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Afro-realism vs. Afro-pessimism

This issue of *CSIS Africa Notes* shares with our readers three of the addresses delivered by National Security Adviser Anthony Lake in the course of his visit to nine African countries in December 1994. The theme on which his presentations were centered was "Afro-realism"—a genuine acknowledgment of the difficulties facing Africa and the central role that Africans must play in their own development.

Members of the delegation (in addition to support staff) included Nancy Soderberg, deputy national security adviser; Carol Lancaster, deputy administrator, Agency for International Development; Donald Steinberg, senior director for African affairs, National Security Council; Ambassador Edward Brynn, principal deputy assistant secretary of state for African affairs; Molly Williamson, deputy assistant secretary of defense; Vivian Lowery Derryck, president of the African-American Institute; Niara Sudarkasa, president of Lincoln University; Shawn McCormick, deputy director of the CSIS African Studies Program; Susan Rice, director for global affairs, National Security Council; Neal Wolin, executive assistant to the national security adviser; Lt. Colonel Michael Sheehan, director of political-military affairs, U.S. Mission to the United Nations; Carol Peasley, senior deputy assistant administrator for Africa, Agency for International Development; Colonel Perry Baltimore, Joint Chiefs of Staff; and Colonel Barry Smith, chief, Middle East/Africa Division, U.S. European Command.

The countries visited were Ethiopia (December 14-16), Rwanda (December 16), Burundi (December 16-17), Mozambique (December 17-18), Zambia (December 18-19), Angola (December 19-20), Benin (December 20-21), Ghana (December 21), and Senegal (December 21-22). The nongovernmental representatives invited to participate in this unique mission contributed their perspectives at group discussions during each airborne leg of the journey.

Mr. Lake, who has dealt with African issues (in academia and government) for more than three decades, rejected the concept of "Afro-pessimism" that has gained currency of late and, in fact, advantageously used the term to reinforce his message. Speaking with great empathy and humanity at each stop, he urged Africans with whom the mission met—whether in government, business, religion, or the broader civil society—to work together and help move their nations forward into the global economic and political arena or risk further marginalization. It was apparent that the Africans we

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met are well aware of the U.S. discomfort about the continent with respect to the failed nation-building in Somalia, the horrors in Rwanda, and other crisis situations.

He frequently emphasized that "the great global challenges of tomorrow can be seen in the challenges facing Africa today." Trends that the United States would like to foster around the globe—including democratic reform, expansion of export markets, prevention and resolution of conflicts, stopping illegal narcotics trafficking, countering terrorism, and curbing environmental degradation—all have a salience to Africa that its inhabitants will ignore at their peril. But his warning is equally important to the United States. The U.S. policy community, too, needs a dose of realism about Africa. The impact of Lake's Africa visit will depend on how developments and attitudes evolve on both continents —*Shawn McCormick*

OAU Headquarters, Addis Ababa, December 15, 1994

I first came to Ethiopia as a young foreign service officer in the mid-1960s, a member of a small diplomatic team assigned to travel around the continent to explain the American position in Vietnam. It was a fast trip, but in just a few days we had the extraordinary privilege of meeting with some of the giants of African independence at the time: Nkrumah, Houphouët-Boigny, Nyerere, Kenyatta, Touré, Senghor, and a number of others. Each had a style all his own, but taken together they made you feel that anything was possible, that a spirit of freedom had been unleashed and with it came the feeling of a boundless future on this continent.

So many of the hopes of that era were embodied in the Organization of African Unity. Founded in 1963 on the dream of all African nations to escape their colonial past and embrace liberty, the OAU gave life to the African struggle to gain control of the continent's destiny. And today I want to speak with you about that struggle, about the dynamics of regional cooperation in a rapidly changing world, and about the role that the United States can and should play in helping Africa move forward.

There could be no better audience for this discussion than the staff of the Organization of African Unity, because you are charged with the day-to-day task of making real the dreams of the fathers of African independence. Better than anyone, you know how difficult this work can be, and is. And I think you also have a sense that, if the nations of Africa are to thrive in the new post-cold war world, African leaders and their people must seize control of their own future.

