

An Interview with Ambassador Princeton N. Lyman and Ambassador Johnnie Carson

What strategic interests does the United States have in Africa?

Lyman: In Africa you have a whole set of complex security and related issues. Not only the expansion of terrorism from East Africa across the Sahel and the dangers of health pandemics which pose threats to the international community, but if you combine those with the demographics and problems of poverty, development, and climate change, these will cause a tremendous migration push toward Europe and elsewhere. All of which impacts on the United States. That combination of things going on in Africa has a very direct and important, strategic importance for the United States.

Carson: The United States is part of a global community and Africa is an increasingly important member. Stability, economic growth, improved health, and greater trade and commerce in Africa contribute to global stability and thus to U.S. stability. The absence of peace is conflict; and the absence of development is poverty; the absence of good economic growth can also generate inequality, poverty, and social upheaval. We have to recognize we are better off as a country and as a global community when Africa is better off.

The problems in Africa do not exist in isolation from the United States. Conflict in Africa generally comes at a high cost to our country. The State Department, USAID, and the White House are often required to engage politically. It also costs us financially at the UN because we [the United States] have to pay the largest share of the budget for UN peacekeepers, humanitarian support and refugee assistance, and for implementing many of the organization's political and diplomatic resolutions.

This interview was conducted by Mr. Michael Miklaucic on March 6, 2017.

What are the major impediments to peace, economic growth, and development in Africa?

Lyman: One of them is the difficulty related to creating large enough economic markets, sub-regional, and then beyond sub-regional markets in Africa so that you have economies of scale and efficiencies of production. Better and more stable governance are needed; and investment is needed. You also need a transformation in Africa from being merely suppliers of natural commodities, and natural resources—that transformation has not taken place in very many African countries. And on top of that, there is a tremendous growth in population, and the ability of Africans to manage that is still limited.

Carson: I would agree that probably the greatest impediment is the absence of good leadership, the absence of good governance, and the absence of the rule of law. There is in fact a correlation between good governance and stability. Countries that are governed well are generally more stable and peaceful. Those areas of Africa where we see the greatest instability are those areas where we see enormous deficits in the quality of leadership; where we in fact see inadequate governance, poor rule of law, and a disrespect for basic freedoms and civil liberties. Where we see the greatest attempts to strengthen good governance, rule of law, and respect for democratic values, we see less persuasive instability.

What are the origins of that deficit in governance and absence of good leadership in Africa? What are the causes of that deficit?

Lyman: There is a whole history of colonial rule, building countries within borders that were created in Europe and that

did not correspond to any of the ethnic or tribal relationships in the continent. You had systems that moved basically from a chieftaincy model with all of the patrimonial linkages that entails, to a national model under the rule of state law. Some of the inherited models were essential for holding the countries together when they first became independent, but many countries never evolved into more effective and accountable systems of governance. In some cases they did; there are countries like Botswana, Kenya, Ghana, and Senegal that have evolved tremendously in terms of developing democratic norms, etc. But, you have a lot of other countries in which this remains a problem, and issues of identity, rivalry, and lack of modern governing institutions continue to constrain development.

Africa is economically one of the most dynamic regions of the world and it is also one of the regions experiencing the most dramatic urbanization. What impact will urbanization have on stability and economic development?

Lyman: There are two theories: Some people think urbanization is a very powerful force for development; particularly for industrialization and economic modernization, but also for revamping the agricultural sector into a more modern economic culture and away from subsistence farming. There is a lot of historical evidence that this is the case. But if you don't have some of the basic political and economic infrastructure and leadership, urbanization can be a source of great instability and greater poverty. That is the challenge for some African governments.

There is a related challenge that is only beginning to be recognized—the nature of

economic development may be changing. Historically countries have moved into more modern economies through labor intensive industries such as textiles, beverages, low-level technology instruments, and then moving up the chain. But there is evidence that robots, artificial intelligence, as well as 3D printing may change the dynamic of industrialization. Africa could be left behind—it would have to find a whole new paradigm. That makes the urbanization a more worrisome prospect.

Carson: Urbanization will be an enormous challenge for Africa. Coupled with the migration of people from rural areas into urban areas, we also have to look at the enormous population growth that is occurring across the continent. The population growth plus migration into the cities will put enormous pressures on governments to provide infrastructure for housing, for schools, for roads, for electricity, and most importantly for jobs. Jobs will be critical for a continent that already has a population where 65 percent is under the age of 30. Urbanization without jobs, without infrastructure, and without planning will present enormous challenges for Africa.

