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TRANSCRIPT  
Into Africa  
**“The Twists and Turns of U.S.-Tanzania Bilateral  
Relations”**

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FEATURING  
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Mvemba Phezo  
Dizolele:

Welcome to Into Africa. My name is Mvemba Phezo Dizolele. I'm a Senior Fellow and the Director of the Africa Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. This is a podcast where we talk everything Africa: politics, economics, security, and culture. Welcome.

The United Republic of Tanzania, the Union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar, a member of Southern African Development Community block, and one of the founding members of the East Africa community block is one of the most stable countries in East Africa, a region that is affected with conflict, insecurity, and violence. However, Tanzania still grapples with poverty as almost 26 million of its population live on less than \$1.90 a day, despite being one of Africa's fastest growing economies. This is the challenge of course of many African countries. On one level, they adapt to be fast-growing; on another level, they're still grappling with the very basic issues of feeding the people, providing for unemployment, and providing all the good services that the population expects of its leaders.

Tanzania has received substantial development assistance from its bilateral relations with various countries, especially the United States of America, which is its largest bilateral donor. Since the establishment of the diplomatic ties in 1961, the two countries have maintained a cordial relationship that have suffered tensions following certain issues, such as the leadership of the previous administration led by the late President John Pombe Magufuli, restrictions on civil liberties, and other problems which have strained the worst amicable relationship between the two countries. Nonetheless, the current administration under the leadership of President Samia Suluhu Hassan has invested in improving relations with the United States and building deeper bilateral economic ties. This was also echoed in the remarks of the current ambassa- US Ambassador to Tanzania at the 2023 Independence Day event, where he signaled the US commitment to building a stronger relationship with the country.

Joining me in the studio today is Ambassador Michael Battle, the current United States Ambassador to Tanzania. Ambassador Battle has had a distinguished career in public service spanning four decades as a diplomat, an academic, a faith-based community leader, and a military chaplain. He was also the executive vice president and provost at the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati, Ohio. He was previously the US representative to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa and the US Ambassador to the African Union in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Ambassador Battle, welcome to Into Africa.

Ambassador Michael  
Battle:

It's an honor to be here. I'm looking forward to a stimulating conversation.

Mvemba Phezo  
Dizolele:

Very well. Good morning again, and you are the US Ambassador to Tanzania, an important country in Africa for a set of reasons. One is actually historic. You know, Tanzania played a major role, really kind of the backbone of a lot of the freedom movement across the East and the Southern part of Africa. Mandela trained in- in- in Tanzania, SWAPO, FRELIMO, you name it, all of them went to the School of Dar es Salaam, if we can call it that. But Tanzania also maintains a strong set of relations with country far beyond Africa. Countries like Suriname, Guyana that will send expert to help Tanzania there. Tanzania is also a country that embrace what they call African socialism. They do their own things totally different from the rest of the world.

Today, the US... the world has changed, the US is grappling with what the US would like to call in Washington great power competition. And there also Tanzania is right in the middle of it, Tanzania is very close to China. In fact, the Chinese built the TAZARA Road, which was kind of the flagship of Chinese investment in Africa for a long time. What is the state of relation between the US and Tanzania.

Ambassador Michael  
Battle:

I want to go back for a bit of historical context when we look at the fact that Tanzania, through Julius Nyerere, was tremendously instrumental in the liberation movements throughout the continent. One point that most people don't recognize but is quite evident when you visit the National Museum in Tanzania, was that part of the motivation and strength and courage that Nyerere had came from his personal relationship with John F. Kennedy. Kennedy, unfortunately, history has not given him the proper recognition for being a US president who encouraged the liberation and independence of African leaders, who encouraged African countries to seek their own independence. And Nyerere was one of his close friends. And if you look at the letters back and forth between Julius Nyerere and John F. Kennedy, one understands the passion that Nyerere had and the respect.

I grew up in the '50s and '60s, but I was a teenager in the '60s. And as many African American men in the '60s who were engaged in the civil rights movement, Nyerere was one of the inspirational points because he saw African independence as a way to develop self-reliance, unity among people, a development process that will allow for peaceful coexistence with a diverse population. So Tanzania has never had ethnic strife in the 60-some years of existence. It has never had religious strife in its years of existence. It's never had an unconstitutional change of government, has never had a coup, in part because of Nyerere's focus on liberation and freedom, but that was an American connection. And one of the reasons that Tanzania was the second country to receive the Peace Corps was because of the personal relationship between John F. Kennedy and Nyerere.