President Clinton has sent me here, with a delegation of senior officials from a number of our departments, for a simple reason: this administration cares deeply about Africa and its future. We care about Africa because of the enormous potential of its people, its traditions, and its resources. We care because we have deep interests in Africa. We care because of the historic ties that bind our two peoples together. And we care because the great global challenges of tomorrow can be seen in the challenges facing Africa today.

But we also know that caring is not enough, that we must act if we really care. And we have. We have been engaged from our first days in office, as OAU Secretary General Salim so generously noted. The United States has helped resolve conflicts throughout the continent, such as our efforts to bring to an end two decades of terrible civil war in Mozambique and Angola. We have launched a new initiative in the greater Horn of Africa to anticipate and try to prevent a potential famine that threatens 25 million people in this region. This is the beginning of our efforts to go beyond immediate relief operations and promote recovery and sustainable development. At the same time, we have continued to respond to humanitarian crises, all too many of them, in Rwanda, Liberia, Angola, Sudan, and elsewhere.

The United States has, we believe, led the way in supporting the remarkable transition to democracy in South Africa, and we have expanded our efforts in all of southern Africa, where peace, democratic government, and economic development are taking hold. We have provided relief from the crushing burden of debt for several African countries so far, and we're working to provide substantial new relief for eligible African nations. We have put a new focus on Africa. In the last six months alone, President Clinton has received seven African heads of government. He hosted the first-ever White House Conference on Africa—when 200 officials, business leaders, and academics came together. This group included the OAU secretary general, who offered great insight into the challenges the continent faces. [For text, see "The White House Conference on Africa," *CSIS Africa Notes* no. 162, July 1994.] And, as you know, high-ranking U.S. delegations—led by the vice president, the deputy secretary of state, and our United Nations ambassador—have crisscrossed the continent in recent months.

All of these actions are evidence that we reject the notion of "Afro-pessimism," that we are encouraged by the signs of great potential emerging all over Africa. Democracy is finding its roots in country after country. There is concrete proof that economic discipline and modernization will yield growth. There are encouraging signs that subregional organizations—ECOWAS in Liberia, IGADD in Sudan, and SADC in Angola,

Mozambique, and Lesotho—are searching for new ways to address the calamitous conflicts in their regions. It is important that there is a longing for stability among so many people tired of civil wars, exhausted by disasters man-made and natural, desperate and determined to pass on a better life to their children. It is a desire that Africans share with people all over the world—from the Middle East to Northern Ireland to Central America.

But while we recognize these signs of hope, we know—as you know—that many African nations are but one step away from crisis. And at such an important and potentially difficult moment, caring means not only acting, but also that it is necessary for Africa's friends to speak the truth as we see it. Not to condemn and not to distance ourselves from Africa's problems, but as part of our commitment to help resolve them.

Despite the signs of progress, the truth is stark. African nations must reverse the economic slide of the so-called "lost decade of the 1980s" that has left their people for the most part poorer, less educated, less healthy, and with fewer prospects for better lives than they had almost a generation ago. Even the countries that are making progress are threatened by instability in their regions. Sixteen African nations are involved in some form of civil conflict; 6 million refugees and 17 million displaced persons put an intolerable strain on resources.

In countries such as the United States, those of us who recognize the importance of continued active engagement and support for Africa are confronting the reality of shrinking resources and an honest skepticism about the return on our investments in peacekeeping and development. The world around Africa is fast coming together, and this continent risks becoming the odd man out.

In the best of times, all that the outside world can offer nations in crisis is a "window of opportunity" in which they can sort out their problems during a period of relative security. The international community can offer support; it cannot be a savior. Outsiders have neither the power nor the right to dictate solutions for the nations of Africa or any other region. Now, when the times are getting tougher, we face a new reality. In Africa and elsewhere, the windows of opportunity can remain open for only so long. And every time the leaders of contending factions do not seize that opportunity, do not act before the window slams shut, they will not only hurt the citizens of their countries. They may also diminish the will of the international community to offer such support elsewhere in other conflicts and crises on the continent. So it will be harder—not impossible, but harder—to count on the international community to heal the wounds of these wars. The warlords—and, tragically, their peoples—cannot always count on an international safety net.