African countries are already challenged by the urbanization that they have already experienced. Many of them, regrettably have not been able to provide either the planning, the infrastructure, or the jobs that are needed today. Add to that a changing economic model in which people are no longer brought into low-level, entry-level manufacturing jobs, and it compounds the problems that exist now. We see urbanization but also a proliferation of slums, increased poverty, increased unemployment, and the challenges that go along with those. We already have megacities

in Africa, and some of those megacities are already enormously challenged.

Africa has the youngest population of any region in the world. It also has the fastest growing population. Nigeria, for example, currently has a population of 185 million people. It is the seventh largest country in the world in terms of population. In less than 35 years Nigeria's population, and the urbanization that goes with it, will overtake that of the United States. By 2050, Nigeria will rank just behind India and China as the third most populous country in the world—ahead of the United States. During that time, Nigeria's population will double. Today, already there are more children born in Nigeria every day and every week than across all Western Europe. Nigeria will need substantially more infrastructure to deal with these challenges. It will need jobs. It will need economic growth and opportunity. This is the challenge that will have to be dealt with and Nigeria is not the only country in Africa experiencing rapid population growth.

Sticking with that theme of economic growth and infrastructure, how would you assess the success of the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), and President Obama's Power Africa Initiative?

Lyman: AGOA is important as an incentive. It is still just a small part of world trade, but it is an incentive to African countries to move into more efficient, more effective industrialization, as well as agriculture—though there are limits on the agricultural side. By being open to almost all of the African countries AGOA does not interfere with sub-regional economic communities; in contrast to the European Union's bilateral

economic partnership agreements, which are disruptive to the development of African sub-regional markets. AGOA is a much better approach to encouraging African trade and development. But not many countries have profited—a few such as Lesotho and Mauritius have benefitted, but a lot of others have not yet organized to take full advantage of AGOA. It also has offered a good forum—there is an AGOA forum every year which our U.S. trade representatives and other officials attend—and it allows for a really frank discussion of Africa’s trade policies, development policies, and future directions; so it is more than just a trade agreement. It is a vehicle for a really candid, but very productive dialogue every year.

What about Power Africa?

Carson: Power Africa has been one of the most important initiatives put forward under the Obama Administration. It addresses a key industrial sector that needs to be in place for Africa to realize its full economic and commercial promise and potential. Africa does not generate sufficient power to drive the commerce, the trade and industry, and the job creation that is required.

The two largest economies in Africa—South Africa and Nigeria—probably together produce less power than the states of New York and Pennsylvania, combined. In order for Africa to take the next step it needs to substantially increase its power generation at every level. Power Africa has been extraordinary in mobilizing U.S. Government resources to support the generation of more power in Africa. Power Africa has been extraordinarily important in incentivizing interested American companies in going out

and looking at Africa’s potential. It has been enormously important as an advocacy vehicle for working with African governments, along with both the international and domestic private sectors, as well as with USAID and other development agencies, and with the Overseas Private Investment Corporation [OPIC], to promote electrification. And I think it has been done wisely.

Power Africa has focused on renewables. It has focused on solar. It has focused on wind and geo-thermal energy. It has focused on village-level and community access. But it has also focused on creating large solar farms and wind farms. And it has also created incentives to work with large companies like General Electric that produce substantial generation capacity on an industrial scale. It’s absolutely critical that a program like this continue. The electrification of Africa, both in its rural and its urban areas, will be critical to future economic growth; that economic growth will be critical to alleviating poverty, and the alleviation of poverty will be critical in helping to reduce conflict and political strife.

Lyman: Let me give you an example: In northern Nigeria, places like Kaduna and Kano, had a degree of industrialization twenty years ago—textiles and related small industries. But without a national power grid, most of these industries depended on their own power plant because they could not function otherwise. In an era of globalization—goods coming in from China, India, etc.—and unable to generate economies of scale, most of those industries have gone under. So, you have simultaneous population growth and de-industrialization in northern Nigeria. The unemployment problems, at a time when you have the growth of groups like Boko Haram, is just tragic.

