first seminar in November 1999 in Senegal, with participants from 43 countries, including 28 generals, two defense ministers and

representatives from the OAU and former colonial powers.

The cornerstone of U.S. security policy in Africa is the Africa Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI). Proposed by President Clinton in 1996, the ACRI by November 1999 had completed the initial phase of training for seven battalion sized (650-800 person) contingents in seven countries (Uganda, Senegal, Malawi, Mali, Ghana, Benin and Ivory Coast). The program, which was controversial from the start because it was announced with little consultation and because the U.S. still determines which countries may participate, envisions training 10-12,000 African troops in 15 to 20 battalion size units (some may be smaller) by the end of 2001. Participating troops are provided with approximately $1.2 million in radios, communications equipment and gear designed to enhance "interoperability" of future African peacekeeping forces.

Participation in ACRI is limited to countries where the military is subordinated to elected civilian leaders, and where there is not evidence that the military is involved in gross human rights abuses. Troops from Uganda, for instance, were originally trained under this program but all follow up training with Uganda has been suspended because of that country's activities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. U.S. officials claim that without ACRI, troops from Benin would not have been deployed for peacekeeping duties in Guinea Bissau and troops from Mali would not have been deployed in Sierra Leone.

Beyond the ACRI program, the Clinton administration has also reserved the right, as in the case of Sudan, to unilaterally bomb African nations and has indirectly provided military aid or training to several insurgent, anti-government groups. More recently, the U.S. has been providing non-lethal military aid such as boots and radios to the Sudan People's Liberation Movement.

The U.S. has also supported the call by ECOWAS states for a moratorium on the purchase, production or transfer of small arms by 16 nations of West Africa.

The Range of Progressive Policy Options

The crisis in the Great Lakes region and the genocide in Rwanda prompted at least one prominent human rights activist[iv] to openly advocate the dispatch of U.S. troops to Africa to prevent mass murder. And several other recent conflicts in Africa have likewise prompted calls for the U.S. military to act. "At least four wars in Africa appear to meet all the criteria Clinton outlined in explaining the reasons for last spring's North Atlantic Treaty Organization bombing of Yugoslavia," argued a reporter for the Los Angeles Times[v] in a comparison that has become commonplace.

But the options generally are not between sending U.S. troops or doing nothing. For instance, the U.S. and other Western countries blocked United Nations action in Rwanda in 1994 and delayed providing logistical support to peacekeeping forces that many argued might have stopped the genocide.[vi] And, in 1996, while humanitarian aid NGOs and the Department of State prevaricated, the Pentagon provided training for Rwandan and Uganda supported troops and Zairian rebels that 'cleaned out' dangerous refugee camps in Eastern Zaire that were threatening Rwanda. Those same troops eventually overthrew Mobutu.

Many Africa advocates[vii] are uncomfortable with direct U.S. led intervention, but criticize the U.S. for not providing sufficiently strong support for international or African led intervention in African conflicts. There have been a few instances where the U.S. has provided this type of support. The U.S. did provide troops to secure landing strips and organize humanitarian supplies of tents and water to refugees in Eastern Zaire. Since that time, the U.S. has provided $100 million for ECOMOG forces active in West African peacekeeping, and it has initiated a much more aggressive program to train and equip African peacekeeping forces.

Yet the U.S. government has a very poor record of consulting with African leaders about military security policy in Africa. The Africa Conflict Response Initiative was developed and announced with virtually no consultation with African forces and OAU Secretary General Salim Salim, among many others, has criticized the unilateral manner in which this proposal was announced and implemented. And if consultation with governments has been minimal, consultation with civil society has been

nonexistent. The U.S. has since taken some steps to incorporate African criticisms of this force, but it remains a U.S. initiative offered to African states more or less on a take it or leave it basis.

Beyond the question of consultation, there is the issue of what criteria is used to select which African countries receive training. The group Demilitarization for Democracy has suggested that many of the countries selected to receive U.S. training would not qualify as democracies and although the methodology of that study lacked precision the general conclusions still seem relevant.[viii] Several members of Congress, including Republican Christopher Smith, have also noted that the U.S. continued to train troops in Rwanda and Uganda long after there was credible evidence that at least some of those troops were involved in human rights abuses. Of the 11 nations intervening in the civil war in the Congo in the 1990s, nine received U.S. arms and training.

Using this record as evidence, several activist groups have called for an end to all U.S. military aid to undemocratic nations (with various definitions) and for the inclusion of human rights criteria in the selection of the countries and individuals that receive training. There are currently campaigns to demand the U.S. government abide by an arms trade code of conduct, provide more information (transparency) about its military assistance programs and attach stronger human rights criteria to the selection of any African troops which receive training from the U.S.[ix] In response, American officials and some human rights advocates argue that properly constructed training programs will enhance the protection of human rights and help build an African peacekeeping capacity.

The Progressive Policy

The history of U.S. military training programs and assistance in Africa, however, should lead ACAS to call for an end to all U.S. arms sales and training in Africa. This is a proposal that was endorsed by more than 60 members of Congress and was written into the HOPE for Africa bill written by Rep. Jesse Jackson, Jr.

There is a rational argument that could be made that the U.S. should be encouraged to support a genuinely African controlled peacekeeping or peacemaking force. In this context a new type of U.S. training program, developed in consultation with African states and conducted with respect for principles of human rights and democracy, could be useful for Africa in the future, but probably only if done in the context of the United Nations.[x] The existing U.S. programs have all failed to meet this test-- not simply because of inadequacies of these programs but because U.S. policy in Africa is not focused on these goals.

The current U.S. military policy in Africa is designed primarily to enhance stability and build relationships between Pentagon officials and African military leaders. Although human rights and democracy are often listed as criteria for the selection of participant countries in military training programs, as a practical matter these criteria are often in conflict with and subordinated to the U.S. desire for stability and to avoid humanitarian emergencies on the order of Rwanda that attract attention on CNN and force politicians to act.

But ending arms sales and military training programs is not sufficient. The U.S. through its past sponsorship and training of both Africa military forces and guerrilla groups (such as Unita) and its current economic links to repressive regimes is involved with military and security policy in Africa.

The challenge for a progressive policy, is to link the call for an end to arms sales and training programs with a demand for a closer examination of other U.S. linkages to Africa that impact on peace and security on the continent. What role, for example, did the U.S. refusal to impose oil sanctions on a dictator in Nigeria or to more aggressively sanction guerrilla groups involved in the diamond trade have on conflicts in Nigeria, Sierra Leone, or Angola? We do not know enough about the manner in which U.S. economic interests, for instance CONOCO's interests in Somalia, become decisive factors in policy making. But there is a growing literature about the role that World Bank, IMF and U.S. Treasury policy prescriptions have played in undermining democracy[xi] and creating social conditions that lead to instability.

A second area of investigation must be so-called humanitarian interventions. As Carol Thompson and others have argued[xii] U.S. food

aid and humanitarian assistance has with alarming regularity undermined the ability of Africans to feed themselves. In other cases, such as Eastern Zaire in the middle of this decade, humanitarian assistance directed toward refugees has had the effect of reinforcing the power of military groups and feeding fighters. Rather than waiting for the crisis to emerge and then being forced into a discussion of "humanitarian intervention", ACAS should encourage a more comprehensive examination of the causes of these crisis and the ways in which the international humanitarian aid community may be fueling wars in Africa.

Beyond this broader look, ACAS should support the demand for U.S. officials to begin a truth commission to examine the role of the present and past U.S. governments in providing both overt and covert arms and training in Africa. The Central Intelligence Agency and Pentagon role in Latin America is well known, but much less is known about the role that these institutions have played and continue to play in Africa. Only after all of this material has been fully released to the public -- in the U.S. and in Africa -- can there be any attempt to construct a new policy based on consultation, openness and a new relationship with Africa.

Potential Allies

ACAS believes a call for an end to all U.S. arms sales and military training programs in Africa would provide an opportunity to educate constituencies in this country about the past U.S. military/security role in Africa and build alliances in African American communities and in the broader peace movement.

As was mentioned above, Congressman Jesse Jackson, Jr., has introduced legislation in the Congress that calls for an end to all U.S. arms sales and military training programs in Africa. This legislation has attracted the support of more than 60 members of Congress as well as

the consumer group Public Citizen and dozens of trade unions.

ACAS has been a leader in attacking CIA and Department of Defense activity in Africa and intelligence funding for academic study. Are we now at the point that ACAS, with other groups, can launch a campaign to end all U.S. arms sales, military aid and training in Africa and refocus peace and security policy in another direction?

Resources

Association of Concerned Africa Scholars web page on Pentagon-CIA linkages: http://acas.prairienet.org/nsep97.html
APIC policy pages on Peace and Security: http://www.africapolicy.org/docs99/peace.shtml
Center for Defense Information: http://www.cdi.org
Federation of American Scientists -- Arms Sales Monitoring Project: http://www.fas.org/asmp
National Summit theme paper on Peace and Security: http://www.africasummit.org/themes/peace/peace.htm
From the National Summit Bibliography: http://www.africasummit.org/themes/peace/biblio.htm
Jeffrey Boutwell and Michael T. Klare, Light Weapons and Civil Conflict. Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflicts, 1999.
Department of Defense. United States Security Strategy for Sub-Saharan Africa. Washington, D.C.: Office of International Security Affairs, African Affairs, August 1995.
Department of State. "African Crisis Response Initiative Fact Sheet." Washington, D.C.:Bureau of African Affairs, December 4, 1997.
Lora Lumpe and Jeff Donarski, The Arms Trade Revealed: a guide for investigators and activists. Federation of American Scientists, 1998.

Notes --

[i] William Minter, ACAS Bulletin, No. 48/49

[ii] Arms Sales Monitor, No 37, 10 April 1998 lists the following proposed recipients of IMET aid: Angola, Benin, Botswana, Cape Verde, Cent. African Rep., Chad, Comoros, Congo (Kinshasa), Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon,

Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Sao Tome/Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

[iii] State Department Data reported in Arms Sales Monitor, No 40, May 1999.

[iv] Holly Burkhalter, representing Human Rights Watch at the time, proposed the dispatch of troops to Africa to prevent mass murder in Rwanda. She made this proposal, for instance, in a conversation with ACAS in 1994.

[v] October 18, 1999

[vi] Congressman Donald Payne and OAU Secretary General Salim Salim have made this argument.

[vii] This is an argument articulated by Congressman Donald Payne, OAU Secretary General Salim Salim, among others.

[viii] The study by Demilitarization for Democracy, for instance, makes this point, although the methodology for this study and the specific critiera used to designate countries as democratic are open to question. Africa: Arms Un-control, Demilitarization for Democracy, July 12, 1999.

[ix] For a discussion of the code of conduct and other programs to attach human rights critiera to arms trade issues see the Arms Sales Monitoring Project of the Federation of American Scientists. Web: www.fas.org/asm.