So it's- it's been a long relationship and I've often said to Tanzanian leaders that even though there have been parts where we have had a strong

encouragement of Tanzania to do better, we have never left Tanzania as a friend. And we will never leave Tanzania as a friend. China has been in relationship with Tanzania for 60 years, they're celebrating the 60th year now. We could have tried a one-up on China if we wanted to do, but that would have been stupid. We could have done the big celebration that this is our 62nd year of celebrating a relationship. And to have talked about the fact that the US was the very first country in the world to have established a diplomatic relationship with Zanzibar in the 1800s. So the US Embassy in Zanzibar at the time was the first recognition of Zanzibar, which is now of course a part of the United Republic of Tanzania. So the historical ties between the US and- and Tanzania are deep.

It's true, China is the largest trade partner. India is the largest investment partner. We are the largest development partner. And I'm trying to help the US get to the point that we incrementally transition from an aid and development approach to Tanzania to incorporate a trade and investment element, which doesn't stop either aid or development because it will continue to be necessary in a lot of instances, but where we do more trade and investment as a complete strategic approach.

Mvemba Phezo  
Dizolele:

Looks like a long-standing relation that goes way back to '61 or '62 when President Kennedy was in the office here. The late President Julius Nyerere built his own brand of leadership, not just for Tanzania, but that he tried to instill into other young leaders at the time, those emerging leaders that some of them we referred to just a few moments ago. When you say that Tanzania was the first country to welcome the Peace Corps, that's an important development. What did the Peace Corps do or what do they still do in Tanzania? What kind of program are they engaged in?

Ambassador Michael  
Battle:

You know, one time we had over 150 Peace Corps volunteers in Tanzania, up to about 180. During COVID, we had to move all of the Peace Corps out of most places in the world where there was not access to vaccine and where COVID was running rampant. And Tanzania at the time, unfortunately, was in a COVID denial mode. So the Peace Corps not only left Tanzania, but it left other places as well. We re-introduced the Peace Corps just last year with the first set of volunteers and we have brought on an additional cohort and we're bringing on a third cohort September of this year. We gonna try to build back to the point that we would have over 150 Peace Corps volunteers. They primarily focus on those who are in education, focus on STEM elements. It's amazing the number of young American civil engineers like electrical engineers, mechanical engineers, students with backgrounds in physics and chemistry, who are volunteering for two years to work in Tanzania.

There's one school, for example, in Zanzibar, I was trying to figure out the exact region of Zanzibar, but in Zanzibar, that had not had a math instructor for seven or eight years. The Peace Corps volunteer was the first math

instructor at that school for seven, eight years. Yet those students were expected to take all of the exams to progress up through secondary school. Unfortunately, a lot of them were not progressing up to secondary school because in Tanzania for some interesting reason, your education is in Swahili up until you get to secondary school then it switches to English. And a lot of people had not been speaking English, except for when they were around Americans and British. So you make the switch from education up to eighth grade in Swahili and then you're expected to take exams in- in English. Now, fortunately, the Minister of Education has introduced where English will be the language taught from the very first grade all the way through, so that would be a big change. So-

Mvemba Phezo  
Dizolele:

Alongside Swahili.

Ambassador Michael  
Battle:

Alongside Swahili, yes. The Peace Corps volunteers are teaching English of course, they're teaching science, they're teaching mathematics, and then we have a number of Peace Corps volunteers who are doing agricultural work as well. And some are working in health care. So ag, health, and education are the major focal points of the Peace Corps' mission in Tanzania.

Mvemba Phezo  
Dizolele:

Very good. I always have a soft spot for the Peace Corps. My first English teacher was a Peace Corps volunteer. So I have my own personal link there. You were sent in many ways, I suppose, at a time where they needed a reset between the US and Tanzania. Of course the relationship had been strained under the leadership of the late President Magufuli. What were the challenges that you faced when you arrived, and how are you working through those?

Ambassador Michael  
Battle:

The challenge was a challenge of perception. People had perceived that all of Tanzania had philosophically made a commitment to retrench as President Magufuli was retrenching from a lot of democratic reform that had started his way back as the second president, President Mwinyi, who using Julius Nyerere's platform, saw that Nyerere in his brand of socialism, had also said that socialism was a tool. It was not a philosophical commitment that one lives or dies for a whip. It was a tool. And Nyerere had said as long as the tool works, you ought to utilize it. But he also envisioned a point when Tanzania would have to open up to a free market system and would also have to open up to a multi-party system of engagement. So President Mwinyi made the switch based upon Julius Nyerere's dreams and hopes.