For Nigeria, which has all of that oil and natural gas capacity, not to have developed a power infrastructure in the North, has made that area much more vulnerable. And, just seeing those industries decline—big textile industries shrinking to a third their original size, is tragic. If countries like Nigeria do not have a power grid that reaches out across the country, the ability to absorb its population in industry—even agro industry—will not be there.

Are de-industrialization and the lack of economic opportunity the culprits responsible for the growth of terrorism in Africa?

Lyman: They contribute. Boko Haram's original argument was, "these people go to college, they come out, and then they have nothing! Western education is really giving them nothing." Their attraction is multi-dimensional, but lack of economic opportunity is one contributing factor. There are others. Poor governance, the lack of good education, a lot of corruption in the past... The U.S. Institute for Peace has been developing a program with the governors of northern Nigeria to try and address some of those underlying problems—not only the economic, but also education and health—so that young people really have a future there.

One of the emphases of the Obama Administration was counterterrorism, which led to the emergence of a number of programs. One of them is the Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Program (TSCTP). What is your assessment of how successful that has been in reversing the trend of terrorism in Africa?

Carson: I think the Obama Administration did a very good job of using programs like the TSCTP and its East African equivalent to help train African forces in counterterrorism tactics; to help improve coordination among their police, customs, military, and intelligence services; and also to help get them to work in partnership with their neighbors to fight established threats that are regional in nature rather than country-specific.

I think a lot has been accomplished. There is always room for more to be done. But the TSCTP has brought some of the nations that are now working together more collaboratively against Boko Haram more closely together. The terrorist groups operating in the Sahel region are operating not just in northern Mali, but in Mauritania and in parts of Niger, as well as in parts of Libya; and they are a potential threat to countries like Algeria, Senegal, and Burkino Faso. Working with these countries both as individual countries and as parts of a regional grouping to improve their counterterrorism expertise and effectiveness is extraordinarily important.

Let me add that while we don't pay as much attention to terrorist elements in East Africa, and while critics are quick to point out that Somalia is still weak and threatened by al-Shabaab, substantial progress has been made in fighting terrorism across East Africa during the past eight years. In 2006, 2007, and 2008—just before the Obama Administration came in—we heard a lot about al-Qaeda in East Africa. Today we hear absolutely nothing about al-Qaeda in East Africa. We hear about AQIM—al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb—which is responsible for the problems in northern Mali, and in southern Algeria, Libya, and parts of Mauritania. But the people who

were responsible for the bombings of the U.S. Embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam in 1998, were part of al-Qaeda in East Africa. We no longer hear about them because they no longer exist. As part of the effort to stabilize Somalia, the United States supported the Ugandan, the Burundian, and the Kenyan efforts in the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISON). The United States can take some credit for the progress that has taken place there. For the first time in decades, there is an internationally recognized government in Mogadishu, and it controls more than just several miles of real estate. In fact, since 2008 Somalia has had three different presidents—all brought in through indirect participatory electoral systems.

The Somali government is taking control of Mogadishu and every major city in the southern part of the country. And more importantly for the United States, we have seen an end to al-Qaeda in East Africa. The United States played a key role here. Those individuals who were a part of al-Qaeda in East Africa are gone and the cell is no longer even spoken of. Fazul Harun is dead. Saleh Ali Saleh Nabhan is dead. These individuals that were part of the al-Qaeda global network are no longer there.

We have also seen a sharp decline in piracy off the Somali coast. The government in power in Mogadishu and the government in power in the Puntland are both committed to the extent that they can to the rule of law and to cooperating with international efforts, and as a result we have seen a decline in piracy.

There obviously have been setbacks in the battle against terrorism in the region. There was the attack against the Westgate Mall in Kenya in 2013, and other insurgent attacks across the border. But it is fair to say that there has, in fact, been some degree of success.

It is very important that the United States remains a good partner with African states as they improve their capacity to deal with terrorism. However we should not substitute ourselves as the leaders in defending them, or in assuming the obligation to protect their countries. We should be strong partners. We should be strong collaborators. And we should be constantly there to help in the most appropriate ways, but we should ensure that African states remain in the lead and that they see this as their problem and not as an external problem, as our problem.