[x] Any U.S. military security assistance to Africa almost certainly should be done in the context of the United Nations or an initiative with real participation from other non-African powers simply because the unequal power relationship between U.S. and African countries inevitably makes it difficult for real consultation to take place

[xi] See for example Curtis D. Grimm, "Increasing Participation in the Context of African Political Liberalization: The Benin Budget Crisis of 1994 and its Implications for Donors." (USAID, 1994). Grim was a USAID officer in Benin and in this paper he discusses the contradictions between USAID officers promoting democracy in Benin and other US officials promoting economic modernization.

[xii] Carol Thompson, "Harvests Under Fire: Regional Co-Operation For Food Security In Southern Africa. (Zed Press, 1991). Bill Raul "From Feast to Famine: Official Cures and Grassroots Remedies to Africa's Food Crisis. (Zed Press, 1991)

Humanitarian Intervention: Summary of Discussion

(Prepared from notes by Caleb Bush)

Some general initial comments noted the paper's important links to larger issues concerning U.S. military intervention. One participant pointed out two themes at work in the paper, our stand as (1) progressives on multi-lateral intervention and (2) on U.S. arms sales and military involvement in Africa. Given that, it was mentioned that military training in Africa is only a small part of a larger U.S. presence throughout the world. Likewise, U.S. involvement has also pushed the privitization of the military in large parts of Africa. There was also concern raised over the increased militarization of shrinking African economies. This then raised a question over whether an expanded notion of intervention might in turn be useful. Many actions outside military inter-vention contribute to conflict as well, this participant suggested.

The call in the discussion paper to end all military intervention in Africa was openly challenged. This became an important point of disagreement and discussion. One participant believed we should pay attention to who is calling for U.S. military aid as well as who is opposed to such aid to help decide its merits. Another participant stated that if the U.S. military did remain involved in Africa, such intervention should only take place in cooperation and consultation with African governments. However, the issue of police training in places like South Africa was also raised as something that might be an important and unrecognized part of U.S. intervention. Such police training is done in open consultation

with the governments involved and has any number of negative consequences.

A recurring aim expressed by many was a desire to set up study groups in order to take advantage of the group's collective expertise. Such work could then serve as a springboard to mobilize community support. The point was also raised how much more we need to know about the root causes of conflict in Africa. Such collaborative work could take large steps to answering such questions.

The dangers inherent in multi-lateral intervention and humanitarian intervention were the next topics of discussion. It was pointed out that the situation is Somalia, for instance, saw military intervention dictating the type of humanitarian intervention that could occur. Given these many issues, one person asked, how do we then envision ourselves or the U.S. government interacting with Africa? Another participant responded with a desire to openly question U.S. government decisions concerning situations like Sudan. Rather than isolating a few, the U.S. should look to isolate all "bad" governments, this participant said.

One individual then asked how we could in turn imagine an African peace-keeping force being set up? The U.S. is not giving African forces the ability to act on their own but is instead setting up the next generation of dependent military dictators. How do we then imagine peace-keeping or democracy from an African point of view?, another participant returned. What do such things mean on the ground? Someone then pointed out the distinction between conflict resolution and peace keeping and how this might be an important consideration for views on intervention.

One participant felt it was too narrow to focus exclusively on bilateral arms trade, which runs a risk of falling into the "neoliberal trap." States have to remain important, this participant said, or else one stops the sale of guns only to contribute to the privitization of violence. Instead, we should support a culture of peace-making and accountable militaries. A participant would later counter that the U.S. military's hands are so bloody, that things cannot be done bilaterally.

The closing minutes of discussion saw of plethora of comments from a wide variety of angles. For coalition building, issues such as landmines and child soldiers could be useful, one person noted. Another participant was concerned with the broad sweep of a call to end all military involvement in Africa. Since such a full stop is hard to reach, a piece-meal approach might be more practible instead. Defense comes down to trade, the right to trade and with whom, said another participant. The question becomes who and what are we defending when we talk about defense? We also need to define what we are for when it comes to security, one person noted. The nature of military involvement is changing, noted another, and we need to be aware of how and why to military is altering its approach in Africa to make its aims more palatable. In this regard, anti-narcotics and increased police-training become acceptable ruses for continued intervention.

Summary Response

How do we define what we are for? A call for a moratorium on small arms trade? An end to police-training? There are also questions of power involved here. Relatively weak African countries confront a powerful U.S. with huge capacities for training and aid. We need to find ways to moderate U.S. power. Likewise, potential U.S. involvement to prevent massacres presents us with hard choices. But when one looks at the U.S. record, not enough has changed to support U.S. involvement. The U.S. is still intervening, not neutral. With NGOs "cosying up" to the CIA after the Cold War, we also need to look at hidden agendas beneath the surface.

With the beginnings of one, how do we then pull everything together for a positive agenda, a "forward-looking program?" Ulti-mately, we have to build an overall policy framework. For example, diamonds might provide a wedge issue on the links between economics and violence. Humanitarian/human rights are also key words for progressive coalition building. We need to find ways to work with people, to listen to our friends in Africa. Other campaigns or parts of the agenda might include a campaign against Talisman, making a link between guns in the U.S. and the dumping of guns overseas, police training, exposing corporate connections in guns sales and calling for corporate responsibilty.

What the U.S. does is without question bad, but we also have the problem of being too U.S.-centered. We also need to find the grassroots groups out there that are already doing what we are talking about. The next time we have a meeting to talk about issues and policy goals such groups have to be here.

Plotting Top Ten Progressive Policies, Constituencies, and Activism: Reflections by Aleah Bacquie, Asma Abdel-Halim

(Prepared from notes by Bill Martin and Caleb Bush)

What have we done in this process?

Aleah Bacquie, in opening the session, stressed that we have a collective vision as could be seen by our discussions and our being here, but we too often work independently. In addition to working more collectively, it was stressed that we should work harder to articulate our vision to today's youth through, (1) campaigns on corporate responsibility, (2) economic and human rights, and (3) stronger societies including women and children, and (4) more justice and respect. Linking US concerns and African campaigns needs more attention. Youth are essential, and we should do our part to increase levels of youth participation.

Asma Abdel-Halim seconded Aleah's comments, calling this a "fantastic day for me". Several key questions to open up our work were flagged: (1) What is "democracy" and "authority"? (2) Can we push US foreign policy from its inward tendency, its overriding concerns with domestic implications? (3) What are the root causes of drugs, AIDS, war and conflict? (4) How do we overcome the isolation of ACAS meetings and bring in people from the institutions and organizations we have been talking about?

Top Ten List and Action:
Where are we going?

Discussion of the separate items and their possible ranking ensued, with specific comments on each drawn out. Comments included the need to stress items that responded to the interests and needs of youth and women. Gender issues were overlooked in discussion and the papers, one participant noted. Depending on the constituency, we may also have to re-imagine and/or rephrase some important items. Young people especially like to hear their language in their own ears, another person commented. Strategies for effective communication to grassroots constituencies also were discussed at some length, including work through schools and churches as well as electronic media.

Successive, immediate issues were then put forth, from the Talisman campaign, to pushing presidential candidates on African policy, to legislative work. From these details, discussions moved to higher ground, recalling our common missions related to social justice in the US and Africa -- we need to make broad, visionary claims, whether it be for $3 billion in aid to ending racism directed at Africa and her peoples abroad. ACAS remains strong as a "framing vehicle" for progressive agenda, but we must work to strengthen ACAS's role as a "mobilizing vehicle."

Top Ten Progressive Priorities for the U.S. and Africa

Association of Concerned Africa Scholars
April 5, 2000

Through workshops, discussions, and internal surveys of its members, ACAS has been constructing a list of concrete priority areas and policies for progressive work in relation to Africa. The order of this list reflects current ranking by the ACAS membership.
x
1. Cancel Debt and End Structural Adjustment: Cancel debt owed by African countries to the US and all international institutions without imposing conditionalities, and end all U.S. contributions to the World Bank or the IMF until these institutions stop imposing structural adjustment programs;

2. Support Public Health: Rebuild the Primary Health Care For All program and refocus health care policy away from single disease threats such as AIDS and toward a comprehensive public health service that prevents and treats all common illnesses. Support the public drug sector, essential drugs policies, and African drug production or cheap drug imports;

3. End U.S. Militarism, Support Reconstruction: Terminate all U.S. military aid programs, arms sales and training programs in Africa, including the Africa Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI), and support refugee assistance and reconstruction efforts equal to those elsewhere in the world – and with an emphasis upon African leadership and assistance to women and youth;

4. Education for All: Demand the U.S. government create a "Marshall Plan" to ensure education for all African children, an end to inequality of access and funding by gender, race, class or region; and the revision of Africa's appropriate place in US school curricula;

5. Support Fair Trade: Recognize that free trade policies have historically increased inequality and gender inequity, undermined countries' ability to feed themselves, and increased dependence – and support instead economic relationships that benefit both Africa and the United States, and lead to balanced, equitable development;

6. Restore Aid: Raise aid to $2 billion per year channeled through the Development Fund for Africa in consultation with representative African organizations, and target programs that aid postwar reconstruction, put women and men (not children) back to work, and avoid subsidizing multinational corporations and international NGOs;

7. Ban Landmines: The US should ratify the International Treaty to Ban Landmines;

8. Support a Democratic U.N.: The U.S. should pay its dues to the United Nations without imposing conditions, support the democratization of the Security Council, and work more closely with representative African organizations;

9. End Slavery: End slavery in all of its forms, and reject solutions that involve buying slaves. Boycott international companies, such as Talisman that invest in countries practicing slavery, and deny trade and other benefits to countries such as Mauritania where slavery is practiced;

10. Reparations Now: Demand the U.S. support reparations for death and forced labor under slavery and colonialism, and the creation of representative, international organizations towards that end. The role of European and American states and firms in slavery and colonialism should be openly recognized and written into K-12 curricula, and national memorials and museums should be erected in memory of the African holocaust.

Association of Concerned Africa Scholars: http://acas.prairienet.org

Scholars and Students of Africa
Demand a New Trial for Mumia Abu-Jamal

We scholars and students of Africa demand a new trial for Mumia Abu-Jamal.

The death penalty meted out to Mumia Abu-Jamal has much relevance for scholars and students of Africa.

Mumia Abu-Jamal's case fits a well known pattern: for over 400 years Africa and her descendants have been subject to criminal injustice.

In his 1982 trial, Abu-Jamal was assigned an unprepared attorney, denied the right to defend himself, banished from the courtroom, and judged by jury of his non-peers. The trial judge was well known as a hanging judge: he thus sentenced Abu-Jamal to death, as he has done 33 others -- all but two being persons of color. Subsequent appeals containing evidence of intimidation of witnesses, false testimony, and fabricated confessions have had to be presented to the same judge. They have thus been denied.

Daughters and sons of Africa have known such "justice" far too often, for far too many centuries.

We can do nothing less than join those demanding an end to the death penalty in this country and a new trial for Mumia Abu-Jamal, and we urge everyone to do the same.