Ultimately, Africa's leaders and its people are responsible for their actions; they have it within their power to settle their differences. And we need look no farther than southern Africa, to Mozambique, for encouraging evidence that when leaders decide to put the future of their nations ahead of their immediate ambitions, and use democracy to settle their differences, they can rightfully claim the gratitude of their people and the applause of the world.

In recent months we have seen in both Lesotho and Mozambique how neighboring states can help prevent such conflicts. And across Africa, there is a new generation of leaders, such as Ethiopia's President Meles, many of whom have come to power since the end of the cold war. These leaders have discarded the ideological baggage of the cold war. They have gone beyond the heady era of independence and the subsequent period of blaming everything on their colonial legacies. They recognize the deadly potential of ethnic rivalries, AIDS, environmental degradation. And they are ready to measure their progress on a different scale: instituting economic policies that promote sustainable development, building responsive governments that give citizens a stake in the future, and creating civil societies in which freedom flourishes.

That is why, despite the dangers and the difficulties that I have just outlined, President Clinton and his administration reject Afro-pessimism. But neither should any of us seek refuge in the illusions of Afro-optimism. Friends of Africa who suggest these challenges will be easily met are not doing any of us a favor.

What is needed, I think, instead, is a new Afro-realism, an Afro-realism that commits us to the hard work that can strengthen the partnership between Africa and America. For without the partnership, Africa will have lost the support we wish to give and are determined to give. And America will have lost the opportunity to participate in what could be—what must be—one of the great adventures of our time: fulfilling the dreams of Africa's greatness that animated the leaders of its independence so many years ago.

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Lusaka, Zambia, December 19, 1994

Our delegation has come to Zambia midway through a visit to nine nations on this continent. We also came to Zambia because I think there are few places that better symbolize the promise of Africa. Our visit must also be seen in the context of the Clinton administration's commitment to engage in Africa.

The battle, as you know, will not be easy, and in my nation and around the world there are those who say that it is already too late. These Afro-pessimists believe that the die has been cast, that there is little if anything the United States can do to help remedy the damage of the so-called "lost decade of the 1980s," that all of Africa is doomed to live on the edge—as its population explodes, its economies slide, its environment declines, and its attempts to replace civil war with democratic reconciliation fail time and again. And, they say, at this time of shrinking budgets, that the United States has no responsibility to help and would do better to look inward to our own problems.

Let me assure you that this is not the view of the Clinton administration. And there are many reasonable men and women in our Congress who understand the value of our aid to Africa, of the continent's great economic potential and the benefits of increasing democracy and stability. And to those who see no hope and who are Afro-pessimists, I have only four words of advice: come to southern Africa.

Come to southern Africa and see the signs of real political and economic progress—signs of increasingly stable democracy, growing civil rights, and clear, hard evidence of economic growth. Come and see what *The Economist* has called a different continent—in their words, "another Africa of plate-glass skyscrapers and new stock markets, of political opposition and outspoken newspapers." Come, I would say to them, come and look beyond the dramatic political changes in Pretoria and Cape Town to the transformation that is affecting almost all of southern Africa—to the multiparty elections and tolerance for some degree of political opposition that have come to every nation here save Angola; to the peaceful passage of power in nations such as Zambia and Malawi; to the deep interest in participation demonstrated in Mozambique, where an astonishing 88 percent of the voters—some of whom had to cross minefields—cast ballots in that nation's first free and fair elections.

Come to southern Africa and see how the increasing strength of democracies is leading to regional stability. Where once the "Front-Line states" had to expend all their energy on the fight against apartheid, more recently they have joined together to put down threats to fragile democracies—in Lesotho, where pressure from South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Botswana stopped an attempt last August to overthrow a legitimate government; in Mozambique, where Presidents Mandela and Mugabe played a critical role in quickly ending Renamo leader Dhlakama's brief threat to boycott the elections; and in Angola, where the states of southern Africa have told the parties, "enough is enough." And let me take this occasion to thank President Chiluba for his critical role in hosting and supporting the peace process in Angola.

