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PRESIDENT OBAMA'S ROLE IN AFRICAN SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT

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Welcome and Introduction:

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Panel Discussion:

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. O'HANLON: Good morning, everyone. Thank you, for coming to Brookings. Peeling yourselves away from the Republican National Convention for a few minutes on this hot, Washington morning to join us in thinking about President Obama's legacy towards Africa. And I've got the great pleasure, as the co-director of the Arica Security Initiative, of moderating a panel with these two outstanding scholars, very dedicated to this broad subject.

My name is Mike O'Hanlon with the Foreign Policy Program, here at Brookings. Just to my left is Sarah Margon, with Human Rights Watch, and her background includes working as the staff director at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for the Sub-Committee on Africa. So, a great deal of background on this particular subject of the day, as well as working previously at the Center for American Progress on issues of conflict resolutions, post-conflict stabilization and related matters. She is now the Washington director for Human Rights Watch, with global responsibilities, but a lot of ongoing interests and expertise on Africa.

To her left is Matt Carotenuto, who is a professor at St. Lawrence University. An important partner with us on the Africa Security Initiative; and Matt has a great deal of background on Kenya, in particular. St. Lawrence has a semester program in Kenya, and ongoing program. Our great intern, Andy Wilcox, is a recent graduate of that program, a student at St. Lawrence, and this is a program that has 15 to 20 students at a time, typically, for a semester of study in east Africa, just outside of Nairobi.

Matt spent a good deal of his recent career either in that center on the semester program, or prior to that doing research, doing field research in Africa. He is from upstate New York. Sarah, by the way, I should have said is from Brooklyn, so we are an all New York panel, because I'm from western New York. And so we would like to think of New York as the great citadel of study on Africa matters throughout the United States.

Matt grew up around Albany, got his undergraduate degree in New York State, and then went to Indiana for graduate studies. Sarah went to Wesleyan University for college, and then Georgetown for her graduate studies.

Anyway, one more thing to say by way of introduction; is that Matt has a book coming out just in a couple weeks on President Obama and Africa, Obama's legacy in Africa. We'll talk more about that. I hope you'll all buy it, it's a good time to think of early Christmas shopping, and early commemoration of the Obama presidency, which as we all know, is soon to end.

And with that, well we'll start to ask a question that really hasn't been asked that often. What is President Obama's legacy towards Africa? Interestingly, even though he is our first African-American president, even though his father was Kenyan, we really haven't talked a lot about this question in the high-level American political and foreign policy debate.

Now, as my two co-panelists know, we have talked about it some, and a lot of important things have been happening in Africa, and President Obama legacy and his origins are part of the story, an important part. But I think it's time to start getting this issue onto the front pages. My guess is President Obama himself may feel this way. We didn't invite him to speak at this session, but maybe we'll try to get him to come, in the winter when he's hanging around Adams Morgan and Dupont Circle without much to do.

And maybe at that moment will have a little more time to reflect. At the moment there's a lot going on, obviously, around the world, and that's been a big part of the dilemma for President Obama, in general, and for American foreign policy, Africa is often an afterthought, especially in a world with so much terror, and to the extent that African gets brought into the Washington discussion, it's often about its links to the broader terrorism problem, as opposed to thinking about it on its own terms, in its own right.

I just want to say a couple more quick words of background here just to set the table. Then Sarah is going to talk specifically about a couple aspects of President Obama's legacy towards the continent, certainly including human rights issues as well as others. And then Matt will bear down a little bit more on Obama and Kenya, and the specific issue of his origins and his legacy.

But let me sort of remind you in a very broad brush about where we stand today, in regard to a continent of well over a billion people, headed towards 2 billion, probably going to be the fastest-growing continent in terms of population and perhaps economic development in the next couple of decades. And a continent that started to show a lot of promise.

So, in very broad brush, and I'm talking about 54 countries, and so with apologies for a couple of rounding errors and a couple of oversimplifications, this is continent that when I was a Peace Corps volunteer in Zaire, in the early '80s was struggling across the board. And of course we all know the early post-colonial history of Africa, a lot of civil wars, a lot of coups, a lot of Cold War proxy fights that we in Washington, or we in the United States, contributed towards fueling. A lot of stagnation, economic development models that have largely been abandoned or seen to have not been particularly successful. Those early decades were not easy.