Signed

M. Ahmed-Rufai, University of Illinois at Chicago
Folabo Ajayi, University of Kansas
Eniola Ajayi, University of Kansas
Peter C. Alegi, Boston University
Kwame Alford, North Carolina A & T State University
Tuzyline Allan, Baruch College
Kofi Anyidou, University of Ghana
Franco Barchiesi, University of the Witwatersrand
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Maternal-Fetal HIV Trials In Africa
Were the sponsors really concerned about Africa's children?

Yodit Bekele

In 1975, the World Medical Association gathered in Helsinki, Finland and re-developed a section of a document on medical ethics. The Declaration of Helsinki was re-drafted in order to ensure the safety of human subjects involved in Biomedical Research. One of the amendments states that "in any medical study, every patient – including those of a control group, if any -- should be assured of the best proven diagnostic and therapeutic method. This does not exclude the use of inert placebo in studies where *no proven diagnostic or therapeutic method exists*" (Flanagin, 1997). In 1996, fifteen studies conducted in ten Sub-Saharan African countries clearly violated the Declaration of Helsinki by including a placebo group in the clinical trial for perinatal transmission of HIV, because in 1994 AZT was found to reduce transmission by about two-thirds. This paper discusses how the organizations funding these trials deliberately picked African countries to conduct studies that they would not have been able to conduct in their own countries.

Most HIV infections in children occur through perinatal transmission. Before any preventive treatment was available in the United States, about 1,000 children were born every year infected with HIV. Worldwide, the number is estimated to be one million per year (Connors, 1994). HIV perinatal transmission is not well understood, but according the National Institute of Health, transmission can occur when a woman has little or no detectable HIV in her blood and a relatively intact immune system (www.niaid.nih.gov, 1996). Without any preventive treatment, 15%-40% of infants born to HIV infected mothers are infected either in utero, during labor and delivery, or after birth through breastfeeding (Connors, 1994). Fortunately, researchers working with animal models of retroviral infection demonstrated that using Zidovudine -- also known as AZT -- may prevent or reduce HIV perinatal transmission (Connors, 1994). Subsequently, clinical trials were conducted in the U.S. and France using human subjects.

The clinical trial in the U.S. (called the Pediatric AIDS Clinical Trials Groups, ACTG 076) a double-blind-controlled, randomized study in which HIV positive women who were pregnant were either in the AZT or placebo group. The women in the AZT group received doses in their third trimester and during labor and delivery. Also, the infants received AZT during the first six weeks of life. From April 1991 through December 1993, 477 pregnant women who tested positive for HIV were enrolled in 15 multicenters across the nation (Connors, 1994).

In 1994, researchers published the first results of studying 363 women; they showed that women receiving AZT had a transmission rate of 8.3% as compared with 25.5% among those receiving placebo, a reduction of 67.5% in

the risk of transmission. Following the results, the data and safety monitoring Board of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) recommended the interruption of the trials in order to provide all HIV positive pregnant women with a preventive measure, thus reducing the transmission among children. Accordingly, the Public Health Service translated the study findings into protocol 076, a guideline for the use of AZT to prevent perinatal transmission (www.niaid.nih.gov).

The Debate

While the findings of the clinical trial were a major breakthrough for the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the developed countries, developing countries especially in Sub-Sahara Africa had nothing to gain from this discovery. The prospects of administering AZT for pregnant women in most African countries are virtually nil for many reasons; the two major reasons are that AZT has to be given to women beginning in their third trimester, but women in Sub-Sahara African countries do not attend prenatal care (they go to hospital when they are ready to deliver); and the cost of administering AZT ranges from $800-$1,000 but government health care expenditures in most African countries are $14 per person per year (as compared to $1,005 in most developed nations) (Annas, 1998).

The World Health Organization concluded in June 1994 that protocol 076 could not be implemented in most developing countries. WHO recom-mended further studies to reduce perinatal HIV transmission, specifically placebo-controlled trials to identify cheaper, more accessible drugs. Following their advice, fifteen placebo-controlled trials involving 17,000 pregnant women were conducted in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Malawi, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe (Annas, 1998). Nine of the studies were funded by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the National Institute of Health (NIH), five by other governments including Denmark, France, and South Africa, and one by the United Nations Program on Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (UNAIDS) (Bayer, 1998).

The Defenders

While doing research for this paper the message that I kept hearing from sources such as UNAIDS, WHO, and governments were the same. Sub-Saharan Africa is hopeless when it comes to HIV infection. UNAIDS estimated that 5% of the population was HIV positive at the end of 1997 and that approximately 2.7 million children have died of AIDS since the beginning of the epidemic. Perinatal HIV transmission in the North is less than 5% while the South has a 25%-35% transmission rate (www.unaids.org).

The sponsors of the trials say the reasons for conducting studies in which there is known treatment are very compelling. Dr. Phillip Nieburg, an AIDS researcher for the CDC "stressed the importance from a scientific point of view of comparing new treatments with the existing 'standard of care' in a particular country. In developing countries, AZT is not the standard of care" (CNN, 1997). Helene Gayle of the CDC said "in the countries that we are talking about, the health care expenditures is about $10/person/year, and so it is really important to make sure that what we are looking for as a potential outgrowth of this is something that is really relevant and affordable" (CNN, 1997). Dr. Varmus of NIH and Dr. Satcher of the CDC defended the trial because "a placebo-controlled study usually provides a faster answer with fewer subjects" (Varmus, et al., 1997). Dr David Ho, director of the Aaron Diamond AIDS Research Center in New York, stated "these clinical trials, were conducted for Africans, by Africans, with the good of their people in mind". He continues, poignantly, "the ethical debate here is obviously a complex one, without a clear distinction between right and wrong, and the imposition of western views, or what Dr. Edward Mbidded of Uganda calls ethical imperialism does not help" (Ho, 19997). Last but not least, defenders keep mentioning the most important aspect of ethical research using humans as subjects: all the women participating in the trial have signed a consent form thus invalidating the ethical debate.

The Opposition

I feel that the trial was unethical and violated the basic human rights of the women involved. Dr. Nieburg stated that that there is no

"standard of care" in the countries in which the studies were conducted. But Dr. Lurie and Dr. Wolfe, spokesmen for the Public Citizens Health Research Group, said that

> the International Ethical Guidelines for Biomedical Research involving human subjects were specifically designed to address ethical issues pertaining to studies in developing countries. Guideline 15 states that an external sponsoring agency should submit the research protocol to ethical and scientific review according to the standards of the country sponsor agency, and the ethical standards applied should be no less exacting than they would be in the case of research carried out in [the sponsoring country]"(Wolfe, et al., 1997).

Dr. Nieburg fully understands that this type of a trial would create a public outcry in the US; he also knows that the average American would listen to his explanation and probably agree with him because of the desperate situation Africans find themselves in. Where is the line drawn? If poor countries do not have a "standard of care", does that mean that countries with the monetary resources have the right to go into poor countries and exploit their poverty?

The cost of AZT treatment for a pregnant woman ranges from $800-$1,000. Even the short course AZT regimen is unaffordable in Africa. According to the CDC, the short course of zidovudine would cost about $50 per person. The cost to screen each woman for HIV (a prerequisite) is $10 per person. As Dr. Marcia Angell, Executive Editor of the New England Journal of Medicine, stated "there has been no assurance that even much cheaper regimens of AZT will become available in the countries where research is being conducted" (Angel, 1997). Annual per capita health care expenditures for some African countries are shown in Table 1.

I agree with Dr. Angell who believed that "a new regimen will be used here [US] after being tested there [Africa]" (Angell, 1997). I believe that on the surface it might seem that the organizations are truly helping the "poor Africans" but it is a façade for finding a cheaper protocol for all HIV+ pregnant women who are

guaranteed preventive treatment by law in the U.S.

Sponsors have the upper hand. They can dictate what African governments can and cannot do. It is hard to imagine African researchers refusing to include a placebo group or sponsoring agents agreeing to their demands. I find it ironic that the question of imposing "western views" on Africans occurs when human rights are clearly violated. Western views are imposed on Africans in all aspects of their lives. Foreign policies, economic aid, and structural adjustment programs are all imposed by the North on Africans.

The consent forms, which all the women have signed, are the most questionable aspects of this trial. A South African physician defended the trials stating that "the starting point for all clinical trials is the assurance that trial participants will be protected from exploitation. Persons who are being recruited into a research project must be allowed to exercise their own judgment freely (autonomy) in deciding whether or not to participate in the research" (Karim, 1998). Dr. Karim published a study he conducted with colleagues to assess informed consent to HIV testing in an antenatal clinic, which was also one of the clinics that recruited women for the trials on their second visit when they found out their HIV status. Dr. Karim et al. found that 28% of the women thought that the research was an integral part of the care they received.

> This medical service setting, and perhaps particularly public care, where the patient has little recourse to alternatives, influenced decisions to participate in a research project. Informed consent sought under such conditions may be less than voluntary. For the patients, an overriding concern is to receive care and attention for the problems that brought them there in the first place. (Karim et al., 1998)

What does this mean? The women felt compelled to participate in the study. The researchers contradicted themselves. If the women did not consent to the trial, if they felt compelled to participate, then the study was unethical.

Table 1. Selected Annual Health Care Expenditures Per Capita and as Percent of GDP

Country (year)	Per Capita (US dollars)	As % of GDP
Burkina Faso (1992)	22	5.5
Cote d'Ivoire (1995)	22	3.4
Ethiopia (1990)	5	3.9
Kenya (1992)	13	2.5
Malawi (1990)	11	5.0
Tanzania (1990)	5	5.0
Uganda (1994)	10	3.9
Zimbabwe (1991)	86	6.5

*Annas G, Grodin M. 1998. "Research Forum. Ethics and Studies of HIV, "American Journal of Public Health, 88(4):560-562, Apr.

All of the women involved in the studies were poor, illiterate, and had no medical care. They were asked to participate in the study right after their HIV status was disclosed to them, when they were most psychologically vulnerable. Most of the women believed that they were getting treatment. Whether the definition of a placebo trial was fully understood must be questioned. A 23-year old South African woman interviewed by the *New York Times* said, "they gave me a bunch of pills to take, and told me how to take them. Some were for malaria, some were for fevers, and some were supposed to be for the virus. I knew that there were different kinds, but I figured that if one of them did not work against AIDS, then one of the others would" (Annas et al., 1998).

Finally, I question the motives of the sponsoring agents, which do not make sense to me. If they do succeed in preventing perinatal transmission by providing AZT to mothers, what are they going to do after the infant is born? Poor African woman cannot buy infant formula for at least two years, which is necessary in order to prevent HIV transmission through breastmilk. Even if they get access to formula, will the water they mix it with be safe? The issue is further complicated by our ignorance of the long-term effects of AZT on either the child or the mother. AZT is not a cure; it is a toxic treatments with side effects. If the women and children involved in these trials get sick from AZT, will the sponsors provide them with an alternative treatment course? That is why I firmly believe that the studies conducted were not for the benefit of African women. The women were used as guinea pigs in order to provide additional answers for the benefit of the developed world.