To those who see no hope for Africa, I say come to the subcontinent and see the unmistakable signs of national and regional economic progress. Zambia provides a fine example of the trend away from state ownership and centralization toward privatization and local control. President Chiluba's government deserves great credit, we believe, for its efforts to liberalize trade, to remove subsidies, lift controls on foreign exchange, reduce budget deficits, and bring down inflation from 187 percent in 1993 to an estimated 16 percent this year. Its continuing attempts to privatize state-owned industries and return land ownership to individuals are extremely important to its future. I believe that economic reform and privatization are rather like riding a bicycle. Once you begin and are moving, if you stop you will fall over. If you try to turn too quickly, you will fall over as well. We believe Zambia is on course, should stay on course, and we will support Zambia as it does so.

Afro-pessimists rightly point out that the path will not be easy, but Zambia and Zimbabwe and other nations are showing signs that "structural adjustment" does yield economic growth. And the results of reform are evident. Just last week, the major donors, led by the World Bank, agreed to provide $2.1 billion for Zambia's development in return for further structural reforms and movement toward good governance. And to help those who are committed to free markets and private enterprise, the United States has established a $100 million Southern Africa Enterprise Development Fund aimed at helping small and medium-sized businesses.

Even as we take the large steps to get these economies back on track, nations must continue to advance the welfare of all of their citizens. That means extending basic education, health care, and agricultural programs so that all people can participate fully in their countries' prosperity. People must feel the tangible gains that democracy can produce. In South Africa during the elections, posters were being used to encourage people to vote. The posters pictured new schools, new clinics, new homes, and new jobs. Those expectations will be disregarded not only at the peril of governments in this region, but of democracy itself. And we need to work to put the benefits of democracy on the table for the people in their everyday lives.

The nations of the region are also making progress in working together as a region. The Preferential Trade Area, recently rechristened the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, underscores the importance of regional economic cooperation. The Southern African Development Community (SADC), designed as a reactive organization to protect the Front-Line states from

economic isolation by South Africa, has evolved wonderfully now to become a focus of regional collaboration, concentrating on transportation, energy, industry, agriculture, and other links throughout the southern African region. With the addition of South Africa as a member, SADC can make the real transformation from a defensive economic mechanism to a proactive organization that can exploit the combined purchasing and producing power of all its members.

For the United States, which has a direct interest in the success of southern African economies, this growth holds the promise of great new opportunities and more high-wage American jobs. During the last 18 months, one new American company has invested in South Africa every 10 days. Exports to South Africa already support more than 50,000 jobs in the United States, and we believe there is immense potential for growth.

Those doubters risk missing out on enormous opportunities in this region. Imagine, for example, a regional electrical power grid, linking the water-based power of the north with the fossil fuels of the south. With the end of civil war in Mozambique, projects such as the massive Cahora Bassa dam may be granted a new lease on life. Ecotourism, telecommunications, manufacturing, and increased export of minerals and agricultural goods all offer the hope of new prosperity here.

So again let me say: the pessimists should come take a closer look at southern Africa. Civil wars are giving way to stability and democratic reforms. In turn, democratically elected leaders are restructuring their economies to lay the groundwork for long-term growth. The possibility of growth is luring foreign investors and the potential for cooperation among states in the region is growing.

But just as I would invite the Afro-pessimists to come to southern Africa and see the signs of progress, here in southern Africa you know better than anyone that to bathe in the illusions of a sunny Afro-optimism could be terribly damaging. For the facts are stark: Africans today are poorer, less healthy, and have fewer prospects for better lives than they had almost a decade ago. The obstacles to growth are indeed enormous.

At the top of that list of obstacles remains the terrible human and economic and political drain of civil war and ethnic conflict. Consider, for example, Sudan. In the 1970s, most development economists expected Sudan to be "the breadbasket of Africa." Instead, ethnic strife and decades of civil war have turned Africa's potential breadbasket into an African basket case—a problem not only for its neighbors but for the whole international community. Even this year's good crops do not preclude the need for humanitarian relief in the war-torn south. In Mozambique, the legacy of years of war is at least a million land mines; just yesterday, we watched as a platoon of UN-trained Mozambicans cleared a field of mines. And we heard that, two days previously, one of those Mozambicans had died to save the lives of his people. For how many years will Mozambicans be forced to clear their fields instead of planting those fields?