Lyman: Let me just pick up on that point, and then I want to get back to the Sahel. The African Union (AU) has just gone through a reevaluation of its whole approach to peace processes—that includes remediation, peace enforcement, and peacekeeping. African countries are today putting their troops on the line in AMISOM, Mali, and a number of other operations, and suffering a lot of casualties. African deployments have not been without problems, but they are bearing the brunt of peacekeeping and peace enforcement on the continent. In AMISOM, where the Africans are providing all of the fighting capacity, there has had to be extensive support from the international community but the Africans are very much in the lead on the ground. In other cases, close UN–AU cooperation will be the most effective way to proceed. In this regard, the AU is coming up with new ways of cooperating with the UN and working with the UN to strengthen the AU’s planning, logistics, and human rights practices. The AU is also planning to make significant changes in the way it is organized, structured, and financed for promoting peace. It will need a lot of support from the UN—especially from the Security Council—because

it is the Security Council that most often calls upon African forces to undertake these tasks.

Regarding the Sahel, I would just point out a couple of other things. The TSCTP has given a lot of attention to the military side, but another program, the Security Governance Initiative (SGI), focuses on the non-military side of this—i.e. the broad management of issues that contribute to instability and terrorism. What has happened in the Sahel region, is there are a lot of semi-decentralized groups, some linked to drug smuggling, kidnapping of Westerners, other forms of trafficking, and now to terrorism. In the Sahel you also have vast, thinly populated areas that are very, very difficult to govern in which these groups operate. But the problems are even broader. The Gulf of Guinea now has the largest instances of piracy in the world, which not only deprives people of their livelihood but also contributes to the use of West Africa as a highway to traffic drugs from South America, through Africa, and into Europe. These various criminal and terrorist groups are taking advantage of weak governments in places like Guinea Bissau, Mali, and Niger. You have to deal not only with AQIM in northern Mali, therefore you must strengthen the capacity of the governments throughout the region to deal with these several problems. The counterterrorism programs and the SGI program are ones that will need to be maintained for years to come. To build the necessary capacity, and to see it grow in a multi-dimensional way that isn't just targeting AQIM or criminal gangs, but offering opportunities for rapidly growing populations, will take broad-based regional and international efforts covering security, governance, and development.

Since the establishment of AFRICOM in 2008, military-military programs have proliferated throughout the continent. Do you believe this should be sustained since AFRICOM is focused on African militaries as opposed to these other dimensions you have discussed?

Lyman: I think establishing AFRICOM was the right decision to make even though the way it was brought into being and publicized was a public relations disaster. The fact is that you had to bring together three different commands that were working in Africa. Before you had CENTCOM, EUCOM, and PACOM all doing bits and pieces in Africa. AFRICOM began with a very broad-based soft power program but because of the problems in Somalia and the Sahel, it has become more engaged in a directly military way—and you need a command to do that.

But you can't look to AFRICOM to do all of the soft power work. AFRICOM is a military organization that is very important but it is not going to do the work of governance building, it is not going to do economic development. AFRICOM's security work will be very supportive of those, but to look to it to do all of that...that was one of the mistakes when it first started; it looked like AFRICOM was going to try to do everything, and people thought "What's this? the militarization of U.S. policy?" AFRICOM has had to work through all of that. But from a purely—"How do you organize and work with militaries in Africa," I think AFRICOM was the right decision.

Carson: AFRICOM is an important element in U.S. policy toward Africa today, but it is only one element in our policy toolkit. The consolidation of our disparate military operations under one command was

a very efficient and positive decision. It demonstrated that the U.S. is concerned and recognizes the growing importance of what is happening on the security side in Africa.

But we have to avoid the impression that there has been a militarization of our policies across Africa. We have always had military attaches and military assistance officers in many of our posts on the continent, who have done great work on behalf of the United States. Now that they are all under one command they can do that work more efficiently—and that is a very positive effect. But we also must recognize that we need a complete and holistic set of policies when dealing with Africa. And those policies should come from the State Department; from USAID and the development organizations; the Commerce Department; as well as from the Defense Department.

AFRICOM is doing some very vital and important work across Africa but it cannot be a substitute for USAID; it cannot be a substitute for the Commerce Department, or the Agriculture Department—in promoting trade and investment, or promoting agricultural trade—and it cannot be another Peace Corps, with weapons. AFRICOM has a role but it is important that it be seen as a part of a holistic policy toward Africa and not a dominant, or overarching part of that policy. For the most part the work that we do across Africa is best done by organizations that are outside of the defense and security establishment; best done by the State Department; best done by USAID or the development institutions; and best done by those organizations like OPIC or the Export-Import Bank that promote trade.