And starting in the 1990s, things still weren't easy, we had terrible wars in Rwanda and west Africa. A number of other problems, Ethiopia and Eretria had their famous very deadly border dispute. A lot of other issues arose, the AIDS crisis was full bloom, malaria, or chloroquine-resistant, drug-resistant malaria was spreading, there were a lot of things that were very difficult, but nonetheless you could begin to discern a little bit of progress in Africa.

In terms of economic growth rates, in terms of democracy and human rights, and you could almost say, and some have argued, that from roughly 1990 or '92, or maybe '95, for about 10 to 12 years, there was a real period of sustained progress across the board in much of Africa. And this is where we saw, for example, 15 to 20 countries begin to reach the ranks of some type of democracy. This is where we saw economic growth rates continent-wide, pick up to something in the range of averaging 6, 7 percent a year in real terms.

Now, that was, you know, measured against the population growth rate of 2 to 3 percent, so the per capita income wasn't rising as fast as those numbers would suggest, but nonetheless there was a positive trend line. And that continued into the 21st Century, but in the same time that that's been going on, we've also had in the last few years in particular a bit of a regression.

On overall progress towards democracy, there's been slippage. Freedom House says that Africa sort peaked in terms of its overall number of governments that are democratic or near democratic around 2005. There's been some backsliding since then. Maybe lost about five years' worth of progress, and things are more like they were around the year 2000-2001.

I think they score roughly 10 countries as mostly free, 20 as partly free, and 20 as not

free, and that's a very broad brush, you know, for about 50 of the 54 countries that we are talking about here.

Economic growth rates have declined partly because China's need for commodities has been reduced, and so the growth rates that were around 7 percent continent-wide are now more like 4 or 5 percent which is barely enough to improve standard of living. We've of course had controversies about China's role, and my colleague, David Dollar, by the way, has just written a very nice monograph on this, where I think he tries to calm of these fears.

I'm sure that issue will come up today, and certainly China's role hasn't been all good, and I would say it's probably been more positive than negative, and I think most Africans in polls have agreed with that assessment, that there's a lot to discuss there as well.

So, that is a once-over on the state of Africa, and again, with apologies for the oversimplifications. But now I'd like to turn towards a once over, I'm thinking about President Obama's role, and for that I will turn to Sarah. Again, we know that President Obama has had a deal with wars in the broader Middle East, the rise of China, the resurgence of Russia, global financial meltdown, and all of the domestic challenges.

So, Africa has often been something that he wanted to do more on, but was frustrated, perhaps, in his time and resources that were available for this. There was the very notable Africa Leader Summit a couple years ago here in D.C., but that happened to coincide with the Ebola outbreak, and so even when he has tried to do positive things, or tried to get the attention back towards Africa other things have gotten in the way. And that's sort of where we are today.

So the big-picture question, in addition the question of how is Africa doing, is how has President Obama managed to influence the course of events there, and what legacy does he leave for his successor?

So, with that, thank you for your attention to that quick overview, and now let me turn the floor over to Sarah.

MS. MARGON: Thanks. Thanks, everyone. And thanks, Mike, for inviting me, I'm really happy to be here. I'm going to talk in, again, broad-brush strokes, and I'm quite sure that at least one

person in this room will be able to refute everything I say, and have an alternative reality to what I put forward. So, you are welcome to do that in the Q&A.

It is really hard to sort of pin the continent down and talk about themes or trend lines. I should also mention that Human Rights Watch is full of what we like to say, recovering lawyers. I am not actually one, but what I've learned from many of them, is that when you ask a question of, is this true, or is this right, or how does this work, or how is the record? The answer is always: It depends. And so I think in the case of Obama's legacy in Africa, we can say it really depends. It depends on your perspective, it depends what you are looking for, it depends where you come from.

But let me put a couple of points in context, having worked on the continent for a very long time, and now also seeing it from the lens of global work, where I work with the U.S. Government every day on a range of countries, crises, conflicts, and frankly positive things, every now again, when there are some.