Reading up on this controversial issue, the same questions kept recurring in my mind over and over. Would the sponsors ever conduct such a study in a White population? Would the sponsors ever conduct such a study in a rich country? How far are sponsors willing to jeopardize the lives of women in order to "save" children? Is the life of an infant more important than the life of a woman? While some of the answers seem obvious, others are not. Nonetheless, three major factors are involved in why the trials were conducted in Africa. They are race, class, and sex.

When criticizing these trials, many opponents brought up a very sensitive issue in biomedical research involving human subjects in US history: the infamous Tuskegee trials in which Black Americans were denied treatment for syphilis when there was a known cure (CDC, 1997). Defenders of the AZT trials felt it was inappropriate and irresponsible for opponents of the trials to compare the two. I beg to differ. The fact that both of these trials involved Blacks and poor people in desperate situations makes it very hard for me to believe that the situations were different. The lives of Africans and people of African-ancestry are not equal to European lives in the eyes of most scientists and governmental officials in the North.

There were 16 trials involving AZT and pregnant women. Fifteen were placebo-controlled and all 15 were conducted in Africa. The sixteenth trial, which gave all women in the study AZT, was conducted in Thailand in 1994. It was the first trial conducted after AZT proved to be effective. The Thai researcher, also

sponsored by the NIH, was pressured into having a placebo group as well. He refused, stating that "conducting a placebo-controlled trial for AZT in pregnant women in Thailand would be unethical and unacceptable, since an active-controlled trial is feasible" (Wolfe et al., 1997). Looking back, the race of the women played a major role in the decisions of the sponsors who financed these trials.

Another factor influencing the decision to conduct the studies in Africa is class. Africans are poor, so poor that, in this age of AIDS, needles are reused without sterilization and blood transfusions are done without screening for HIV. Packard and Epstein (1992:363), writing about two studies of infants and children in Kinshasa, stated "the greater number of injections previously received by seropositive children of seronegative mothers than by seropositive children of seropositive mothers (who presumably have similar HIV burdens) strengthens the argument that these injections represent an important route of exposure to HIV, rather than reflecting medical needs for HIV-associated illness." The sponsoring agents know that the African governments do not have the resources to care for people and exploit their advantage. If the sponsors really cared about African children then they would put pressure on organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank into forgiving debts that African countries owe. African governments in trying to pay their debts spend more money on repayment than on health care. For example, Uganda spends $3 per person per year on health care compared to $17 per person on debt payment (Farmer, 1996). If the sponsoring agents felt they did not have the power to forgive debts, they could curb the spread of HIV in Africa in other ways. Studies show a direct correlation between contracting sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and HIV. Treating STDs effectively could thus reduce HIV transmission. In clinics in Tanzania where proper treatment of STDs was available, HIV infections were reduced by 40%. Nonetheless, even though drugs to treat STDs are cheap, the sponsors would rather study a regimen that is more expensive and less accessible to Africans.

The third factor that concerns me is the fact that the subjects involved are women. While it is apparent that perinatal transmission could be studied only on pregnant women, African women have been subjected to too much exploitation in the past. From the beginning of the AIDS epidemic, African women have been regarded as the vector for HIV transmission. The stereotypical image of the African woman selling her body to sustain livelihood gives researchers an excuse to treat her as an object. Packard and Epstein (1992:353) reported on a study that compared HIV infection among prostitutes and female controls in Rwanda; commenting on the sampling procedures they wrote, "matching of the female controls was not extended to marital status since, for the age group studied, celibacy in women in Central Africa is commonly associated with prostitution". As long as African women are viewed as promiscuous sexual objects, researchers will justify their unethical trials by separating women of the South from those of the North.

Negative publicity by the Public Citizen Health Research Group and others in and outside Africa brought a halt to the trials in 1997. In 1998, NIAID published a report from a clinical trial it funded in Uganda for perinatal transmission in which half of the women were given the short course of AZT and half received a new drug, nevirapine. NIAID described the advantages of nevirapine over AZT (www.safaids.org). Nevirapine involves a single oral dose to the mother in labor and one to the infant within three days of birth; the results indicated that at 14 to 16 weeks of age, 13% of infants who received nevirapine acquired HIV, compared with 25% of the AZT group; a short AZT regimen starting during labor and continued during the infant's first week reduced mother to child transmission to 25%. Nevirapine was twice as effective. Nevirapine regimen is 200 times cheaper ($4) than long-course AZT ($1,000) and 70 times cheaper than the Thailand short-course AZT; it could be considered for a standard intervention for all pregnant mothers in high prevalence countries, with or without HIV testing. Research continues into longer-term efficacy (at 18 months), toxicity, and drug resistance.

Conclusion

While this is a remarkable breakthrough for women in developing countries, I feel that the struggle is just beginning. Researchers need to look at the whole spectrum of women's health and not just HIV in trying to reduce perinatal transmission. HIV just like any other infectious disease is complex in that it mostly affects poor people who do not have access to adequate medical care. If organizations such as WHO or UNAIDS are really concerned about Africa's children, then they also need to look at the status of women in Africa. If they really want to help, then more pressure needs to be put on organizations such as IMF and the World Bank (which are run by the developed world) to forgive the debts that African countries have accumulated. In order for the countries to pay more attention to the needs of their people, African governments will have to spend a tremendous amount of money which they do not have right now. Also, researchers from the North who follow guidelines set forth by the Declaration of Helsinki have to realize that women in the South involved in clinical trials have as much right as women in the North. It is the researchers' duty to go against sponsors, which pressure them into conducting unethical research. The subjects put their faith as well as their lives in the hands of researchers hoping that they will get the best possible treatment. Researchers need to look beyond subjects and realize that the subjects are human beings with hopes, dreams, and fears, just like any other people.

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After the National Summit on Africa: Exchanges

Introduction
William G. Martin

As documented elsewhere in this issue in materials from the November, 1999 Progressive Africa Action Workshop, the last five years have witnessed several attempts to address the issue of a new "constituency" for Africa. Among the most notable, and certainly the best funded at a running cost of over 8 million, was the National Summit on Africa. ACAS members worked with the Summit in key areas, from writing briefing papers to chairing regional and state chapters; some ACAS members, including this writer opposed official participation given the nature of the organization and its decision-making structures. ACAS as an organization took no position on the Summit.

With the Summit's final meeting, a new debate has arisen over its legacy and the decision by its leadership to create a permanent organization. Many of the national Africa organizations that ACAS has worked with over the last decade have chosen not to continue to participate in the leadership of the Summit because of disagreements about the direction of the organization. TransAfrica president Randall Robinson, The Africa Fund Executive Director Jennifer Davis, International Human Rights Law Group head Gay McDougall, Africa Policy Information Center leaders Adwoa Dunn Mouton and Imani Countess, and AFSC organizer Jerry Herman have all resigned from their positions with the Summit.

We reprint immediately below several key articles related to this discussion, most by ACAS members. Included are: an open letter from concerned Summit delegates at the closing session of the Summit, documents debating the creation of the new organization, a critical press report by Jim Cason and Jim Lobe, and a response by Summit leaders Herschelle Challenor and Leonard Robinson, followed by Cason's and Lobe's subsequent response . The Africa Policy Information Center has a longer, fuller group of exchanges and reports available on the web at: http://www.africapolicy.org/docs00/chr00.htm; see the listings in February and March 2000 titled "USA: Summit Documents."

Concerned delegates to the National Summit, "Where is the Dialogue in the National Summit on Africa?" February 20, 2000

Jim Lobe and Jim Cason, "Africa Activism: What Direction Now?" February 25, 2000

Salih Booker, Memo to Board of Directors, National Summit on Africa, February 28, 2000

Letter from Michigan State Co-Chairs to Leonard Robinson and Herschelle Challenor, March 5, 2000

Herschelle S. Challenor, Chair, Board of Directors and Leonard H. Robinson, Jr., President and CEO, National Summit on Africa, Letter to the State Chairs, Co-Chairs, and State Delegations, March 7, 2000

Jim Cason and Jim Lobe respond to Herschelle Challenor and Leonard Robinson, March 17, 2000

(Editors note: the following statement was drafted by delegates to the National Summit. It was presented at the closing session by Dr. Mojubaolu Olufunke Okome, a professor at Fordham University who was co-chair of the New York state delegation.)

The National Summit on Africa (NSA) has brought together thousands of individuals and hundreds of organizations to move forward the dialogue on US-Africa relations. We recognize the efforts of all those involved. However, we are extremely concerned that the process has been organized in violation of many of the core values that motivate and drive our efforts to promote social, economic, environmental and political justice in Africa. We protest the use of our names and reputations of our organizations in ways that violate the following fundamental principles of democracy, transparency and accountability.

BALANCED AND OPEN DEBATE:
Whereas representation by African official and privileged sectors is strong and African diplomatic statements were included in NSA orientation materials, representation within the official Summit process by other Africans in the US and by African civil society, including women's, farmer's, labor, human rights, youth and other grassroots organizations is woefully inadequate. If the NSA is about peoples' participation in policymaking, why are these views and voices not given (at least) equal prominence? Where are the opportunities for diverse opinions in keynote addresses and plenary sessions? If the goal of the deliberative process is to create a Plan of Action on priority policy issues, why are discussions of current issues affecting the continent absent? At the so-called Presidential Candidate's Forum, why were no opportunities provided for questions regarding the candidates' records and positions on issues affecting Africa? Where is the balanced dialogue?

DEMOCRATIC AND TRANSPARENT PROCESS:
Decision-making and communication surrounding the NSA process has been concentrated in a small, centralized group without adequate consultation with the participants involved - e.g. over officials invited, fiscal accountability, corporate sponsorships and the future of the NSA. If the NSA's ideals are partnership and democracy, why would an African leader who has a well-documented record of human rights abuses be honored? Does the prominent role given to Daniel arap Moi represent the kind of governmental partnership we want reflected in US-Africa relations? Why were alternative Kenyan views not given equal visibility? If Moi was invited in the name of the California delegates, why were most California delegates unaware of it until their arrival in Washington DC? Where is the dialogue on good governance?

ECONOMIC JUSTICE:
Why are corporate-friendly policies promoted, while worker- and environment-friendly policies are ignored? Why is the NSA promoting one particular piece of legislation -- the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) -- in its documents and plenaries? Why, given the rise of African and global social movements for economic justice, has there not been similar space allocated for their proponents to examine the role and impacts of the World Bank, the IMF, and the WTO? Where is the dialogue on fair trade, economic reform and developmental alternatives?

CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY:
Why is the NSA funded by companies like Monsanto and Chevron, known exploiters of

workers, communities and the environment? How were the decisions to accept sponsorship arrived at? Did these contributions assure a privileged position of corporate voices and the absence of their critics? Where is the dialogue on corporate accountability?

WORKERS' RIGHT TO ORGANIZE:

Whey were functions and delegates booked at the non-union Grand Hyatt? Where is the union bug on Summit documents? Why were African trade unionists not present? What do these anti-union acts tell African workers? While Al Gore refused to cross a picket line, why were NSA delegates and activists expected to cross that same picket line? Where is the dialogue on worker's rights and on solidarity between workers and unions in the US and in Africa?