And then of course, President Mkaapa then, when President Kikwete came along, President Kikwete tried to do a rapid movement toward opening up democratic space and opening up alliances with the West, which included more free market. So Kikwete and George W. Bush were as close to each other in terms of genuine, authentic personal friendships which exist to this day, as Julius Nyerere and John F. Kennedy were, which is one of the reasons that

Tanzania has the largest PEPFAR program of any country where PEPFAR, because of the personal relationship between George W. Bush and Kikwete. So the perception was that Tanzania was going completely and irretrievably in the wrong direction.

When I arrived in Tanzania and started working closely with not just the president, but with different levels of the ministers in the government, what I discovered was that there was a genuine thirst on the part of, uh, Tanzanians to move beyond the closed, locked-in systems of denial, even COVID was denied under the previous president, and in the matter of just a few months with the leadership of President Samia, Tanzania went from being a country that had less than 4% of its population been tested to over 96 percent of the country been tested and vaccinated. So that kinda rapid change happened. Now, Magufuli-

Mvemba Phezo  
Dizolele: But that's more than perception.

Ambassador Michael  
Battle: Yeah, that's more than perception. Yeah. But the perception was that it was irretrievably going in the wrong direction. The reality was that it was not irretrievably going in the wrong direction. The reality was not that everybody was lockstep in the retrenchment that had happened under Magufuli, but president of Tanzania also is the chair of the single party, the CCM. So there's a lot of power under the presidency.

Mvemba Phezo  
Dizolele: Chama Cha Mapinduzi.

Ambassador Michael  
Battle: What I have, I've tried to do in Tanzania is to work with the Tanzanian people, leadership and people, because I have close relationships with the opposition groups. I have hosted lunches with opposition, I host meetings with opposition. I have a close relationship with the CCM, the Secretary General the CCM. I meet with him just as I meet with the leaders of the opposition party in party because a multi-party democracy is better for Tanzania than a single-party system that does not open itself up. And we didn't have to convince Tanzania of that reality; Tanzania knew that reality and it was simply going back to that line of progression that had started from President Mwinyi based upon what Nyerere had already said was an inevitability. So there was a line of continuity, both philosophically and practically, that had simply been interrupted. And then it was going back to making that line of continuity stronger.

Mvemba Phezo  
Dizolele: As the US Ambassador, you can meet with anyone you want in- in Tanzania, but the oppositions are still feeling the restriction of the political space. How are they faring vis-a-vis the ruling party?

Ambassador Michael Battle: Just a few months ago, I met with Freeman Mbowe at my house. I hosted a lunch with him after he had left-

Mvemba Phezo Dizolele: And who is this?

Ambassador Michael Battle: The leader of the largest opposition on the mainland, and of course ACT is the largest opposition in Zanzibar. So we met because he had just led, a week prior to the lunch that I hosted for him, a very large protest march through the city of Dar es Salaam, a huge protest march. Totally peaceful, no interruption whatsoever from the government. In fact, the government had worked hand in hand to guarantee that the march would be peaceful and successful, and that there will be other protests movements. The Tanzania Centre for Democracy which is in part funded through the US and the Swiss and others, it's a group that brings together all of the different opposition groups to discuss what Tanzania's democracy should look like. And I've encouraged Tanzanians not to try to make your democracy a replication of the US democracy, but to make Tanzania's democracy something that reflects authentically Tanzania's all social context.

If you look at the US, the US was a part of Britain. Our democracy does not look like the British democracy. We don't have a monarchy. We don't have a parliament. We have term limits in the presidency. There are no term limits for the British Prime Minister. Prime Minister could stay Prime Minister forever if the Prime Minister is constantly elected. So America's democracy, the British democracy, the Kenyan democracy, the Israeli democracy, these democracies are not the same. So Tanzania has every right to develop a democracy that has Tanzania's stamp on it. There are, however, some elements that must be a part of anything that claims to be a democracy. You must have freedom of press. No matter what the philosophical and political structure of the democracy is, you have to have freedom of press, you have to have freedom of assembly, you have to have the ability for people to participate openly and transparently in the process of selecting whatever leadership the country will have. And you have to have... Where there is diversity of religious ideology, one has to have the freedom either to practice religion or not to practice religion, without condemnation either for the choice to practice or the choice not the practice.