You know, I think what this administration and the president has done, and is really important, is they have not just treated, and he has not just treated the continent as the ones sort of monolith, it has been a collection of countries, that has been regions, that has been individual countries. And that has been very important, in my view, for institutional building. What happens in west Africa is obviously incredibly different than what happens in east Africa, and the southern part of the continent, and even the north.

And that hasn't always happened. We've seen a greater familiarization with what goes in different parts and how that impacts policy. At the same time there have been some very interesting structural issues. The 2012 National Security Strategy for Africa put forward four pillars where democracy and governance was kind of the first pillar the first priority, but what we've actually seen in the ensuing years, is that the resources haven't been quite aligned with that push.

We've seen a decline in U.S. government funding for D&G, democracy and governance, and we've seen a real scale up in development. Power Africa, which I'm sure many of you have heard of, but also security assistance, which has been a growing priority on the continent.

So, it's within that frame that you can sort of see the beginning of priorities that aren't

always sort of tied down to concrete actions. That is, unfortunately, not a problem solely of this administration, I think we see that time and time and again, I'm sure we'll see them the next. But it was notable that there was a push for democracy governance, and I'll put human rights in that basket, and then a decrease in fund, significantly.

So let me talk about a couple of good themes that I've seen. I don't want to say good and bad, but I'll say good, and less good, or good and weaker, because in a lot of ways the jurors are still out on where things end. I mean, the president, obviously, has not left yet, so there are still things that can go in the last six months of his administration.

So, strong messaging: I think we've seen across the board there's been some very strong language, very good speeches on all of his trips, followed up by senior leadership from other parts of the U.S. government that has been very strong. Whether it's on the need to balance counterterrorism and human rights, or support for civil society. The rhetoric has been strong, it has empowered young leaders, it has empowered the business community.

I think we even see in certain countries, ambassadors, U.S. ambassadors who have been empowered by that, and have gone out and given speeches and posted them, and growth in the use of social media to engage not just governments but also individuals, communities, NGOs, and in a way, universities, that hasn't been done in the past. And I think that's been a real positive to engaging large populations, and sometimes disconnected environments.

I would also say LGBT, or LGBTI issues, if you want to call it that; I think this administration has really done a remarkable job in bringing this to the center of its foreign policy. It's been very difficult in much of Africa, it is not only something governments have been resisting to, but it is also something that many local populations and communities are resistant to treating these people with basic fundamental rights.

And I think the administration has basically gotten it right, in terms of how they engage, it hasn't always been public, it hasn't always been a giant push, but it has been a clear priority, I think if you look at the speech that the president, or the response that the president gave to some of the questions when he was in Kenya, he has been very consistent and strong on this, and it has been really impressive

and has supported the community very much.

I think we've also seen a lot really good crisis response, so you can look at Guinea in 2009, Central African Republic in 2012, or Nigeria in 2012, 2013, and the administration kind of kicks into quick action, all hands on deck lots of statements, lots of engagement, big important officials flying in to engage, it's obviously not the U.S. government's job to stop a lot of these crises, but obviously to play a role.

The president has been on the phone with a lot of leaders trying to get them to stand down or stop the crisis, or sort of pull back. I think though it's here where they generally fail a lot of times on the follow up because it hasn't been consistent looking at issues that need to be addressed after the hot moment of crisis passes.

So, whether it's, you know, helping to support rule of law and institution building, or addressing accountability from atrocities, those have kind of fallen by the wayside once the crisis is kind of out of the media, I think we are paying for that now in South Sudan a little bit, which has been, in my opinion, quite bungled, unfortunately, given the strong relationship that the U.S. government had with that country and its independence. We can go into that in Q&A, later in Q&A.

So, I'll just talk very briefly about some of the weaker issues, or some of the areas where I have been very concerned. I would security assistance up at the top. If I'm not mistaken, it has nearly doubled or tripled since the president took office. There are certain countries where you see a dramatic expansion, and the problem is that in many cases this has brought this administration closer to authoritarian regimes, whether it be Rwanda or Uganda.