In spite of these issues and failings much has been accomplished that can be built on over the months and years ahead. Before any NSA continuation plans can be considered, however:

- A framework of Guiding Principles that enshrines the above values must be developed in a transparent and participatory manner;
- A full evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses to date must be completed and discussed, taking into account the views of at-large delegates, marginalized and missing groups, as well as those who have left or opted out. These discussions should inform considerations about whether to take forward the NSA and in what manner.

Activism: What Direction Now?
(http://www.foreignpolicy-infocus.org/papers/africapr)

Jim Lobe and Jim Cason

From February 16 to 20, some 2,300 committed and energetic delegates from throughout the United States gathered in Washington, DC, for a five-day, high-profile "summit" dedicated to building a politically powerful coalition for Africa, but there was much uncertainty about how to do it. The official program and plenary sessions were dominated by U.S. and African government officials, members of Congress, and corporate leaders. But the energy in the workshops and hallways of this event, as well as the commitment of delegates to use their own funds to get to Washington for the meeting, demonstrated again the potential for Africa activism that still exists in the United States ten years after the South African victory over apartheid. Particularly noticeable was the high attendance -- upwards of 30% -- of Africa expatriates who established themselves during the conference as key players in any future constituency for the continent.

The National Summit on Africa (NSA) was a four-year effort, generously funded with almost $8 million by the Ford Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The NSA approved a 254-point platform -- a sometimes contradictory laundry list of policy recommendations -- the "National Policy Plan of Action for U.S.-Africa Relations in the 21st Century."

Beginning in May 1998, the National Summit on Africa convened a series of "regional summits and policy fora" around five broad themes in U.S.-African relations:
1) democracy and human rights;
2) economic development, trade and investment, and job creation;
3) education and culture;
4) peace and security; and
5) sustainable development, quality of life, and the environment.

Each regional summit elected state delegations who, together with 500 at-large delegates, participated in the deliberative process at the Washington gathering. The NSA's National Policy Plan will be presented to policymakers with the view that it will form the blueprint for a new and broader U.S. engagement with Africa in the 21st century.

Among the specific proposals endorsed by the summit were an urgent request for the U.S. to provide increased funding for AIDS research, education, and prevention and a demand for comprehensive debt relief for Africa. The final summit document also calls for conditional support of the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act trade bill that is currently before the U.S. Congress and for a new "Marshall Plan" -- scale commitment of additional financial resources for African development. The recommendations urge Washington to support a ban on landmines, end sales of small arms to Africa, and provide far more money for peacekeeping missions in Africa.

But the final assembly, addressed by two of the most widely respected black politicians, Rev. Jesse Jackson, Jr. (D-IL) and former Rep. Ron Dellums (D-CA), was clouded with charges by many grassroots and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) rooted in the antiapartheid movement that the mobilizing effort put into the summit risked being hijacked by a leadership with a "corporate-friendly" agenda. "Somehow all the hard work we put into making our voices

heard here was for nothing," complained Nunu Kidane, a former cochair of the California delegation. Kidane had helped organize the San Francisco regional summit, but she resigned in disgust because of what she characterized as the top-down nature of the NSA.

"Many of the people who went to Africa to do solidarity work in the 1960s and 1970s, knew they would never get paid," said Prexy Nesbitt, a Chicago-based activist and educator who serves on the board of the Africa Fund and has worked with TransAfrica, the Washington Office on Africa, and many of the other national Africa groups. "But today," Nesbitt explained, "[with the emphasis on trade and investment], you're getting more and more people going with a sense of 'what is in it for me?' This [meeting] is controlled by the latter type. These are the new colonizers."

Although Nesbitt didn't mention him by name, he appeared to describe Leonard H. Robinson, Jr., the NSA's "president and CEO", who had defended Washington's "constructive engagement" policy with apartheid South Africa as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs in the Reagan and Bush administrations. More recently Robinson worked as a lobbyist for both Sani Abacha's military regime in Nigeria and Togolese president Gnassingbe Eyadema, one of Africa's longest ruling dictators. Robinson apparently intends to transform the NSA into a permanent organization directed with a board half of whose directors will represent U.S. corporations active in Africa. "We're going to need a board that brings a lot more to thetable," said Sunni Khalid, the former National Public Radio reporter who is now the summit spokesperson. "It takes a lot of money to do this."

As originally conceived, the summit was to be used to mobilize and expand a variety of groups and interests worried about Africa's marginalization following the end of the cold war. Since the 1980s, aid to Africa has declined sharply, despite half-hearted Clinton admini- stration efforts to increase it. After the 1992-93 Somalia debacle, Washington's refusal to act decisively to stop or prevent civil conflicts, including the 1994 Rwandan genocide, fueled fears, according to the summit's literature, "that the United States would continue to disengage" from Africa despite "unprecedented opportunities...to promote democratic values and free markets."

"Little urgency is given to our problems, and when assistance is rendered, it is relatively too little and often delayed," Organization of African Unity (OAU) Secretary-General Salim A. Salim told the delegates during the opening speeches. "This is in remarkable contrast to how other societies are treated in this regard. It boils down to the fact that Africa lacks a strong constituency in the United States," Secretary- General Salim added.

Over the past two years, the National Summit on Africa has convened six regional and three policy conferences-- in Boston, Chicago, Baltimore, San Francisco, Denver, Atlanta, Los Angeles, Houston, and Oklahoma City -- with attendance ranging from a low of less than 400 in Chicago to well over 3,000 in Atlanta. A summit press release claimed that more than 10,000 participated in these regional forums.

Almost from the beginning, however, the NSA secretariat and executive committee were criticized for a "top-down" approach that failed to adequately consult with existing local groups and long-established NGOs with national networks. Many of the national activist NGOs, fearful of alienating the powerful donors who were behind the summit, joined the national board but confined their criticisms to internal discussions. From early on in the process, according to several board members, representatives of the International Human Rights Law Group, Africa Fund, Constituency for Africa, American Friends Service Committee, and Africa Policy Information Center voiced strong concerns about the huge expenditures (more than $400,000 on one regional conference, including $40,000 for fresh flowers) and the failure to adequately consult with local activists and groups. Salih Booker, who until recently worked with the Council on Foreign Relations and who drafted the original proposal as a consultant for Ford and Africare, resigned from the board in October 1998 to protest the lack of transparency with which the process was being conducted and the lack of a policy for accepting financial contributions from corporations with questionable records in Africa, including Chevron.

Unease on the twenty-eight member board increased last December when Robinson circulated an internal memorandum in which he laid out the case for creating a new organization after the summit to act as the "central repository on Africa-related issues and affairs." Arguing that the lobbying network for Africa had been "moribund [especially since the conclusion of the Free South Africa movement], largely ineffectual over a sustained period and considered a nonfactor by the various power centers of decisionmaking in Washington," Robinson asserted that "it would be a travesty if the summit failed to capitalize on the momentum it has generated to fill the void."

As originally conceived, the NSA was supposed to cease to exist a few months after the Washington meeting and the formulation of the National Policy Plan of Action. Robinson's memo, however, went on to propose an initial annual budget for an "American Council on African Affairs" of almost $1 million. Robinson wrote that, based on recent conversations "with corporate executives and with representatives of the foundation community"-- including Coca-Cola, Sara Lee, World Space, Carnegie Corporation, Rockefeller Brothers Foundation, and the MacArthur Foundation -- "it is very conceivable that the summit will attract additional, substantial capital as a consequence of the February 2000 event." Robinson noted that the corporate interest in providing financial support "represents a sea change in attitude and receptivity and should mushroom -- anticipating a knock-out summit in February."

The following month, the six member executive committee endorsed Robinson's idea and called for the new organization to be headed by a board with 50% corporate representation. Though some NGOs would remain on the board, others, according to the memo, would shift to an advisory committee. "[T]he new board cannot afford to be perceived as being other than corporate-friendly,'" stated a January 18 memo from the executive committee.

That agenda became clearer by the time the 2,300 delegates began arriving to hear President Bill Clinton and half a dozen other administration and official dignitaries kick off the summit with a call for participants to lobby their members of Congress and senators to quickly approve the corporate-backed Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). "All of the hard work we had put into trying to get a balanced view of the bill was excluded," lamented California delegate Kidane, as speaker after speaker exhorted the delegates to push for the AGOA. (During the NSA's policy sessions, the AGOA was rejected by one of the five policy working groups and endorsed with reservations by another. Yet a press statement released at the end of the summit by the secretariat cited "support for the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act" as the first of half a dozen of the major policy recommendations of the summit participants.)

More disappointments were to come. Grassroots and NGO delegates were incensed both about the sponsorship by corporate giants Chevron and Monsanto of specific events and about the appearance of Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi as the sole African head of state to address the meeting. "Taking money from Chevron was a violation of decisions taken earlier in the summit process and of the people who are struggling in the Niger Delta," said Jennifer Davis, director of the New York-based Africa Fund, which played a leading role in the antiapartheid movement and more recently in the struggle against military rule in Nigeria. "I would have preferred to do without a couple of dinners and not have Chevron and Monsanto as donors," said New York cochair Mojubaolu Olufunke Okome, a Nigerian who addressed the final plenary session on behalf of many of the dissidents and won a standing ovation for her comments. "Chevron's policies in the Niger delta are morally bankrupt," she said, adding that a member of her own family had been killed in the violence that has wracked the oil-rich region.

Ezekiel Pajibo, who works with the Africa Faith and Justice Network and was cochair of the Maryland delegation, said he was so outraged that Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi was the only African head of state on the program that he helped organize a demonstration outside the Grand Hyatt Hotel where Moi addressed a luncheon gathering. Delegates arriving for the luncheon not only had to walk through a line of demonstrators shouting "sham" and denouncing Moi as an "African Pinochet," they also had to cross a line of picketers from

the Hotel and Restaurant Employees Union who were protesting the hotel's refusal to allow a union. Vice President Al Gore, who was scheduled to address the same luncheon, refused to cross the picket line, and his remarks were instead broadcast into the gathering.

Summit dignitaries defended Moi's presence. "We invited many heads of state to come," said NSA cochair Andrew Young, a former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations and ex-mayor of Atlanta, who stood by Moi as hecklers were led from the hotel banquet hall by security officials. "President Moi came." Still, Moi's presence was symptomatic of a larger problem at the summit. Although the discussion in the policy groups was lively and participatory, the plenary sessions were dominated by official and corporate voices, charged David Beckman, who is president of Bread for the World. "Whereas representation by African official and privileged sectors is strong," noted a petition signed by scores of delegates, including some board members, "representation within the official summit process by other Africans in the U.S. and by African civil society, including women's, farmers', labor, human rights, youth and other grassroots organizations is woefully inadequate. If the NSA is about peoples participation in policymaking, why are these views and voices not given (at least) equal prominence?"