And so Tanzania is moving incrementally, to become democratic leaning, but I don't think philosophically Tanzania would ever stop being a socialist, predominant leaning country, because socialism was the context out of which Tanzania got its rise. You look at some of the countries in Europe, a lot of the Nordic countries, they're not socialist countries but they have a strong social welfare orientation of taking care of- of the people with the benefit of the state and with the taxes and all that, but they are also democratic. So Tanzania can have a political philosophy that is defined by Nyerere's notion of socialism, ujamaa, people are gonna together, they're gonna be unified, they're gonna

self-reliant, and they're gonna move forward positively, and also have a free market orientation. That I think would probably be the best context for Tanzania's development.

Mvemba Phezo  
Dizolele:

So the, uh, social democracies of Northern Europe like you have described are open societies. In the case of Tanzania, some of the concerns that people have is that the political space is restricted. Where will you rate that on a scale of one to 10, 10 being fully open, from your engagement with your friends, both in the st- in the ruling party and in the opposition?

Ambassador Michael  
Battle:

First, there... it'll be an artificial designation, but due, a two-track approach to this. Compare Tanzania with his neighbors, and then compare Tanzania with Western democracies. If you compare Tanzania with Western democracies, Tanzania would not rate high on a scale of looking at the open space that is provided in places like the UK and the US. If you compare Tanzania with his neighbors in East Africa, many of which have very Draconian laws against LGBTQI people, to Tanzania that resisted the drift toward those Draconian laws and decided that that's not the direction that it wanted to go but it wanted to have a more peaceful society where people were not demonstrating in the streets either in opposition to other people. Are in a declaration that the country must do X, Y or Z. So one has to...

You know, I used to teach philosophy of religion most of my academic life, and logic and scientific methods was my principal philosophy course, where religion was the principal religion course. And I always resisted the notion of comparative religion, because there's artificiality whenever you start comparing religions against each other, because there is in the back of the mind of the person doing the comparison already a concept of what is good and what is right. And no matter how objective you try to claim that you are, none of us are 100% objective because we are human. And my standard was that you don't compare religion and ideological against each other. You compare them against their own base, what they claim, and the progress that they're making, and then you evaluate it.

So if you look at Tanzania from the vantage point of the model that I used in academia, Tanzania is making slow but steady progress. But to say a one to 10, no one already... Here's the artificiality of it. What we define as the 10 is going to be Western Europe. That's not the right kind of standard. Tell you why. Western Europe engaged in slavery for hundreds of years after its so-called liberal democratic status. The United States of America, 100 years, more than 100 years after its founding, still had much of its population in slavery. And it wasn't until the 1900s that women in the US were able to vote. And to this day, to this day, in 2024, the United States of America does not have a permanent voting rights act. It is still being renewed and revisited over incremental periods of time. So probably if you look at 10, we are not a 10. Most of Europe is not a 10. If France and England were 10s, they would not have such strife

with ethnic groups in France and in England. So the notion of 10 is a false notion.

Mvemba Phezo  
Dizolele:

But the 10, Ambassador, is not compared to Western democracies; the 10 is compared to what you described so eloquently about the trajectory of Tanzania itself. So today, if that's what you're saying, you are in a very privileged position as a US ambassador with all that it entails. If we were to walk in the streets, walk the streets of Dar es Salaam or the streets of Zanzibar and talk to women's group, talk to youth group, talk to the friends that you've made in your position, how would they rate? What do you hear from them? Do they feel like they're getting to the Tanzanian 10? Or are there the three or- Because it's been fluctuating.

Ambassador Michael  
Battle:

What they feel is that the country is- is making progress. For example, the three major bills that the opposition was hoping would work its way through Parliament on media reform, on a plan for constitutional reform, on opening up democratic space, made it through Parliament, not at the level, because there were some who said it did not go far enough. But the fact that these bills were baited through Parliament and the fact that there is great expectation that there will be a free and fair and transparent election in both 2024 and '25. So I think the average Tanzanian would say that it's a world of difference between what existed five years ago but then that's not a good standard either. Because if you compare Tanzania now against what it was under Magufuli, well, I mean, it was so bad then that what is progress now doesn't have to be all that great to still be progress. So what you have to do is say okay, how quickly has Tanzania gone back to the trajectory that started with Mwinyi and that went on steroids with Kikwete?