All of Africa is not in conflict. All of Africa is not being destabilized by terrorism.

All of Africa is not caught up in civil war. All of Africa probably needs good defense and security forces, but they do not need the kind of high-level, kinetic engagement that some would associate with the programs in Mali or the war in Somalia. So, it's important that we look at this holistically.

One thing that is sometimes overlooked is that we have a number of what I call heritage conflicts in Africa—conflicts that have gone on for decades, that have gone on since the independence of African states. They have been too complicated, too complex, too hard to resolve, and they have dragged on, and on, and on. But for the most part, conflict has actually declined across Africa over the past thirty or forty years; except in these heritage cases. We no longer have the conflicts of the 1970s and the 1980s. We do not have armed conflict in South Africa; we do not have armed conflict in Angola; we do not have armed conflict in Mozambique, or Zimbabwe. The wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone have ended. Where we do have conflicts today are areas that have been in conflict for decades.

The problems in the Sudan and South Sudan did not start with Darfur, they started in 1957 and have been going on since then. The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the problems there did not start with the collapse of the Mobutu regime in 1997 and 1998, they started six months after independence. The first UN peacekeepers went into the DRC during the first year of that country's independence. And today the UN force in the DRC is still the largest peacekeeping program in Africa. These most difficult places in Africa like the Sudan and South Sudan, the DRC, Somalia, and the Central African Republic, have been in conflict for

decades; these countries have long, complicated political histories—and for reasons both domestic and international, too difficult to get our heads around and to take a serious interest in trying to resolve.

Lyman: We have talked about all of these terrible problems in Africa. But one of the most positive things going on in Africa is to see the growing capacity of the new, young generation. They are very entrepreneurial; you have people in Nigeria coming up with new technologies; you see the use of technology to help fishermen to know prices in local and global markets; you see them starting businesses in Kenya, in Nigeria, and elsewhere. There is a program called the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) that has now connected thousands of young people to each other across the continent. Some of them are pushing for democracy, some of them pushing for better business opportunities. That's a very exciting part of Africa, and if they are given a chance—if their governments are really going to open up to them and give them the international connections they need—they will be the future. And some of them are extremely impressive.

I would like to return to the issue of soft power. There is a critique that says Western style democracy might not be the most appropriate model to promote stability and economic growth and development in Africa; that there might be an Asian model, a Lee Kuan Yew style model, or a Chinese model, represented by Rwanda and President Kagame, and Ethiopia. Do you give any credence to that idea?

Lyman: We heard that in the 1960s a great deal, when dictators claimed they were going to be enlightened despots. But they

weren't enlightened, they were just despots. Today there are countries that have adopted aggressive development programs behind rather autocratic governments, like Rwanda and Ethiopia, but you also see the cracks that are growing in those countries underneath the surface. In Ethiopia, there has been tremendous unrest in the last year, which is very threatening to that country. The idea that a democratic system based on the rule of law, with regular elections, is incompatible with Africa—I remember Kofi Anan saying there is nothing Western about human rights! Ask any African father whose son has been jailed whether he thinks that is an appropriate African way of dealing with dissent.

The societies that have good, solid democratic institutions like Ghana today, or Mauritius, or even South Africa despite all its problems, in those states you see stability and growth. I think the argument that autocratic, enlightened despots are right for Africa is a myth.

Carson: There is only democracy. There is no African democracy. There is no American democracy. There is no Asian democracy. There is no Latin American democracy. Democracy represents a set of fundamental values and principles that are to be found in all democracies, wherever they are in the world, whatever the region.

We have different democratic systems. There are federal systems and unitary systems. There are parliamentary systems, presidential, and prime ministerial systems. There are mixed systems with prime minister over president, or president over prime minister. There are unicameral and bicameral democracies.

But democracy at its cores is based on a set of values and principles; multi-party

democratic rule, which allows for routine and periodic elections for people to select their leaders, leaders who respect freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom of association, freedom of the press, and commit to protect civil liberties and property alike. Democracy protects the rights of citizens as well as corporate interests. These principles are universal. We do not talk about the Asian model of democracy when we describe India. Some refer to the Singapore model of Lee Kuan Yew; of course Singapore is comparatively easy to manage being that Singapore is a city-state. There is an alternative model out there. I will give it a blunt name—it is authoritarian capitalism.