The petition, which charged that the summit process "has been concentrated in a small, centralized group," also called for a "full evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses" of the summit to date and the adoption of a "Framework of Guiding Principles" on governance, participation, and transparency before any decisions are taken on the organization's future. But Robinson, who agreed to allow Okome address the final plenary session as a representative of the dissenters in order to avoid a disruptive protest from the floor, declined to be pinned down on precisely what his organizational intentions were. Instead, he stressed that he wanted to fully cooperate with the NGOs and others. "As long as the National Summit on Africa has a nickel to spend," he said, "we guarantee that we will work with anybody who has Africa -- not self-interest -- in

mind... Why can't we work together to make this happen?" he asked.

Salih Booker remains skeptical. In a memo he sent to the board in early February, Booker strongly opposed perpetuating or transforming the organization, noting that Robinson's recommendations "suggest the creation of an entity dominated by U.S. corporations to act as a catalyst for working against the existing people-centered NGOs and their public education and public advocacy networking efforts. These proposals will only lead to a further diminution of funding possibilities for existing Africa-focused organizations, especially politically and economically progressive organizations inclu-ding African-American ones," he argued.

Others agree. "Any new organization that has that kind of money behind it has the potential for defunding the groups that have been the mainstay of Africa work generally," said Melvin Foote, director of the Washington-based Constituency for Africa (CFA). Foote, who resigned from the NSA board in January, said that it has been difficult for many of the NGOs that have participated in the summit to criticize it publicly for fear of offending their donors. Ford and Carnegie have long dominated Africa funding in the foundation world.

Despite all the profound disagreements and criticisms, the National Summit on Africa demonstrated decisively that there is a powerful network of activists in the United States who are working on, or trying to work on, Africa issues and are not being reached by existing Africa-focused groups. With $8 million to spend, the NSA succeeded in drawing local organizers who had not been part of existing networks into the regional summit process and eventually to the national summit in Washington.

But, as the protests at the meeting and the resignations from the summit board showed, many activists and local networks were not prepared to be paraded into Washington simply to endorse a corporate -- and U.S.-government -- dominated agenda handed down from on high. For every person who protested publicly at the summit, there were at least two more who told reporters that they saw the problems but believed they would be fixed in the future. "They brought us together in New Jersey, and we plan to stay together and keep organizing,

but we're not going to be taking orders from this crowd in Washington," said one delegate who asked that his name not be used.

The NSA organizers have already said they are heading in a "corporate friendly" direction, so the question for other Africa-focused organizations is whether they can pick up some of the energy generated at the summit and channel it into a new movement.

Ten years after the end of apartheid in South Africa there are still hundreds of local community groups with linkages to Africa, but the range of activism on Africa crosses over a number of issues and is much less nationally focused. Beyond the direct campaigns for democracy and human rights and against oil companies in specific countries such as Sudan or Nigeria, there are global coalitions on trade issues, debt and economic justice, landmines, and small arms that focus attention on Africa. In addition, more radical groups in the black community, such as the Black Radical Congress and U.S.-based activists organizing for Afrocentric schools, chose to stay away from this gathering but are passionately committed to Africa work.

Whether the organizers of the National Summit on Africa manage to attract additional foundation or corporate funding for their new project, what they have done is demonstrate the potential for Africa organizing and present a challenge to Africa activists in this country. The question now is who will pick up this challenge?

(Jim Lobe is a Washington-based correspondent with the Inter Press Service news agency. Jim Cason is an executive committee member of the Association of Concerned Africa Scholars. Both are part of FPIF's "think tank without walls.")

RE: Summit Secretariat Proposals on the Future of the Summit

As a former member of the Board I am very concerned about the proposals for perpetuating the National Summit on Africa that you are currently contemplating. I believe that these proposals represent a contradiction of the very Summit process they purport to continue and a betrayal of the original vision of the Summit. Nor do these proposals emanate from demands arising organically from successful subregional summit meetings during the past three years.

I strongly believe that the proposals to perpetuate the Summit as a new and permanent organization should be opposed for the following reasons:

- They contradict the original vision of the Summit process and prejudge the Summit deliberations themselves;
- They fail to seriously consider the desirability of ending the NSA, following its intended closure, in favor of strengthening the organizations that have a proven record of far more productive and cost-effective work on African affairs;
- They suggest the creation of an entity dominated by US Corporations to act as a catalyst for working in direct competition with (and potentially against) the existing people-centered NGOs and their respective public education and advocacy networking efforts;
- They suggest the creation of a new vehicle focused on the corporate community that would itself be a duplication of other existing corporate-oriented Africa groups;
- They fail to acknowledge that the National Summit on Africa has not demonstrated that it has any significant capabilities or comparative advantage in any of the areas it proposes to continue its work. Greater

humility and a capacity for self-criticism would be welcome, as it appears that the original plans for a serious evaluation of the Summit process have -- like so many other decisions -- been abandoned;

- These proposals will only lead to a further diminution of funding possibilities for existing Africa-focused organizations, especially politically and economically progressive organizations including African-American ones.

Background

In 1993 I was contracted by the Ford Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation to undertake a review of ten American organizations and programs that focused on African affairs and to review the changes in US foreign policymaking toward Africa that were then emerging with the end of the Cold War. This study has unfortunately never been publicly released. Principal among its findings was that Africa did not lack a constituency in the US but rather that there were multiple constituencies. The report further outlined the potential convergence between African objectives of attaining security, democracy and development and those of the US of promoting global security, enlarging the community of democracies and increasing economic growth and prosperity in the world. The report recommended -- inter alia -- working with the existing leading Africa-focused organizations to build a shared policy agenda and to develop means to increase public participation in the policymaking process. It noted that those most effective in impacting policy had historically been excluded from foundation funding. The report identified a need for greater cooperation among existing groups, based on their unique strengths and focused on a shared agenda, rather than the creation of new and competing organizations further draining scarce resources.

The Summit was designed to help build such cooperation within a specific timeframe while avoiding the creation of a new and permanent diversion of the limited funds available for Africa work in the US.

In 1995 I was contracted by the Ford Foundation to develop the concept paper for the National Summit on Africa. That report was given to Africare as the organization designated by Ford to develop the concept into a funding proposal and to serve as a 'midwife' for the creation of the Summit process. In 1996 I served along with my close colleague Dr. Cherri Waters as a consultant to Africare to develop the Summit funding proposal. As the individuals responsible for articulating, in writing, the vision of the National Summit on Africa necessary for foundation consideration of the project's merit and feasibility, we know that the idea of creating a new organization, especially a hegemonic one, is antithetical to the original vision of the Summit process.

As you all know, the NSA was modeled on the United Nations World Conferences model (e.g. the Earth Summit, the Conference on Women, etc.). A secretariat supported by expert groups prepared written resource materials designed to inform democratic debate in a series of preparatory conferences in each subregion of America. These meetings produced draft plans of action and elected delegates to the National Summit. The deliberative process at the Summit is to produce a final plan of action with recommendations for improving and increasing US relations with Africa not only in the realm of foreign policy but among all major sectors of American society. The process was originally intended to identify priorities in US-Africa relations and to strengthen those organizations that work full-time on Africa by facilitating their use of the process to educate and engage new participants in their various programs, and to help them shape their programs to meet newly identified interests. These core organizations were seen as the institutional vehicles upon which the post-Summit efforts would depend. Indeed, the Summit process -- as an extended educational and mobilization campaign -- was intended to help deliver new people and new resources to those organizations best able to service the needs of expanded constituencies and

to cooperate with one another on specific work. Though this approach has consistently been ignored or resisted, it is the most important and still salvageable potential outcome of the Summit.

At the start of the Summit process in 1996, myself and others involved in its creation invested a great deal of personal and political capital in convincing numerous constituencies that they should participate in the Summit project and help shape it through its democratic processes. Progressive constituencies in particular were often skeptical and claimed that there was a hidden agenda to create a new organization that would tie its fortunes to the private sector's more narrow profit-making interests in Africa, and that it would be organized almost exclusively around elites and big ceremonial functions. We fought hard against such criticisms and insisted on the commitment to a people-centered process with transparent governance and employment practices. We succeeded in bringing represent-atives of the Africa-focused groups onto the Board following their initial exclusion. And we tried to direct the Summit toward helping strengthen the work of the Africa-focused organizations.

After two years on the Board of Directors, I resigned in protest over the poor governance of the process, the poor management of its substantial resources and the absence of an ethical policy on fundraising. I became convinced that the Summit would not accomplish its original objectives and that its continuance would come to represent an enormous opportunity cost while consuming unprecedented levels of funding in this field of work. The donors themselves became increas-ingly skeptical and though they continued to renew and increase grants to the Summit they lowered their expectations. One donor said that the revised objective was to ensure that "no-one gets hurt".

Conclusion

I now must apologize to the many whom I helped persuade to support and participate in the Summit, including several of yourselves. If the Summit perpetuates itself in the form proposed, many organizations and efforts on African

affairs will indeed be hurt. We all understand that the Summit has gathered some people together, generated some interest in Africa, and even created some momentum. But anytime you spend the kind of money that was available to the Summit it is to be expected that at a minimum a number of people will respond. Well meaning constituencies may even momentarily see a need for a continuation, but the funding available for these kinds of activities has become a zero sum affair. The question that Summit leaders and leaders in the philanthropical community must ask is: given the limited resources available for work on Africa in the United States, is this a good investment compared to strengthening the considerable talents -- and potential for cooperation and synergy -- among the existing Africa-focused organizations? The creation of the Summit itself resulted from a similar question. We should not ignore the costly lessons of the past three years.

I appeal to you, Members of the Board, to resist the temptation to support these proposals to perpetuate the Summit.

February 8, 2000

Letter from Michigan State Co-Chairs to Dr. Leonard Robinson and. Herschelle Challenor, The National Summit on Africa

(http://www.africapolicy.org/docs00.sum0003b.htm)

Rev. Mangedwa Nyathi, Salome Gebre-Egziabher and Iva Smith

Concerning: The National Summit on Africa

We have just returned from attending this unique celebration of Africa in Washington this last week, and we write to congratulate you on all the arduous arrangements and long hours of labor that we know that you and the staff invested in creating all this activity for us. We were privileged to attend, to hear so many promises to work for and with Africa from leaders of the community, and to renew our own efforts to be part of a greater voice for Africa in this country.

We do plan to continue our work as the Michigan Summit on Africa in ways yet to be determined, and we shall be meeting shortly to assess how we proceed. We already have plans for seeking support for Africa partnership activities from the Michigan Legislature. And we met with both Representatives John Conyers and Carolyn C. Kilpatrick at the Capitol while we were in Washington.

We shall be eager to receive the revised National Plan of Action and to hear of the plans of the National Summit on Africa for implementing our plan of action and policy agenda.

Participants in the Michigan Summit on Africa have a long history of working closely with a variety of organizations that have labored long for Africa here in Michigan - especially with TransAfrica, the American Committee on Africa, the Africa Fund, Washington Office on Africa, Africa Policy Information Center, as well as with some others.

The pro-Africa movement here in Michigan, which has many accomplish-ments including passing more state sanctions laws on South Africa (3) than any other state, has benefited in may ways from the work, staff, and support of those organizations over several decades. We were encouraged to join the Summit effort and to build our own Michigan Summit on Africa in large part because we saw some of those organizations joining the Summit three years ago.