In Kenya I wouldn't call it an authoritarian regime, but I would say the influx of cash to the Kenyan defense forces as a result of the need to support the fight against terrorists, as they call it, has really in some cases sort of blinded other areas of engagement. And this is very, very worrisome. The irony of course is that when AFRICOM, as many of you I'm sure will recall, was set up in 2007, 2008, there was this concern that it would be this traditional combatant command with a very heavy military hand.

And in fact that didn't happen for its first three years, but under the Obama

administration, what we've really seen is this push on militarization. The funds going in now compared with the decrease in D&G funds show that the CT portion the influx of security systems, has really pushed the administration into a new realm. This isn't to say that there aren't threats on the continent, but it is worrisome to see how the administration engages so starkly with security forces that in many cases have horrific records, at the same time that they are decreasing, as I said, this D&G funding.

And then lastly, I think there is, many of you are familiar with the president's stand with the Civil Society Initiative, and I think on the one hand that's been a very good initiative to push NGOs out there to get the president to meet with a wide range of independent actors, on all of his visits. The problem is it's been kind of selective, or they've chosen when it makes sense to do so.

Opportunities were missed for many years in Uganda, where President Museveni has run the country for a long, long time, with a heavy hand against civil society, and a pretty significant crackdown and repressive actions. Again, there are a lot of missed opportunities, and at the same time, NGOs calling for accountability, and calling for national-level engagement, has been very problematic, because there hasn't been a lot of support for those NGOs, particularly when the governments have pushed back against them.

The administration, I will say, has been really strong on justice with a big J, so supporting international criminal court, whether it's in Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, they've been very robust also trying to go after Bashir, and getting him to show up in the Hague. But other than that big umbrella of justice there's been a much weaker push at national levels, which, you know, could actually have much more of an impact on the individuals affected by various crimes.

So I think I'll stop there so as not to go on too long, but I'm happy to delve into depth, and also talk a little bit more about specifics, because there are, of course, countries where I think, overall, the administration has done a pretty good job in dealing with a number of complicated issues, and other countries where it's been pretty bungled.

MR. O'HANLON: Fantastic, Sarah. One quick follow up before we go to Matt. Let me also say that if anybody wants a seat up front, there are at least a dozen seats up here, you are welcome to take them if you wish.

The follow-up question; you folks at Human Rights Watch are outstanding, and notorious for being the conscience of the policy debate. And so when I hear you sort of say, as many positive things as critical things about President Obama's Africa legacy, that sounds like a pretty good grade coming from Human Rights Watch. Is that an unfair way to summarize it? Obviously I know details of what we want to talk about.

MS. MARGON: Yes. Yes.

MR. O'HANLON: But I'm just trying to put it all together and try to just have one simple, you know, bottom line takeaway. It sounds like on balance, you are saying there's been a fair amount of good, even though there have been also a lot of shortcomings. Is that fair?

MS. MARGON: Yes. And then I think -- I would put it there for now. I do think there have been a lot of shortcomings, and you could argue that some of the shortcomings have been so dramatic. I think the push for security systems, and alignment and support with the authoritarian regimes is what's going to really be a problem going forward, and that's only just beginning now.

So we don't see how that's going to look down the road. That's what really concerns me and could in the end, trump, no pun intended, all of the positives that I have mentioned earlier. You know, Human Rights Watch often gets this reputation as being sort of unfair, or complaining, or unjust, but I think what we are trying to do is show an honest picture, and so when things are good, we are very happy to say they are good.

We are happy to say, hey, this works, this was the right approach, and you incorporated human rights issues into your large national security policy. And look, it worked. Amazing, you didn't think short term, you thought long term, you thought about the big picture. Great.

MR. O'HANLON: Right.

MS. MARGON: We are just not known as well for saying that all the time.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. So, Matt, let me turn to you, and please tell us a little bit about your book project and the themes that you think are relevant to this big-picture question of Obama's legacy on Africa. But I'd just love to hear about the book. Congratulations on its forthcoming publication. Please, over to you.

MR. CAROTENUTO: Yes. Thanks, Mike; and thanks, Sarah, and thanks to Brookings for inviting me. You know, I'm a historian so I think to approach this topic you have to also think about it in its historical context. Did the Obama administration inherit a sort of legacy of African policy for four administrations I'd say, yes.