There is a model that you see in China—authoritarian political systems operating alongside a quasi-free market, economic system, where private ownership and property are now allowed and the state no longer controls all elements of the economy. Individuals can own and build up assets of capital, but political controls is rigid and authoritarian, and political space is restricted. That is the model that Paul Kagame in Rwanda, and others elsewhere are pursuing. But I believe that this model will be just as much a failure as the old Soviet and socialist models were, because it does not provide protections of individual civil liberties, and it does not provide protection of corporate and intellectual property.

Governments that will take a person's rights away, will also take their factory away; will take their intellectual property away; and will take a person's ideas away, whenever they come in conflict with the political thinking of the state. I think that democracy is absolutely important and every time we put an investment into an authoritarian state it has a

higher risk of failure than if we put it into a democratic one.

During the past 15 or 20 years China has emerged as a growing presence in Africa. There is speculation that the new Administration will impose significant reductions in the foreign assistance budget. What do you think the costs are? What warning would you give to the current Administration with respect to a decrease of support for African development and governance programs, in light of China's growing presence? What are the risks?

Lyman: It is good to have other countries contributing to the development of Africa. China has done a lot in terms of infrastructure and other kinds of investments. But China is not interested in good governance and it is not interested in fighting corruption. And it is not necessarily always playing by the same set of commercial rules.

It does allow for the United States and China to cooperate in certain areas. We have cooperated with China on peace processes in South Sudan, we both support African Union peacekeeping and peacemaking, and we cooperate in anti-piracy efforts off the coast of Somalia. But if the United States starts to play a lesser role in the broader areas of development and governance in Africa, where will be the strength and support for Africans who believe in those things?

Let me give you an example from the aid program—one of the most successful aid programs that we have in Africa is PEPFAR [President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief], which contributed to arresting the terrible disease [HIV] and gradually getting control of it. It's expensive—it costs about \$3.5 billion per year. If you cut away the overall aid

program and left only PEPFAR—because you cannot stop PEPFAR; people would die if you stopped PEPFAR, literally—but then you are cutting off all the other things, all of the other health programs, all of the governance programs, trade capacity, all of those things, you would be taking much of the best of America out of the equation. And then all of the issues we have talked about—the problems of population and terrorism, excessive migration, etc.—would not be addressed, and then they will come back and bite us in the ankle or worse later on.

If you look at security in a broad sense, these programs are all very much a part of the broad security role in Africa. And if we cut back on them in a substantial way, other countries won't make up that difference.

Ambassador Carson what is your advice to this Administration?

Carson: Soft power is our most important asset and policy tool across Africa. It is the thing that distinguishes us more than anything else. That soft power is delivered through our development agencies and through our diplomatic engagement. And it has been extraordinarily successful in helping a number of African countries move forward. These soft power instruments have been put in place by both Democratic and Republican administrations and they have been aimed at addressing the most critical issues that face Africa today.

It has been Power Africa, to provide power to the continent that has the least amount of electricity. It has been Feed the Future—helping to create a green revolution across a continent, which is the lowest per capita producer of agricultural goods across

the globe. It is PEPFAR, which has helped to stem and reverse the HIV/AIDs pandemic. It is the global health programs, in general, that allow us to work against malaria, to work against ebola, and other contagious diseases that can come into the United States as swiftly as the most direct incoming flight. It is the MCC—the Millennium Challenge Corporation—program, another started during the George Bush Administration that has been instrumental in addressing some of the key infrastructure needs of a number of African countries. It is YALI. It is also the programs of the OPIC and the EXIM Bank. These are critical. And, on a human level, it is organizations like the Peace Corps, and the thousands of volunteers who continue to go out and are, in fact, the personal, daily face of America to hundreds of thousands of Africans across the continent.

This is the array of our soft power. These are the things that give the real meaning to what America is about, and what America is attempting to do. And this is the seriousness of where we are—our soft power is the most important and significant asset in Africa and we have to remember that. While we want to address the security issues that are on the table before us, the best way to ensure stability is through stronger democratic institutions; greater and more inclusive economic development and growth; and providing opportunities for a burgeoning population; and our capacity to work with Africans—at every level, as partners in a collaborative fashion. This is best done through soft power. This is best done through working and supporting democratic institutions, and development that is inclusive, broad-based, and accessible to everyone.

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In 2014, water workers survey a biomass site in Kenya as part of the USAID Power Africa initiative. (Alexa Kameru/ USAID)