So most Tanzanians will say that the connection is being made. And they will also say that they're looking for more of the liberalization of laws to be codified. They will say that the government is making progress, but not fast enough. They would say that the space has been open, but not wide enough. And that would be a legitimate and fair critique of Tanzania.

Mvemba Phezo  
Dizolele:

So that's- that means then if I hear you, Ambassador, there's dynamism.

Ambassador Michael  
Battle:

There's dynamism, yes.

Mvemba Phezo  
Dizolele:

And it's in the right direction.

Ambassador Michael  
Battle:

In the right direction. President Obama used to always say, "We are continually and consistently striving to make a more perfect union." Tanzania

is continually and consistently striving to regain its connection to the hopes and dreams of Nyerere and Mwinyi and Mkapa and Kikwete.

Mvemba Phezo Dizolele: So the Zitto Kabwes of the world, the Tundu Lissu of the world will subscribe to this movement?

Ambassador Michael Battle: Would say that there is consistent incremental progress. And they will also be excited about the fact that Tanzania's inflation rate has been only about 4%. Tanzania has the largest cash reverse of most African countries. Tanzania is not overly burdened with debt, as most African countries are. There's no large scale terrorist threat in Tanzania. There is, however, a caution that the leaders of the Islamic faith help with parts of Zanzibar when they look at the fact that there are some people who are trying to radicalize young people in Zanzibar. And the leaders of- of Islam in Tanzania have come together both in Zanzibar and on the mainland, to see how the faith itself can start teaching Islam more openly and more strongly to counter the probability of radicalizing people. So Tanzania recognizes that there's a potential for radicalization, but then it became proactive, that it's now trying to figure out ways that it can counter radicalization before radicalization becomes dominant.

I have a hopeful view of Tanzania. I don't have a rose-colored glass view of Tanzania. Tanzania is at a pivot, it's, you know, like playing basketball. Tanzania is at the point that if President Samia leads the country transformatively, Tanzania can pivot and go in the right direction. If Tanzania decides that open space and freedom and free market economy is not where it wants to be and that retrenchment is where it wants to be. If it does that, I think then Tanzania will circle back, but it's at pivot. And- and because it's at a pivot point, we can't determine with absolute certainty, whether it's gonna be a three-point shot or it's gonna just be a missed shot.

Mvemba Phezo Dizolele: Time will tell.

Ambassador Michael Battle: I'm hoping that it's gonna be a three-point shot and I'm doing everything I can to assist that it's a three-point shot.

Mvemba Phezo Dizolele: We'll find out soon enough, I guess.

Ambassador Michael Battle: Absolutely. And then we'll know for sure.

Mvemba Phezo Dizolele: The US is the largest development partner-

Ambassador Michael Battle: Right.

Mvemba Phezo Dizolele: ... in Tanzania. You said earlier that you like to see that pivot, to use your term.

Ambassador Michael Battle: Absolutely.

Mvemba Phezo Dizolele: And explain what is the US objective in this and what is the US planning to do-

Ambassador Michael Battle: Okay.

Mvemba Phezo Dizolele: ... to transition to becoming a large trade and investment partner 'cause that's what they need.

Ambassador Michael Battle: That's exactly what they need. Well, there are two principal things that I want to talk about as example of that. ExxonMobil has a share, not the majority share but a share of a \$42 billion liquefied natural gas project that we are waiting now for the final certification with Tanzania. Well, it's ExxonMobil, it's Shell, it's Equinor, it's a small gas operation out of Indonesia and unfortunately, I forget the name of that- that- that company, but it's a \$42 billion project. Tembo Nickel, there's about a 17% American share of that. It's a subsidiary of Lifezone Metals. They are going to refine nickel in Tanzania. They're not just extracting nickel from Tanzania; they're building a processing plant.

So what I've said to Tanzanians and what I say to Americans, is that Tanzania has every right to demand that investors in the extractive industry should be required to do at least first and second tier processing value added productivity to Tanzania's natural resources before exporting them out of the country. Because if you extract and immediately export, you create no wealth chain, you create no value added chain, you leave a country in poverty while you're taking away its resources. So my approach is to encourage American investors to come to Tanzania and to invest in building, processing, refining, value added...

