

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

A BROOKINGS BRIEFING

"AFRICA'S TIME HAS COME: THE ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES  
IN AID AND DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS"

NELSON MANDELA

Former President of South Africa  
Former President, African National Congress

Monday, May 16, 2005

11:30 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

Falk Auditorium  
1775 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.  
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[TRANSCRIPT PREPARED FROM A TAPE RECORDING.]

P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. THORNTON: Okay. If we could get started.

I am John Thornton, for those of you who don't know me. I chair the Board of Trustees here at Brookings.

And, of course, it's my very great honor and pleasure to say a few words of introduction about the Former President of South Africa, Former President of the African National Congress, and the Nobel Peace Prize Winner, Nelson Mandela.

I want to put my comments into context in three respects. Number one, without laboring the point about global poverty, we all know the situation as it currently exists; that fact that over 20 percent of the world's people live on less than one dollar a day; the fact that 39 million of the 42 million sufferers of HIV/AIDS in the world live in economically poor countries; the fact that six and half thousand people die of HIV every day in Africa; 3,000 children die every day of malaria. We all know these are absolutely appalling human statistics, and we all know that we need to do something about it.

Now, in its own way, the Brookings Institution is taking this charge very seriously and in addition to work that's been done to date under the very able leadership of Lael Brainard, and funded largely by Dick Blum, one of our trustees and the Hewlett Foundation,

I'm also pleased to say that one of our other very longstanding trustees and former president of the World Bank, Jim Wolfensohn, is donating a million dollars to Brookings this year to accelerate our efforts to find innovative, action-based solutions to some of these very difficult problems.

And it's his intention and our intention that this would then lead to a five-year, \$10 million effort to address these issues in a very fundamental way.

And, in fact, we're hopeful that the Brookings Institution will do some work in the future with the Nelson Mandela Foundation in South Africa.

Now, in addition, I want to put Mr. Mandela's visit to the United States in context. He is here largely to help raise the visibility and the awareness of a newly created institution called the Nelson Mandela Legacy Trust, to be based here in the United States, the purpose of which will be to raise money and to disburse that money to the Mandela Legacy organizations on the ground in South Africa, addressing the very pressing needs of children, of peace and reconciliation, of health, education, and also a very innovative new initiative to enhance leadership capability on the ground through the Mandela Rose Trust.

These are very important initiatives. When you put these back in the context of what I said earlier, and under the theme of Africa's time has come, we all know this has gone on for too long, and each of us has got to do much, much more than we're currently doing.

And we are hopeful that each of you in this room today and those of you listening elsewhere will take this to heart and do one meaningful thing in your life you're currently not doing to help alleviate poverty around the world.

Now, with that general background, I give you the inspiration of Mr. Mandela, who, of course, needs absolutely no introduction. There's no person on Earth who has more moral authority, who can speak with greater passion, and be more compelling on these topics than he, and so I give you to Mr. Mandela.

[Applause.]

MR. MANDELA: Thank you for that generous introduction.

It is a pleasure to be among friends at the Brookings Institution.

Brookings is one of the oldest and most distinguished independent public policy think tanks in the United States. All democracies, especially young ones such as South Africa, must build their own capacity to do the research, analysis, and public education to address underdevelopment. We hope to do so in partnership with you and others.

We can today bring good news from Africa, where it can truly be said that the commitment to human rights and democratic values is broader and deeper than ever before. This progress must be deepened and speeded up by concrete support from developed countries in the West.

At the heart of this more positive relationship between Africa and the West is a new recognition of mutual obligations and responsibility. The U.S. and other donor nations should provide substantially greater economic assistance on terms that are more flexible and responsive to the priorities set by African concerns. At the same time, African leaders need to agree to abide by internationally accepted standards of transparency, accountability, and good governance, and to work to hold each other responsible for meeting these standards through such measures as the African peer review mechanism.

We know success will not come easily, but we repeat that the good news—we repeat that the good news is that a new democratic consensus is taking hold across the continent. There is growing recognition that unless and until Africans themselves are able to curb abuses of power, Africa will not have the peace and stability required to end poverty and to find its rightful place in a globalizing world.

I know that my President, Thabo Mbeki, and other African leaders are looking forward to the G-8 Summit in Scotland in July. This will be a historic opportunity for the G-8 to demonstrate its political will. The summit provides an opportunity to give greater practical expression to the New Partnership for Africa's Development, supported at last year's summit hosted by President Bush.

It is important to note that even if we could terminate all forms of tyranny everywhere, we would have to be aware that true democracy cannot be imposed nor transplanted. It must be homegrown and a product of consensus and inclusivity within any given country. That is why we disagree on the matter of Iraq. Such disagreements are not uncommon among friends. In fact, they are a mark of strong, candid, and honest friendship.

We are pleased that President Bush has committed to a new and more performance-based approach to granting foreign assistance, called the Millennium Challenge Account. There are two areas where assistance in our view can be expanded with great impact. We are glad to say they are also priorities for President Bush.

One is health and the need to provide greater access to means of prevention and treatment for Africa's greatest scourges: HIV/AIDS, malaria, and TB. Freedom, after all, means little to someone left to die at the mercy of preventable and treatable diseases. We are gratified by President Bush's emergency plan to aid the relief. Adding to this effort are the many contributions of America's private foundations and nongovernmental organizations, most notably the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

The second area is providing the means for people to empower themselves through a good education. We feel a special bond with the very young,

perhaps because we missed—what we missed the most during our years in prison were the sounds of children laughing and the warmth of one's own family.

The Nelson Mandela Children's Fund, one of the three charitable organizations established in our name, works for the well-being of children and youth and will do so far into the future. The second of these, the Nelson Mandela Foundation, also has a keen interest in primary and secondary education and will continue to promote ways to redress the legacy of apartheid. This foundation is also involved in issues such as HIV/AIDS, reconciliation, democracy, and nation building. And the third one, the Mandela Rhodes Foundation, is already making a major intervention in building excellent leadership capacity at the tertiary level through the Mandela Rhodes Scholarship Program launched earlier this year.

Another area of education which deserves highlighting is the initiative to revitalize African universities. There remains a severe shortage of the highly trained people required if Africa is to meet the challenges of the 21st century. We are pleased that President Bush and other G-8 leaders recognize this. We welcome foreign partners, but we must be sure that Africans are fully playing their parts.

It is our hope that the three Mandela Legacy Organizations—the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund, the Nelson Mandela Foundation, and the Mandela Rhodes Foundation—will contribute significantly to this. It is for this reason that we're spending time on this visit to the United States to help bring into being a legacy trust which will enable friends and supporters in the United States to support the work of our organizations in Africa.

I thank you.

[Applause.]

MR. MANDELA: Thank you.

MR. THORNTON: Mr. Mandela, we thank you very, very much for your words of inspiration as always.

MR. MANDELA: Thank you.

MR. THORNTON: If our friend in this room and others could remain seated while Mr. Mandela departs the building, we would appreciate that. Thank you for coming, and I hope that Mr. Mandela's work will affect each of our lives [inaudible].  
Thank you.

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