That to echo what Mike and Sarah have said, African policy or African issues have not usually been at the top of foreign policy initiatives, and so to make that a part of the, sort of, priority of the Foreign Policy Initiative, it would have been a very difficult task for any president, including the first African-American president.

There is also a history of dealing with sort of the language of foreign policy debates about Africa that I think are important, and there has been some efforts to try to change that. In thinking about the African continent, not just a continent of crisis, in need of help or saving, or thinking about development as a term for -- as a synonym of westernization of various institutions; but there has been a continuity in terms of militarization of African policy in the past with Africa.

Other initiatives that have come into play during the Obama administration very much took lessons from the recent past, from the Bush administration and continued them. And so we have to think about these kinds of issues as we move forward in that historical framework. Myself, I came into this topic by mistake; I'm a specialist in western Kenyan history, where Obama's father, and his paternal heritage is.

I was doing my dissertation research in 2004 on rural ethnicity, the community in which Obama's father is from, and I started getting questions as early as February of 2004, about this boy from Chicago. I didn't even know who he was, to be honest, at the time, but I saw basically an interest in Obama and Kenya in particularly, before I think it really hit the United States.

And so there was a moment, there was an opportunity there, and witnessing it from sort of the elements in 2004 all the way though his senatorial visit in 2006, all the way up into the president, and including the 2015 historic visit to Kenya, there's been a real opportunity here, in thinking about it, but it's often colored, I believe, by the politics of history, and the politics of his heritage.

So I think his African-American identity has been an asset abroad, particularly on the

African continent, that diaspora tie in direct ways, has made him readily received in 2008 and 2012 for a moment of celebration across the continent. I mean the Kenyan press deemed Obama, Kenya's gift to America, in 2008. You know, including a national holiday for the country.

So this is not something to just dismiss, but I think there has been some lost opportunities, and it's often in the way that he has been sort of weaved into African history, or Kenyan history in that way, and as a historian part of the issues of my book, so really kind of see how American audiences, and global audiences were often introduced to Kenyan history, African history for the first time, through the Obama story. And the ways that it politicized, on both sides of the spectrum, the famous son of a goat herder narrative that was used by both his political opponents and his political supporters in propping him up.

And I'll just, you know, give one example. In 2004 during the presidential election, I was in Nairobi, and invited to the U.S. ambassador's residence for their traditional election party, and this was when Obama won his senatorial campaign in Illinois which really wasn't a contested fight as many of you would know. And when he was announced as the winner, the U.S. ambassador went over to a particular contingent, led by a Kenyan politician named Raila Odinga, who at that time was wearing a giant American flag tie, and a huge Obama pin in a very high-level audience.

And he congratulated him as if his brother had been elected to the senate of the United States. So, the U.S. ambassador at the time, William Bellamy, did not sort of declare this a victory for Kenya-U.S. relations, or African-U.S. relations more broadly. He fit it very distinctively into the local politics of ethnicity, where Raila Odinga represents the Luo community from which Obama's father is from, and the ways that he has been perceived, in that area, he has had to work against any perceptions of favoritism.

And I often think that this, you know, one of the things we can't dismiss, when we talk about his Africa policy, and particularly in his relationships to Kenya throughout his administration here, it is his political opponents portrayed him to. Even as far as, I think, 2011 there was a CBS, New York Times poll, that said 25 percent of Americans still believe he was not born in the country, 45 percent of registered Republicans believe that at that time.

So, to think that that didn't have an impact, even though I think the president and the administration often laughs at it, often mocks this birth or narrative that's out there. I think it's actually quite important when we think broadly about the legacy and how that maybe allowed him to not engage or delay the engagement until the second term, and I think, I'm sure in Q&A we can talk about the first term versus the second term in terms of level of engagement.

In 2015, on the eve of his presidential visit to Kenya, the first sitting president to ever visit Kenya, you know, The New York Times interviewed David Axelrod, and David Axelrod basically said, you know, of course Donald Trump, running around talking about him being born in Kenya, has impacted our engagement with this particular part of the country. I didn't even need to ask that question.