These civil conflicts also require nations to continue to spend huge sums on their militaries—funds better spent on building schools, clinics, and highways. In Angola, the nation's vast petroleum riches are being drained by its civil war. Once the parties stop fighting, international support to rebuild that nation's economic base will first have to be directed at demobilization efforts. And consider this: the slightest possibility that conflict or civil war will erupt again causes foreign investors to pull out and to stay away. Without capital, African nations will again find themselves unable to move forward.

What might be described as the more traditional obstacles—ills that have plagued African nations since the days of independence—also stand in the way of progress. Militaries remain too large and too strong and they threaten fragile democracies. Corruption—such as the kleptocracy in Zaire—can frustrate any attempt to develop a modern and efficient economy. And the continued failure of economies to diversify will make these countries vulnerable to sliding international prices and slow development.

Finally, the path of "structural adjustment" has placed a whole new series of challenges in front of African governments that, like Zambia, have mustered the courage and the political will to impose economic discipline on themselves. Leaders must be able to see beyond the immediate displacement and anger that can be brought by sudden devaluations or the removal of price subsidies. The temptation to turn back will be great—and it must be resisted.

And the countries of Africa must also hold fast in their efforts to reduce the terrible $180 billion of debt that they owe. To help remedy this, the Clinton administration began two years ago a program to reduce the amount the poorest African countries must pay to our government to service their debt. At recent sessions of the G-7, President Clinton has brought this issue to the forefront. Just this week, the United States and its G-7 partners agreed to cut by two-thirds the amount that the poorest African nations must pay to service their official debt and, significantly, for the first time the G-7 nations agreed to find ways to reduce the actual amount of debt that is owed.

My observations today, and the policies of the Clinton administration, should make it clear that we stand with you on the front lines of the struggle for Africa's future. But that does not give us license to forget reality. Americans are debating at home about where and when to get involved; the United Nations is stretched to its capacities in this and other continents; and shrinking budgets in donor countries around the globe could mean stagnant levels of aid. So, every time the leaders of contending factions in an Angola do not seize the opportunity for peace, every time a "leader for life" robs his nation blind, every time a nation slides back on its commitment to economic discipline, that country is not only hurting its own citizens. It is threatening the prospects for the growing integration and thus global success of Africa as a whole.

As we look into the future of this continent, which I

believe does hang in the balance, I hope that we never forget how far Africa has come. Imagine what you would have thought a decade ago, or even less, if I had stood before you and used phrases like "President Mandela"; if I had talked about establishing investor codes to attract foreign capital; or if I had discussed the turnout in elections in Mozambique or Malawi. But those are topics of everyday conversation in southern Africa today. They are the reasons why reasonable men and women in faraway capitals should continue to invest in the future of Africa.

Cotonou, Benin, December 21, 1994

I first came to Africa as a young foreign service officer in the 1960s. It was an exciting time, a time when—in the wake of the escape from colonialism—anything seemed possible. Across the continent, the giants of independence led their people into the modern era. They put forth new constitutions, with guarantees of political freedoms. The economic future looked bright. But in the years that followed, patterns of autocracy took hold—rulers for life, repressive regimes, bloated militaries, and nations robbed blind of their resources. The golden promises of independence began to disappear.

Now—almost three decades later—Africa faces a second watershed, a time when the patterns of the future are again being established. It is an extraordinarily exciting time—what the British observer Colin Legum has called a second independence. It is a time when the future of participatory government in Africa hangs in the balance and creative minds are fully engaged. Today, in many countries across the continent, Africans are breathing new life into old institutions and getting down to the daily tasks that together make up democracy. Parliaments (including Benin's National Assembly) that once were no more than rubber stamps now debate and decide legitimate policy disputes. Multiparty elections now offer the citizens of many countries the opportunity to choose among different candidates and platforms. And the press—traditionally no more than a government mouthpiece—reflects the real concerns of the people.

The hot lights of international television are now focused elsewhere. But in the months and years ahead, democracy in Africa will face what may be its most difficult and important test: the test of making day-to-day democracy work. As they now do the hard work of using new democratic institutions to manage their daily political and economic business, the leaders and peoples of Africa will have to answer critical questions: Can participation conquer the persistent reality of ethnic and religious divisions? Are basic human and political rights the property of one group—or do they belong to all? What responsibility are people prepared to take for their political and economic affairs?