Therefore, now we are very concerned to learn how the Summit effort, as was promised to them and us, will feed into and work closely with all of those organizations and will not lead to their demise by competing with them. We assume that you will be convening meetings with the broader community of the leaders of those organizations as you discuss future plans.

In addition, we are assuming that any plans will be provided to and debated by the state delegations that constitute the base of the Summit effort to date. This is good democratic process, which we presume will be at the core of any continuing Summit process and organi-zation. We were encouraged to read your letter, Dr. Robinson, that "To this end, we are, right now, developing strategies to facilitate the Plan's implementation, working in concert and collaboration with the thousands of you, grassroots, non-governmental groups throughout the country, as well as Africa-focused organizations at the national level." We believe that it is important that full debate and democratic decision-making inform not only the development of the Draft Plan of Action but also the purposes, structure, and operating principles of any organization which extends the Summit process beyond May 31, 2000.

We have just seen your website announcements that: "Decisions on the new structure for our next phase will be made during our Executive Board meeting to be held on March 4th" (February 29, 2000, Special Announcement). We also read with some concern that, "We are contacting a random sampling of delegates and state chairs in order to consult with them on this critical objective of the Plan's implementation." (February 24, 2000) A

"random sampling of state chairs and delegates" is not a democratic process that we expected from a constituency-based organization. We shall expect that you will consult broadly with all delegations so that the full benefit of our diversity it included in the decision-making process - both about implementing the Plan of Action and any continuing structures of the NSA organization. Clearly, no decision about the future of the Summit can be made as soon as March 4 if democratic consultation is to occur.

We look forward to hearing from you again.

Thank you again to you and your staff for all your efforts in planning this meeting.

(Editor's Note: The following is the full-text of a letter to the state delegations of the National Summit on Africa from the summit's directors. The letter includes an extensive response to the analysis of the summit's Washington, DC meeting, by Jim Cason and Jim Lobe and included earlier in this exchange forum.)

The National Summit on Africa held February 16-20, 2000 was a powerful testament to your hard work, dedication, commitment and investment in the critical cause of strengthened relations between the United States and Africa. Your passionate commitment to a mutually beneficial U.S.-African partnership over the past two years and at the National Summit in Washington had a profound impact on U.S. policy makers and the American public at large. The Secretary General of the Organization of African Unity, President Clinton, Secretary of State Albright and other American and African officials recognized that you are a bona fide, serious, potential political force. Their presence at the National Summit reflected this awareness. They now understand that Africa Matters to a broad spectrum of the American people. Without you, these dynamics would not have been possible!

Although much has been accomplished, a more difficult phase of our work has just begun. The National Policy Plan of Action must be implemented. For this to occur within a reasonable time period, we must work together and develop a viable education and advocacy action strategy that will require support from the State Delegations and thousands more across the United States.

During a meeting with Chairs of State Delegations midway through the Regional Summit process and ever since, you the delegates and participants around the nation have pressed the Summit Secretariat to address the question of a post-Summit mechanism to implement the Plan of Action. [This expectation reached its zenith when the Summit's Dialogue and Celebration of Africa exceeded our aspirations.] In reacting responsibly to your expressed sentiments and the call for definitive follow-up action, the Summit Secretariat, consistent with policy directives from the Board of Directors, initiated an internal process to formulate a realistic way forward. Our very preliminary plans to sustain the Summit's work were bolstered by the ringing mandate echoed by thousands of participants at the National Summit on Africa in Washington. Rest assured that we will consult with a cross section of State Chairs and Delegates in reaching final decisions related to structure, methods of communication and the nature of the relationship between the Summit Secretariat and the states. Moreover, in concert with plans to restructure the Board of Directors, we will reserve six Board positions for one representative from each of the six regions. We have already consulted with some of you by telephone concerning the future plans of the Summit Secretariat. Following the special meeting of the Executive Committee of the Board held this weekend, this consultative process will continue through a series of conference calls.

In the final segment of this letter, we find it necessary to address issues raised by some recent communications sent to you. While it is the policy of the National Summit on Africa not to respond to commentary that criticizes its actions, in the interest of transparency, we do feel constrained to provide some observations on a recent electronic article by Jim Lobe and Jim Carlson [sic], which contained several false statements and half-truths.

The allegation that the National Summit on Africa used a "top-down approach that failed to

adequately consult with existing local groups and long established NGOs with national networks..." is simply false. First, eleven of the major Africa focused groups or groups with Africa as a major area of concern, are members of the NSOA Board of Directors (AAI, the Africa Fund, APIC-WOA, Africa News Service, the African Studies Association, the Constituency for Africa, the Corporate Council for Africa, International Human Rights Law Group, the Modern Africa Fund Managers, USA for Africa, the Africa Office of the National Council of Churches). Reverend Leon Sullivan, Randal Robinson of TransAfrica and C. Payne Lucas of Africare are National Co-Chairs. The labor movement is also represented on the Board. Secondly, the six Regional Summits were democratic and open to all persons, including Africans, residing in the states within a given region. Indeed a special effort was made to ensure that a cross section of the American people would be represented including youth, academics, faith based communities, non-governmental organizations, women's and environmental groups, elected officials, the corporate community, resident Africans and ordinary citizens. This search for diversity was made quite clear to the institutional partners in the six regions, as well as to state representatives when they convened to elect their delegates. Indeed from the very outset of operations, the Summit's stated philosophy and practice has been of inclusion, diversity, bipartisan, and completely open to everyone. Finally, while the NSOA Secretariat did provide a Draft Plan of Action (DPA) based upon a set of thematic issue papers researched and written by African and American academics, NGO representatives and the policy relevant community, all participants in the Regional Summits and delegates at the National Summit were free to modify the document as they saw fit, with no interference from the Summit Secretariat.

In citing the support for the African Growth and Opportunity Act by the President Clinton, the Secretary of State, Senior Director for Africa at the NSA, and Secretary of Transportation Slater, Messrs. Lobe and Cason neglected to point out that every single African official who spoke at the Summit including the Secretary General of the OAU, the Secretary General of the Economic Commission for Africa, the Vice President of Nigeria, the foreign ministers and the Ambassadors to United States from Senegal and South Africa, voiced their firm support for the Africa Trade bill and called for its rapid passage. Indeed we support the African leaders in their desire for a trade bill. The charge cited in the article that the National Summit was being "controlled by people with an emphasis on trade and investment and that... these are the new colonizers" is intriguing, since a colonizer is one who settles in a colony. In contrast, it is perhaps those who think they know what is best for Africa, despite Africa's clear statements to the contrary, that are acting in a paternalist manner characteristic of the former colonial powers.

The allegation that the National Summit is "being hijacked by a leadership with a corporate-friendly agenda" or will be dominated by corporate interests is silly at best. In October 1998, the Board of Directors adopted a policy with respect to corporate funding that states, inter alia "in identifying and evaluating prospective donors, the Summit will take into account the overall governance and corporate responsibility record of each corporation. In researching corporations special consideration will be given to human rights, workplace and diversity issues, environmental record, operations abroad, and corporate giving history." Every corporation that was approached for funding was checked in advance through a due diligence procedure at the Secretariat's fund-raising secretariat based at the Carnegie Endowment for Peace. Upon completion of this review process, the file was submitted to the Board of Directors for its approval. All corporate gifts received were approved if not by the unanimous consent, then by the vast majority of the Board.

The lion's share of the financial support has come from the Ford and Carnegie Foundations. To suggest that a diverse group of corporations who gave a total of $315,000 in the five weeks preceding the National Summit would have any serious influence when even those that provided $6.8 million tried in no way to influence the substantive positions in the Draft and the final National Plan of Action, simply makes no sense. Virtually all non-governmental organizations seek and accept funds from corporate donors and

have corporate representatives on their respective Boards of Directors. All of the NGOS, including Africa focused groups, actively seek and receive foundation grants, which are, after all, resources generated from corporate profits.

The report that the "final assembly was clouded with charges by many grassroots and non-governmental organizations rooted in the antiapartheid (sic) movement that the mobilizing effort put into the Summit risked being hijacked by a leadership with a 'corporate friendly agenda,'" is untrue. Only one individual read a document for which signatures were being sought during the conference. The delegate from New York was given the opportunity to speak, not to avoid a disruption as implied by reporters, but rather because the National Summit supports the articulation of diverse points of view. The fact that no petition was presented at that time suggests that this was a position of a very small minority. Moreover, apartheid in South Africa was sui generis involving clear racial, class and ideological cleavages. The democratization of South Africa can be attributed not only to the struggle waged by the African liberation movement, but also to the sustained, valiant and effective efforts of the anti-apartheid movement in the U.S. and other parts of Europe. That battle has been won and the role played by American anti-apartheid groups, including most of the individuals on the Summit Board, should be commended. However, the issues that challenge the rest of Africa are more complex and require different analyses and responses.

With respect to the personal attacks against the President of the National Summit on Africa, it is important to note for the record that Leonard Robinson was appointed Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Africa in 1983 with responsibility for U.S. economic and commercial policy toward sub-Saharan Africa, not Southern Africa and the controversial policy of constructive engagement. Inside the Department of State he repeatedly warned fellow policy makers that American policy toward Southern Africa was wrong and that the Free South Africa Movement would succeed in mobilizing American public opinion against the constructive engagement policy. He left the Department of State in 1984 when it became

clear that his warnings were ignored to become the first President of the U.S. African Development Foundation. Initially Congressionally funded with an appropriation of $1 million, by the time he left in 1990, its Congressional funding had risen to $17 million. As Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs from 1990 to 1993, his portfolios included West and Central Africa, narcotics, democracy and terrorism. In 1992-93, 62.4% of all drug traffickers arrested at JFK International Airport were Nigerian. Illicit drugs interdicted through these arrests were headed for the streets of our inner city communities and constituted a threat to U.S. national security.

In 1993, Leonard Robinson, while working for the then law firm of Washington & Christian, the firm, with the encouragement of U.S. authorities, agreed to assist the Government of Nigeria in establishing a drug interdiction program, including initiating a polygraph system for all police officers, security personnel and border guards, and to help formulate an official drug policy. Leonard Robinson and others presently working with Africa-focused organizations, worked on this project. This work was conducted in the national security interest of America.