So, you know, the idea that these kinds of things in the back of the room are there, I think are also important, as we kind of move forward. I'll be happy to talk more about the specifics of the Kenya example. I think I'll stop now.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you, that's great. I want to follow up both of you on a number of issues, before we go to all of you for your thoughts and questions. Let me begin with Kenya a little bit more, and you Matt, and then ask Sarah about that country as well as a few others, because we are trying to make sense of a whole continent's worth of history.

And with apologies to countries I'm not going to list, we know there are probably 6 or 8 or 10 countries that tend to get most of the news, that are the largest countries or the most politically significant, or historically the most significant. And Kenya maybe straddles the line, but since we are talking about Obama, and we are talking about Kenya in that context today, we'll certainly include it.

So, I want to ask -- make sure we talk a little bit about Kenya, Ethiopia, and I think President Obama stopped in Ethiopia on that same trip last year and was -- got into a little bit of trouble for commending them on their state of their democracy. There are a lot of things going well in Ethiopia. We did an event with one of your colleagues a few months ago on Ethiopia. I'm a big fan of Ethiopia. I think, however, one has to be a little bit more guarded in maybe the praise for the current state of politics.

But nonetheless, we can come back to that. Certainly, we should talk more about Sudan, and Sarah mentioned that already; certainly Nigeria, certainly Democratic Republic of Congo, and then

South Africa. There are other countries one could add to the list, but I want to make sure we talk a little bit about those. And we can do it either individually, or more broadly.

I wonder, though, Matt, if you could start with Kenya. And you could talk a little bit about how Kenya is doing, in your mind. Politically, in terms of human rights, which I know Sarah will comment on as well, economically and, you know, what this Obama moment has really meant in the context of broader trends that area underway in one of east Africa's most important countries.

MR. CAROTENUTO: Yes. I mean, as the kind of center of east Africa and, you know, geographically, but also arguably politically and economically, you know, Kenya is an important partner to the United States and important for the region overall. And I think during the Obama administration, we've seen an ebb and flow both positives and negatives coming out of the country.

In 2002 Kenya had the first time in its history where the opposition ever won an election, it was a real moment of celebration, and for, you know, Kenya experts on policy, and Kenyans themselves it was a joyful moment. I think politically that they really thought it was the end or the beginning of the end of some of the autocratic rule that had plagued the country since independence in 1963.

As many of you know, right, five years later the next election was disastrous, the country descended into violence where well over 1,000 people were killed, and half-a-million or more internally displaced. And so that marked, you know, the beginning of the sort of political campaign for presidency in the United States where the end of 2008 was that moment of celebration in Kenya for this kind of connection to U.S. politics.

So, in terms of Obama's connection, what he inherited in dealing with sort of Kenyan issues, is a really fraught moment. Between 2008 and the next election 2013, Kenya did pass a very progressive Constitution in 2010, although that really wasn't implemented until the 2013 election. And, you know, many people, in looking at the 2013 election have talked about the role the Obama administration has played in electoral outcome.

Where you had two politicians, William Ruto and Uhuru Kenyatta, who were both indicted by the ICC at the time of when they were running for the campaign, often referred to as the Alliance of the

Accused in Kenya. And the high-level officials, including Johnnie Carson, assistant secretary of state for Africa at the time, making public statements, not necessarily mentioning them by name, but saying the famous phrase, choices have consequences.

And the Uhuru and Ruto, the two politicians in Kenya at the time in 2013, really used that to their advantage, to paint the ICC as neo-colonial institution, so paint the Obama administration as favoring Raila Odinga, his Luo ally from the West. Of course this confirms the fears that we had that Obama is not just a Kenyan, but he fits into the ethnic politics of the region.

And so a lot of people see that 2013 election as a backslide, even though the politicians there are quite youthful and are not part of the old guard in terms of their career, per se, but have also been kind of taking Kenya back into a more authoritarian regime. Press freedoms have gone down, there's been some human rights abuses particularly in dealing with how the Kenyan state addresses the terrorism issue, and the Somali question. And we can talk more about that.

And of course during this, the first term and in particularly the second term in office, we've seen the regional issue of Al-Shabaab in Somalia. So the first U.S. drone strike happened in June of 2011, and then less than four months later, you have the Kenyan military invading southern Somalia and destabilizing the region. When you look internally in Somalia you have things like Al-Shabaab and I think have been destabilized, that aren't as in control of much territory.