For example, cashew nuts is one of the principal things that Tanzania does in terms of a agrarian affair. That's, uh, an American operation that started the first processing and packaging of cashews in Tanzania. TanzaNutz is that brand. They're a bit more expensive, but when you buy TanzaNutz, you buy a brand that you know was processed, packaged in Tanzania, by Tanzanians, and didn't export it out. That's my approach to trade and investment.

And what I've said to members of the House and the Senate when I've been here this week arguing for the renewal of AGOA, that we should not simply renew AGOA as AGOA always was. We need to renew AGOA quickly and for a long period of time, and also to include in AGOA, the critical minerals and provide an opportunity for countries that are AGOA eligible and that have critical minerals to have a- an agreement with the US that would expect US and other Western countries to extract, process, and refine, if necessary, but add value-added addition. That's the only thing that's gonna end poverty. Tanzania has 65 to 67 million people, fifth largest population on the continent. In the next 20 years, Tanzania's population will double. So you're looking at 130 million people or more in Tanzania, no more space, no more land, but double the population. It's gonna take industrialization to get people out of poverty.

Mvemba Phezo  
Dizolele:

It's complicated with the US because the US is not a- a planned economy like China and so on. So how you as an ambassador, what power do you have, what incentive do you provide potential investors to go to Tanzania to do the kind of things that you're advocating?

Ambassador Michael  
Battle:

I'm glad you made the differentiation between what China, uh, does what we do and what the West does because the- the- the companies in China are nationally owned. So there's no responsibility to or obligation to a board of directors. There's no obligation to have a profit margin. And US businesses, the principal driver is a profit margin. What I'm trying to do is to encourage American investors to do their due diligence. And when they reach a point that they perceive that the distance that they have gone to invest in, like the LNG project and Tembo Nickel, will produce a profit. That should be the motivation beyond tech subsidization.

In a sense, I'm radically conservative when it comes to what should incentivize a business. I think what should incentivize a capitalistic free market business is the expectation of a profit and that you do your risk analysis prior to your investment. If the motivation is that you're gonna get a tax incentive or a subsidy, you tend to take a greater risk because there is less risk, so it seems like a greater risk. But when that risk is subsidized, you also get somewhat careless. If that risk is less subsidized, or not subsidized, then you're gonna do your risk analysis with a deeper dive and you're gonna expect that your profit margin is gonna be well calculated, measurable, in expected timeframe. And that's why companies that are coming to Tanzania are from India, from Turkey, from the United Arab Emirates. These countries are investing in Tanzania because they are expecting a profit. Americans who are free market oriented should do the same calculus, expect the profit and not expect subsidy to be the weight into an investment scheme.

Mvemba Phezo  
Dizolele:

But in the case of Tanzania, also in the case of Africa at large, there is a serious hurdle and that's the narrative. It's not even the realities. You were talking

about perception earlier, Ambassador. The narrative is: Don't go there. There is risk. There's corruption, there is this, there is this. In the case of Tanzania, it's a socialist country, and so on. So there gotta be some level of incentive to cushion that risk. The risk that comes with the narrative, the risk that comes with not knowing the place because so much layers of "bad press," quote, unquote, has been imposed on Africa. The Chinese, the Indians, and many others do not see Africa to that lens. They see it differently, and sometimes it reminds them of home.

I remember one time to driving from Johannesburg to Soweto, from the city centre and so on, and I looked out the window and I saw these industrial chimneys and- and I'm like, "Wow, this is why Americans like South Africa. I has to remind them of Ohio." You know, it looks familiar, there's some familiarity there. That's not the way the rest of Africa looks.

Ambassador Michael Battle: Not that.

Mvemba Phezo Dizolele: That's not the way... That's not the way Tanzania looks. So for an investor who's coming from elsewhere, even that prism is very important. Are we... Are you working on anything, too?

Ambassador Michael Battle: What the government, the US government's responsibility is, and the embassy's responsibility is to help tell the story that is the true story. And that's the story that is influenced by a perception. The perception that most Americans have of Africa is at least 40 to 50 years old. The average American walking down the street when you talk about Africa, they think of people in grass huts. They... Then they they arrive in a place like Dar es Salaam and they see tall modern buildings, fabulous five-star hotels, they see modernization and industrialization. The largest manufacturer of trailers, trailer beds of like the tanker trucks and all that kind of stuff, is in Dar es Salaam. Most every 18 wheeler in East Africa, was built in Tanzania. The pipelines that are used for the transfer of oil and gas and also for sewage systems are built in Tanzania. Pipes that last a hundred years and not the standard 20 years, they're built in Tanzania, and people don't normally think about that story.

