

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

A CONVERSATION BETWEEN CONGRESS AND THE AFRICAN DIPLOMATIC CORPS

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 22, 2011

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, last week, several Congressional colleagues and I convened the first House-Senate Conversation between Congress and the African Diplomatic Corps on African issues. This historic event was opened by me, House Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health and Human Rights Ranking Member DONALD PAYNE, Senate Africa Subcommittee Chairman CHRISTOPHER COONS and Senate Africa Subcommittee Ranking Member JOHNNY ISAKSON. We were joined during the event by Representative KAREN BASS and Representative BOBBY RUSH.

Democratic Republic of the Congo Ambassador Faida Mitifu presented a comprehensive overview of the African diplomatic corps on the African Growth and Opportunity Act, AGOA, and trade, agriculture and food security and energy and infrastructure. She also joined us in presiding over this session.

Too often, we in Congress have only brief encounters with the African diplomats in Washington, and a fuller, ongoing interaction would be of help to both Members of Congress and diplomats in building U.S.-Africa relations that are mutually beneficial.

In our Subcommittee hearings, we conduct oversight on issues of concern involving U.S. policy—often regarding individual countries. For troubled countries such as Sudan, Somalia, Cote d'Ivoire and Zimbabwe, such U.S. policy oversight is critical. However, the issues we are covering today require interactions that are more detailed and more sustained. Trade, agriculture and energy are important matters that call for the kind of discussions that go beyond an office visit or even today's dialogue.

It is the hope of our members and the diplomatic corps that we can use this initial event as the beginning of ongoing discussions on how to make AGOA more broadly beneficial for the nearly 6,400 covered items, for example. We need to better understand how to overcome the obstacles to successful U.S.-Africa agricultural trade. One comment was repeated by several diplomats: further delay in passing legislation to extend AGOA's third-party fabric provision will send damaging mixed signals to investors.

Africa's population of approximately 1 billion people has a growing consumer base that is capable of being a larger player in global trade. One out of every three Africans is now considered to be in the middle class. This rising middle class will enable both economic and political development in Africa. For the United States and other developed nations, these developments benefit us as well by providing an enhanced market for our products and allowing African countries a larger tax base that will lessen the need for foreign aid.

More robust African economies are beneficial to the entire global economy.

We also have to work more effectively to help African nations produce more energy for themselves and developed world consumers such as the United States. As Ambassador Mitifu pointed out in her opening statement, current trends indicate that less than half of Africa's population will have access to electricity by 2050. She and her colleagues called on our government to support such projects as the Grand Inga Dam project in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which would contribute 39,000 megawatts for a continent-wide electricity grid.

A major theme among the comments and questions by the diplomats who participated in this event was concern about security and a desire to partner with the United States in combating terrorism, trafficking in persons, the international drug trade, piracy and other criminal activity that affects the continent.

As we all know, the United States faces a reduced ability to fund programs at previous levels. Consequently, we are working to ensure that the funds we do have are used as efficiently and effectively as possible. In order to maximize these goals, we must have a better idea of the actual needs of African societies. In everything we do together, there must be collaboration and the goal of mutual benefit. A win-win situation is sustainable, but programs aimed at only one beneficiary are not.

Deciding for Africans what their needs may be is not an appropriate strategy. We need African governments to be stakeholders in whatever programs we fund, and that will not be likely if they are not consulted in advance. Better program targeting requires partnership, and we hope this session is part of the creation of an enhanced partnership between us.

U.S. POLICY TOWARD ZIMBABWE

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 22, 2011

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, on November 2, our Subcommittee held a hearing to examine the current U.S. government policy toward the Republic of Zimbabwe and to consider how our policy toward this southern African nation may develop in the years ahead. Zimbabwe is considering a new constitution that will lead to the elections in 2012 that had been postponed from this year.

There has been mutual hostility between the United States government and the Zimbabwe government of Robert Mugabe since that country became independent in 1980, although Assistant Secretary of State Johnnie Carson said in his testimony that the relationship worsened with the extra-legal seizures of white-owned land in the 1990s. Mugabe and his supporters blame America for not supporting its liberation struggle, while the United States has criticized Mugabe's government

consistently for human rights abuses, especially against its political opponents. With U.S. Ambassador to Zimbabwe Charles Ray encouraging U.S. businesses to invest in Zimbabwe last month, it would seem that U.S. policy is in the midst of a transformation.

Following independence from Great Britain in 1980, Prime Minister Robert Mugabe's policy of political reconciliation was generally successful during the next two years, as the former political and military competitors within ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front and the rival Patriotic Front-Zimbabwe African Peoples Union began to work together. Splits soon developed, however, and PF-ZAPU's leader, Joshua Nkomo was removed from government.

When PF-ZAPU was accused of initiating a rebellion due to the removal of Nkomo from the cabinet, government military forces began a pacification campaign primarily in his base in the Matabeleland area, which resulted in as many as 20,000 civilian deaths.

In part through its control of the media, the huge parastatal sector of the economy and the security forces, the Mugabe government managed to keep organized political opposition to a minimum through most of the 1990s. Beginning in 1999, however, Zimbabwe experienced a period of considerable political and economic upheaval. Opposition to President Mugabe and the ZANU-PF government had grown, in part due to the worsening economic governance issues. At one point, one U.S. dollar was worth more than 2.6 billion Zimbabwe dollars. Following the seizure of white-owned commercial farms beginning in the 1990s, food output capacity fell 45 percent, manufacturing output dropped by 29 percent and unemployment rose to 80 percent.

The opposition was led by the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), which was established in September 1999. The MDC led the campaign to handily defeat a referendum that would have permitted President Mugabe to seek two additional terms in office. Parliamentary elections held in June 2000 were marred by localized violence and claims of electoral irregularities and government intimidation of opposition supporters. Still, the MDC succeeded in capturing 57 of 120 seats in the National Assembly.

The last four national elections—the presidential election in 2002, parliamentary elections in 2005, harmonized presidential and parliamentary elections in March 2008, and the presidential run-off in June 2008—were judged to be not free and fair by observers. In the March 2008 elections, two factions of the opposition MDC, known as MDC-T to denote Morgan Tsvangirai's faction and MDC-M for the group led by Arthur Mutambara, gained a combined parliamentary majority. Mugabe was declared the winner of the June 2008 run-off election after opposing candidate Tsvangirai withdrew due to ZANU-PF-directed violence that made a free and fair election impossible. Mark Schneider, Senior Vice President for the International Crisis Group, told the Subcommittee that as many as a third of MDC

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