But when you think about it from the Kenyan perspective, they've been wielding attacks across the border in increasing numbers, by the hundreds, and thousands and thousands of people have been impacted, particularly in the northeastern part of the country. And so there's been a real problem in terms of how, I think, the administration has dealt with that question, without engaging in kind of local development issues in the northeast, without engaging in the whole picture.

It's a very complex history, if we look at the borderlands of Somalia and Kenya that go all the way back into the 1960s or before. I don't think that the policy associated with that has been as complex, as it needed to be. And so, I mean, I think Kenya is a real interesting case study, into a place where the Obama Administration had more political capital to spend than probably any other place outside the United States.

And the question is, have they spent it wisely during the administration? The 2015 visit was dubbed really as a, you know, a kind of coming home ceremony. Yes, he was critical of several social issues, he was critical a bit of the regime, but the way Kenya has perceived this was really to legitimize the president, and the vice president legitimized the Jubilee Alliance for local political reason. And it really helped further those policies and some of those authoritarian, I think, initiatives that were helping on the ground.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. Sarah, please feel free to pick up there, and talk about any of the other countries.

MS. MARGON: Yes. Maybe I'll do a quick -- I mean, I agree with most of that. I think one of the things that has been so astounding, is while Kenya is dealing with a very real security threat it is the way in which the Kenya security forces have responded that is so concerning. For long time, the Kenya defense forces have been seen as sort of the better model. It was the police that were incredibly problematic and abusive. There was virtually no accountability. And even when there were set entities or institutions set up to address accountability from the 2007, 2008 election debacle, and forward like the IPOA, the Police Oversight Authority.

The will, sort of a phrase that I hate, but the will from the Kenyans to actually take these decent reports and implement the recommendations, has been very little, and this is not for lack of push of support financially from the U.S. government, but it is a bigger issue, it is a bigger question, of how do you move an institution and a government with whom you are quite close, and sort of make it very clear that the status quo is unacceptable.

And what we have seen now in Human Rights Watch is that after documenting police abuse for many, many decades, is that increasingly we are seeing in the Kenyan defense force, is particularly in the northeastern part of the country, start to play a role in some of this abusive behavior. We actually have a report coming out later this week, looking at some of this; that a colleague of mine has been documenting for a very long time.

And I think, you know, the concern is that counterterrorism isn't a justification for abuse. It isn't sort of this pendulum swinging question, where okay, things are getting worrisome, and so the

policy needs to focus solely on security. Within the benchmark, if you will, of securing human rights, there's a middle ground. And one of the things I have always found as strange about U.S. policy towards Kenya, is that if you take a look a little bit north and west to Nigeria, U.S. policy has been different, and in some cases Nigeria has been battling some of the same problems.

They have this growth of threat from Boko Haram, which is in many cases absent from Abuja, so people in Abuja don't really feel it in the same I think that people in Nairobi do, don't feel the threat in the same way. But U.S. policy has been decidedly, had been, prior to the Buhari election, decidedly cautious. And in fact the escalation of rhetoric was much stronger than I expected.

Now, you argue that the Nigerian security forces were just so bad that there was no way the U.S. could engage and support them; that that government was so blatantly corrupt and abusive, and so outside of the scope of what the U.S. could engage with, that they had no option but to move towards punitive engagement, for the most part, and basically cut off, almost completely, the Mil-to-Mil relationship, while still supporting and engaging with a much more robust civil society that had engaged and actually coalesced in a way that the Kenyan civil society has yet to do.

But I was stuck by it, because it wasn't as if the abuses that were going on in Kenya, when it comes to security forces were any less problematic. You know, I don't want to compare apples and oranges, but it's worrisome, and what it does is it really alienates local populations, and local communities. In both cases it was predominantly Muslim communities that were feeling really alienated from the central government, many of whom had not had a lot of engagement with rule of law, basic fundamentals of sort of a governing authority.