Now, the risk on the other side is that people say, "Oh, well then there's modernization in Dar es Salaam and in Dodoma and in Arusha and in Zanzibar. So why do we need to keep having aid?" Because there are so many parts of Tanzania in the countryside that are overly poor, just as in, um-

Mvemba Phezo Dizolele: The 26 million we mentioned.

Ambassador Michael Battle: Yeah, just as in South Africa. I've been to South Africa five times. If you stay in Johannesburg and you go to Pretoria and the Cape, but then if you go to some

of the smaller outline [inaudible 00:40:39], there- there's real serious poverty and that exists... Whoa, wow, hold tight now. If you go outside of Manhattan, in New York, you gonna deep poverty. These people who are sleeping in the streets in Washington D.C. in tents. They don't do that because they just love sleeping on the tent. They do it because they're poor and they cannot afford homes. So you have all this massive modernization in- in Washington D.C., and then you have people living in tents. I think it's a bigger sin here-

Mvemba Phezo  
Dizolele: Compared to the West.

Ambassador Michael  
Battle: ... because we have the capacity-

Mvemba Phezo  
Dizolele: Yes.

Ambassador Michael  
Battle: ... we have the capacity to be better. It's a factor of structured long-term poverty, and a country that is historically poor that is trying to make itself better, and we have a responsibility to help them get better. So our job is to tell the story well, and we have instruments in the US government like loan guarantees. We are doing a \$300 million funding for Tanzanian banks to guarantee loans that they make to small women entrepreneurs and other entrepreneurs. That's the part that we do.

Philip Morris is building a new plant in Tanzania. Nobody had to incentivize them to do it. They said, "Oh, there's a lot of tobacco grown here. Somebody's gonna process it." The nickel, "There's a bunch of nickel here. Somebody's gonna process it." If America is as wise as we claim that we are and I think we are wise, we would say that the largest graphite deposits on planet Earth are in Tanzania. You cannot have an electric vehicle industry sustained over generations without graphite. Somebody has got to process to. Well, right now, graphite is extracted and most of it goes to China and is processed in China, and then we buy it from China. Where's the logic in that? We are to invest in ways to process graphite in Tanzania, buy it from Tanzania, and have other parts of the world also buy it from Tanzania, but buy it not in its raw form from Tanzania, but buy it in its value added productivity form in Tanzania.

Mvemba Phezo  
Dizolele: Ambassador, I started early on by talking about great power competition.

Ambassador Michael  
Battle: Yes.

Mvemba Phezo  
Dizolele: And we talked about Tanzania being very, very, very close to China and bashfully so. What is your relationship with your Chinese counterpart?

Ambassador Michael Battle: Well, I'm hosting a dinner at my house in May. It'll be seven people from the US Embassy and seven people from the Chinese Embassy. My director of development, their director of development; my military attache, their military attache; my DCM, their DCM; their ambassador and me; my PD person, and their PD person. So we're doing that kind of thing. I do the same kind of thing with India. I do it with South Korea. I do it with Japan. I have hosted lunches with all of the NATO countries. I have hosted lunches at all of the East African countries. I host lunches that have African ambassadors from small African countries, as well as ambassadors from large countries. So the relationship we have with China is modeled... In Tanzania, we're trying to model it off of the direction that the President and the Secretary of State takes. That it's a great power competition. We're not enemies of China, China's not enemies of the US. We are competitive with China. We will compete work... We must compete and we will compete well where we must compete. We are trying to avoid conflict when we can avoid conflict, but we will work... find ways to work collaboratively because it sounds hokey, but because the universe demands that we do it.

Mvemba Phezo Dizolele: Very good. That sounds very zen. Thank you very much Ambassador Battle. It's my pleasure having you on Into Africa.

Ambassador Michael Battle: We have to do this again. We- we only scratched the surface.

Mvemba Phezo Dizolele: Thank you for listening. We want to have more conversations about Africa. Tell your friends, subscribe to our podcast at Apple Podcasts. You can also read our analysis and report at [csis.org/africa](https://www.csis.org/africa). So long.

(END.)