As noted by the reporters, the National Summit on Africa process was modeled after the United Nations world conferences. One of the cardinal principles of the UN system is sovereign equality, which is rooted in the belief that every nation, despite the views and actions of its government, should be treated with courtesy and respect, and has the right to articulate its views before the world forum. Ralph Bunche, former Under Secretary General of the UN, once said that there are no crosses or tombstones on the battlefield of debate. The accepted practice to express dissent is to leave the room, rather than disrupt a session, which intrudes upon the rights of others. The Summit extended an invitation to every African Head of State with whom the United States has diplomatic relations. President Daniel Arap Moi of Kenya, with the encouragement of the Department of State, accepted the Summit's invitation. Several other nations like Benin, Senegal, Tanzania and Mozambique were in the midst of electoral campaigns or had just held

elections. For reasons of protocol, many other African Heads of State were reluctant to make a commitment to attend the National Summit, prior to the confirmation that President Clinton would address the Summit. The article by the reporters quotes heavily from a confidential internal document requested by the Board of Directors in November 1999. It was a discussion paper and was not projected as official policy. Leaking this document to the press represents a breach of confidence. As it turned out, the Board of Directors considered a set of recommendations from the Executive Board at its meeting in February 2000 and decided by a vote of 16 for, 4 against and 1 abstention to agree in principle to the establishment of a Phase II of the National Summit on Africa for the purpose of implementing the National Plan of Action, following broad consultations with Africa focused groups and other interested constituencies.

In this connection, perhaps the most puzzling position cited in the article was that the National Summit on Africa was established with the understanding that it would end with the completion of the National Summit and that, therefore, to prolong it is a breach of faith. Does that mean that the Constructive Engagement position of the Reagan Administration should never have been reversed? No organization, university, corporation or government policy is static. Dynamism requires that institutions respond to new realities. The delegates from around the country energized by the Summit process have forcefully called upon the Summit to continue its work -- especially to educate Americans about Africa and to ensure implementation of the National Policy Plan of Action -- and to keep them involved in it. Why invest significant resources and work to create a constituency if you are not prepared to sustain it? The very essence of effectiveness is to always follow through on what you initiate.

In conclusion, the National Summit on Africa has been in existence only slightly more than three years. Growing pains and other challenges not withstanding, it admittedly is not perfect. As has been publicly acknowledged, there is room for improvement and strengthening of operations, including communications with those you who comprise a vast and growing network. However, what took place in Washington two weeks ago was no mirage, you experienced it, you made it happen. Do not allow anyone to challenge this reality -- nor its historic, constructive impact. Nothing worthwhile in life is gained without vision, determination, good luck and the right mix of a dedicated core of people to a common purpose. In the final analysis, all the National Summit on Africa seeks is that the realities of Africa be known and understood by the American people; that the support base for Africa in the United States expands dramatically and that American policy towards the nations of the African Continent be responsive to their legitimate needs and our respective mutual interests.

As over 600 papers around the world have reported, you have demonstrated that Africa Matters to Americans. There is no turning back. We must all stay the course.

Herschelle S. Challenor, Chair, Board of Directors
Leonard H. Robinson, Jr., President and Chief Executive Officer

March 7, 2000

Response to Leonard Robinson and Herschelle Challenor.
(http://www.foreignpolicy-infocus.org/progresp/vol4/prog4n11.html#IN)

Jim Cason and Jim Lobe

In a letter to the state chairs, co-chairs and state delegations, the leaders of the National Summit on Africa (NSOA), Leonard Robinson and Herschelle Challenor accuse us of making "false statements" and offering "half truths" in our recent Foreign Policy In Focus article about the Summit. Yet, in the three full pages of text which follow those charges, we find no real evidence that would effectively rebut any issue of fact which was raised. The rebuttal instead relies on the abundant use of straw men, non sequiturs, circular reasoning and excuses.

More important than responding to us, the Summit leaders fail to address the questions raised by participants in their meetings about the undemocratic processes and lack of transparency in the process. For example, to rebut the charge made by many participants that the NSOA failed to consult adequately with existing local and national networks, Robinson and Challenor simply offer a recitation of the different organizations and individuals represented on their board of directors. The people we interviewed for our article did not question the representativeness of the board membership, but the degree to which all members of the board were involved in discussing and making key policy and other decisions. That question is simply ignored.

Moreover, we named five national organizations whose representatives on the board expressed serious concerns about the alleged lack of transparency and undemocratic process by which such decisions were often made. Since publication of our article, several other board members have volunteered that they shared these same concerns. And, of course, even before the February meeting, several board members resigned for the same reasons. In all, seven board members told us they did not resign or go public with their complaints during the process in part for fear of alienating those

foundations which have so generously funded the NSOA.

Robinson and Challenor insist that the concerns expressed by some delegates about the NSOA Secretariat's "corporate-friendly agenda" is "silly at best" and cite as evidence the Board's decision in October 1998 to adopt a policy on corporate funding. But the question raised to us by participants is why was a policy adopted only after protests from the delegates and why was it applied in such an inconsistent manner.

The policy on corporate funding was adopted only after dozens of delegates at the regional summit in Atlanta were unpleasantly surprised to find banners and publicity for Chevron, an oil company notorious for, among other things, using its own helicopters to transport troops loyal to the military dictatorship in the Niger Delta, prominently displayed at the site. Subsequently, NSOA organizers rejected funding from Chevron for the California summit and then turned around yet again and accepted Chevron's money to help pay for the national summit, according to Summit spokesman Sunni Khalid. Assuming that Chevron's corporate behavior during this period did not change substantially and that the criteria by which potential corporate donors were assessed by the fund-raising secretariat remained constant, it is difficult to understand the apparent inconsistency.

It is similarly difficult to understand how Robinson and Challenor can assert that the "vast majority" of the board approved each and every such donation. We have spoken now with more than half a dozen board members, all of whom told us they opposed taking any money from Chevron at any time. Of course, the best way to resolve this apparent discrepancy is for the Secretariat to publicly release the files on all corporate donations received by the NSOA and the minutes of all NSOA board meetings so that

participants in the process can judge for themselves.

Robinson's and Challenor's discussion of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) provides a good illustration of the problems that provoked some delegates to characterize the NSOA leadership as "top down" and "corporate friendly." We don't dispute that virtually every African official, U.S. government leader and corporate executive who spoke at the plenary sessions called for AGOA's enactment. The issue raised to us by many delegates, however, was why other voices were not heard in the plenary sessions.

After all, the AGOA was the source of very lively debate in the two task forces which took it up, as it was in recent regional summits. And, as we pointed out, the platform provision on the AGOA as ratified by the delegates fell far short of an unconditional endorsement. Yet the official press release put out by the Secretariat the day the Summit ended cited AGOA's approval as the first of half a dozen recommendations taken from the Platform. A subsequent press release issued February 29 insisted that the delegates approved a "strongly worded resolution in favor of the bill" without any mention of the conditions which were attached to the relevant provision. For us, the issue is not whether the trade bill is good or bad, the issue is whether or not the Summit leadership accurately represented the views of the participants in their process.

These actions bolster the notion put out by some delegates that the National Summit here in Washington really consisted of two events. There was the Celebrity Summit which was dominated by officials and corporate executives speaking at the delegates assembled in plenary session, and then there was a People's Summit at which state and grassroots delegates actually discussed and debated the issues. But the Secretariat's press releases and now Robinson's and Challenor's letter appear far more responsive to the celebrity agenda than to that of the actual delegates -- a point made to us repeatedly by many participants.

The important discussion now should be on how to move forward. Robinson and Challenor have already announced plans to form a national organization with a budget of more than $1 million for its first year of work. After what Robinson describes in a note posted the organization's web site as consultations with a "random sampling of state delegates and co-chairs," the executive committee of the Summit has also decided to reconstitute the national board to include six state co-chairs as part of a smaller 18 member body. And, as stated in our original article, the new board will be designed to be much more "corporate friendly" with half the seats reserved for corporate and other donors.

But, as with past discussions about Summit activities, the decision to move forward has not been accompanied by a willingness to debate the new structure or include critics in the process. The website for the National Summit in mid-March featured a letter from Chicago delegate James Exum congratulating the Summit for doing more to advance Africa activism in this country in the past three years, than all of the national Africa organizations have done in the past ten. Exum calls specifically for the Summit Executive to move forward with a second phase of activity.

But the website does not include even one of the sampling of critical letters sent to the Summit during this same period. For instance, the three co-chairs of the Michigan delegation [included earlier in this exchange forum] wrote in early March that they believe the process has been neither democratic nor transparent. "A 'random sampling of state chairs and delegates,'" they wrote in a letter to the Secretariat that was obtained by these writers, "is not a democratic process that we expected from a constituency based organization. Clearly, no decision about the future of the Summit can be made as soon as March 4 [the date of the executive committee meeting] if democratic consultation is to occur." It seems reasonable to ask why this letter was not similarly posted on the NSOA's website?

Other delegates have simply decided to abandon the Summit process and work with other organizations. California State Delegation co-chair Francisco Da Costa, for instance, has said he is committed to remaining involved in Africa activism work in the future, but "NOT [his emphasis] linked to the NSOA." Nor had any member of the Summit Secretariat, as of March 11, chosen to participate in a national

email listserv discussion group established to debate how to move forward. This only bolsters the notion that control of any future organization that comes out of the NSOA will remain largely in the hands of a small, self-selected group at the top.

But it isn't only the delegates who are skeptical of the process to date; it is also some of the new constituents that the Summit leadership apparently hopes to attract. "I hope the summit was for Africa, and not for personal aggrandizement," said Steve Hayes, the head of the Corporate Council on Africa, a group which represents some 173 companies active in Africa. In an interview with us after the meeting, Hayes added that he did not think the corporate community "would jump in to create a whole new organization" to perpetuate the Summit.

The National Summit was described as a "Dialogue and Celebration of Africa" and yet, contrary to the assertions of Robinson and Challenor, we found many participants who were clearly upset at the absence of a real dialogue. The level of concern about these issues was evident on the final day, in the final plenary session when one of the New York Co-Chairs became the first and only dissenting voice to speak at a plenary session. At least half the audience of participants rose to their feet to applaud when New York co-chair Mojubaolu Olufunke Okome politely blasted the Summit for taking money from Chevron and raised serious questions about the lack of democracy, transparency and inclusiveness of the process.

Ultimately, however, the decision on whether and how the NSOA Secretariat continues will be made not by the state delegations and participants, but by the foundations which have already invested almost $8 million dollars in the process -- many times the size of the annual budgets of existing Africa-centered organizations. At the moment, The Ford Foundation and several other donors are evaluating the Summit's work and considering future funding. But in a memo to his board in late December, Robinson reported that The Rockefeller Brothers Foundation has agreed to provide some funding and that the MacArthur Foundation has indicated its interest in post-Summit activities.

The foundations have tremendous power in this process. It was a Ford Foundation program officer who originally conceived the idea for a National Summit and commissioned the first concept paper. Although that program officer ultimately left the foundation, Ford has continued to be by far the biggest financial backer of this project. But frank dialogue with foundations is often difficult and clouded by concerns that offending powerful donors could prejudice a critic's access to future donations.

The National Summit meeting last February had an energy and vitality that demonstrated the strength of Africa activism that exists in this country today and the potential for future work. Several thousand people took time away from their regular jobs and paid their own way to Washington to participate in a national discussion about future directions for U.S. policy toward Africa. But this first three-year effort should be evaluated carefully and fully before any decisions are made about moving forward.

The Summit leadership has not demonstrated any interest in such an evaluation. Hopefully, the foundation community will be better able to listen to the broad range of views about possible directions for future action and not simply accept the assurances of those asking for money that the way ahead has already been decided.