There are few better places on the continent to ask these questions than here in Cotonou. For it was here—just four years ago—that the rapid changes in Africa's political landscape began. The combined force of the worldwide fall of Communist regimes, internal economic decline, and a new generation grown impatient with authoritarian leaders combined to change history. After a decade in which only four nations—Botswana, Gambia, Mauritius, and Senegal—tolerated opposing political parties, President Kerekou and other leaders called a national conference to settle Benin's political differences and chart its future. Africa-watchers saw it as an interesting experiment. Little did they know what would follow: adoption of a democratic constitution, free and fair elections, and the peaceful transfer of power.

During our trip to Africa, my delegation has visited many countries facing the same kinds of challenges as they wrestle with the demands of day-to-day democracy. In Ethiopia, where President Meles came to power after decades of civil strife and hardship, he is now taking the hard steps necessary to create a democracy, including writing and adopting a new constitution. But that will not be enough. He must find ways also to reach accommodation with other parties on questions of human rights, individual freedom, and the proper role for ethnicity in his multiethnic society. And they, in turn, must learn to engage in the process while remaining a loyal opposition.

In Burundi, we found a nation that has lost two presidents to assassination in the past 14 months and yet has found the courage to reach a political compromise involving power-sharing. But this challenge remains: how to give real meaning to such compromise in a nation where ethnic tensions threaten to blow apart the fine democratic balance they have fashioned.

In Mozambique, we found President Chissano, Renamo leader Dhlakama, and their supporters struggling to put behind them two decades of civil war in the wake of the nation's first democratic election. We found a government and an opposition party trying to define their proper roles in the nation's first multiparty parliament. And in Zambia we found a government explaining to its people why a major structural readjustment program was necessary despite the short-run economic hardship it was causing. And here in Benin, a leader on the path of democracy, you are debating and deciding the proper legal structure for your next elections.

The leaders of these nations are probably getting more than they bargained for on these democratic shakedown cruises. They are learning—and learning early—that democracy is so much more than writing a constitution, swearing in a legislature, or opening a newspaper. It requires leaders who are farsighted enough to stick to their goals and confident enough to take criticism along the way. It requires citizens who are willing to participate—not only in elections, but in the mundane decisions that bring water to their fields or determine where bus routes will go. And it requires everyone to exercise a kind of national responsibility—to put the commitment to democracy ahead of his or her individual desires and ambitions.

In capitals across the continent and in villages and towns, the new leaders of Africa know that to remain in power and be effective, they must share power in effective ways. On a national level, this means empowering individuals and groups by listening and reacting to their concerns. It means opening the door to labor unions, universities, human rights groups, religious organizations, and other elements of civil society, including an independent judiciary and a free press. In particular, women must be given a role at every level of national life. If not, any nation will be the poorer for it—and will be no real democracy.

On a local level, responsive government means moving away from the centralization of power that was promoted under autocratic and Marxist regimes. New governments have the opportunity to cast off those legacies and invest indigenous groups with power. For example, giving regional and local authorities more say in their own future cannot help but improve local services—and, ultimately, attitudes toward the national regime. Responsive government also means permitting citizens the right to change their leadership in free and fair elections.

The president of Haiti, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, has said to President Clinton that the second election, more than the first, is the true test of a democracy. Until the last few years, here in Africa the electoral process has too often best been described by the phrase "one person, one vote—one time." Ensuring the smooth and peaceful passage of power from one president or prime minister to the next is critical to ensuring that citizens, other nations, and foreign investors retain confidence in a nation's stability.

Many countries in Africa are trying to reform their political systems at the same time as they put into effect economic reforms that may cause short-term hardship to their people. This makes the transition to democracy doubly difficult. But Benin, Senegal, Mali, Niger, and other nations are demonstrating that economic discipline does yield rewards. Their success will stand as proof that vibrant democracy and thriving free markets go hand in hand.

African governments are also confronting the challenges of creating a culture of political tolerance. African leaders must make room for—indeed, invite—a flourishing local opposition. It is in their self-interest to allow this opposition to grow, of course, because it provides a safety valve for discontent, a way to express another opinion that does not involve an AK-47, a mortar, or a mine. Opposition parties are learning how to organize themselves and work within the system to translate their political views into policy. For the first time, the political discourse of Africa includes the concept of a loyal opposition.

On both sides, this vision not only requires an absolute devotion to the rights and principles of democracy but also an equally devout belief in free expression—a belief in the battle of ideas, rejection of extremism as moderates come together, the instinct for compromise.

Governments and opponents alike are learning that these are essential elements of democracy. They are learning to speak the common, wonderful language of democracy. Certainly this will lead to more than a few strange moments, such as leaders of political parties known to have ordered slaughter of their opponents arguing with one another over a clause in the constitution or challenging those same people in reasoned parliamentary debate. Leaders will have to learn, as President Soglo of Benin has learned with such grace, that democracy means putting up with opinions of every stripe and even insults from some corners.

Nurturing democracy also demands that governments enforce civilian control of the military, put an end to patterns of corruption, and oppose cults of personality. These are large goals. But without strong daily efforts to achieve them, African nations will never escape the devastating impact of the lost decade of the 1980s.

In the end, however, I am convinced that the most important test of African democracy will be how well nations learn to deal with one of the worst legacies of the continent's colonial masters: arbitrary national boundaries. For by drawing these borders without regard to ethnic groups and other cultural realities, the colonial powers left Africa with a challenge of enormous proportions. And it is a challenge, I believe, that only democracy and true representation can resolve. Africa, more than any continent, must contend with an astonishing array of forces that drive or pull its societies apart. In Zambia, there are more than 70 ethnic groups. Cameroonians speak more than 250 languages. Sudanese occupy a country the size of Western Europe. In Ethiopia, Christianity and Islam each claim 40 percent of the populace, with indigenous believers making up the rest.

By their very nature, authoritarian governments are the enemies of diversity. Democracies, on the other hand, draw their strength from the differences among their peoples. Consider the alternative. In the African context, more so than elsewhere because of the colonial legacy, depriving different ethnic or other groups of the right to representation—whether it be at a local or national level—is a recipe for catastrophe. One need look no farther than Liberia or Angola for the evidence.

In the last week, my delegation has seen stark evidence of the devastation that can accompany failed attempts at democracy and national reconciliation. In

Angola, a country that returned to civil war two years ago despite holding a free and fair election, yesterday we witnessed a human tragedy. The once beautiful town of Kuito in ruins, not a building standing that had gone unmarked by rifle or mortar fire. A field where 2,000 people in search of food instead met death in a cross fire. Acres and acres of once productive farmland strewn with land mines that make it unusable. And camps where thousands of the displaced anxiously await word that they can again go home.

Those scenes provide the most dramatic reason why we are helping Africa nurture and sustain its democratic institutions. In fiscal year 1994, we increased our funding for democratic elections and institutions in Africa to $119 million from $5 million the previous year. We also intend to continue our support of private groups such as the National Endowment for Democracy and the African-American Institute, which have played critical roles in promoting democracy and monitoring elections.

We should also consider how best to apply pressure on remaining autocratic states: by halting aid, suspending debt renegotiation, imposing trade sanctions, and denying visas or freezing assets of high-level officials with proven records of corruption or human rights violations.

Enlarging the world's community of democracies has, in fact, become a central pillar of our foreign policy on every continent. The United States promotes democracy not only because of altruism but because it is in our national interest. We support democracy because elections provide a peaceful way to change. Because it is the best way the world has found to protect and advance basic human rights. Because the political freedoms of democracy inevitably are the natural partners of economic freedoms that give all people the chance to get ahead. And because democracy is contagious—when it takes hold in one nation, its neighbors are more likely to follow.

I am convinced that democracy will find deep roots on this continent because the African people have tasted democracy and, every day, they are proving the Afro-pessimists wrong. I am convinced because the institutions of democracy have found their roots in capitals and towns from Cotonou to Cape Town. And I am convinced because democracy is so much more than a constitution or adherence to the rule of law. It is a way of life that knows no borders, that no boundary can block and no ocean can divide. It is rooted in the human spirit, a spirit that all of us—African and American—do share.

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