And so it struck me as very interesting, saying, well, the U.S. actually can take a position of strength, and they can engage and sort of say to the Nigerians, ah-ah, you can have lots of senior government officials fly in and saying, ah-ah-ah, before we engage in any meaningful way on this, you need to have a functional election. Now of course, the question in Nigeria is, well, they did have a pretty remarkable election, and the Nigerian people spoke. It wasn't with some flaws, but comparatively to other ones it was quite impressive.

So, what has actually changed in Nigeria that would lead the U.S. to engage in a different

way? What about all the benchmarks that President Buhari throughout their last summer basically a year ago when he came to visit, have those actually been met. Whereas, in the Kenyan sense, we know that most of those have not been met, and U.S. policy sort of chugs along, as it were. And in fact I think what we'll see as an ongoing scale up of security systems in Kenya to fight the terror threat. And meanwhile, a very concerning role from the Kenyan defense forces.

So, it's an interesting power. I've spent a lot of times the last couple of years working on Kenya and Nigeria, and have consistently been surprised to see the differences in U.S. policy, which is good. I mean, that means there's a nuanced policy across the continent, but if you look at them and sort of say, well why here and not there, you know, that begs the question of, sort of, how they make choices within this administration, and how they push the policy forward.

MR. O'HANLON: Before we go on to any other countries, could say a word about Ethiopia. Is it relevant in the same conversation? Or do you use a whole different analytical prism to get at what it's up to these days.

MS. MARGON: Ah! This one gives me a lot of heartburn, I've got to say. I actually the U.S. policy towards Ethiopia has been pretty terrible. I'll give them pretty low marks if you to do it, to say it that simply. I think the president, I understand the interest in going to visit the African Union, and I think the speech that he gave at the African Union was a pretty remarkable speech, that resonated across the continent. But articulating that as a visit to Ethiopia with a meeting at the African Union was the inverse, in my opinion, of what it should have been.

I think going to visit Addis, when there has been no sign of change, and what we have seen since 2009 with the passage of this civil society proclamation and the antiterrorism law, has been a complete hardening and vetting of civil society, a clamp down on independent dissonant voices, a scale up of journalists and independent activists, are either in exile or in prison. If I'm not mistaken, Ethiopia has more journalists in prison that Iran. They even have more now in prison than Eretria, which for instance, we know the Ethiopians don't really want to be part of.

So, to me, the fact that the President would go to Ethiopia is astounding. This is a presidential visit, this is not something that you just do, sort of, because you happen to be the region,

there is a reason to go, and we've seen the tide now changed in Ethiopia since that time.

In fact, we've seen over the last couple of months these protests that have been met with excessive force, not just local police or EMEA Region but by the federal police with indications and examples of torture for, potentially, something that's been supported by the U.S. government. So, to me, it's been a very bungled policy, and it is not -- there's not a lot of room there, for the U.S. to give them a pass.

MR. O'HANLON: Let me ask one more question, and then we'll go to you folks, you good folks here in the audience. And obviously we are just trying to take different ways of getting at Africa at large, with some focus on certain countries. I want to ask a little bit about the question of elections, and how we deal with the phenomenon of benign lifetime democratically elected "forever leaders."

And it's a big problem. We know it's -- We saw people like Museveni and Kagame who have already both been mentioned today do good things in their countries when they came to power, certainly compared to what had happened before. And even Kibela, in my old Peace Corps country of DRC, at least there was an element of quasi stability at least in politics for a while. And now we can't figure out how to persuade these folks to step down when the time is right.

And it's not just the Mugabe's of the world, because I think the Mugabe's of the world, to my mind, are, in Africa today, less and less the problem. Because Africans themselves have figured out in many ways how to put pressure on those people, with support from the international community.

There aren't as many of those people left. There are a few. But I'm more worried about the Kibelas of the world, and maybe even the Kagames, maybe even the presidents who, in broad historical terms, have done amazing things for their country, but unfortunately they start to conflate that progress with the country's need for them indefinitely, and we are mortal, so it can't be a forever solution, and they should maybe be thinking about a little bit more.

Anyway that's a little bit of an editorialized question, but what do we do about this? You know, we are going to have an event here in August on DRC, and Kibelas apparent disinterest in elections, even though it's time for him to allow them, and then to stand down.

One last point I'll make is that I spend a lot of time the last few years on Afghanistan

policy. And for all of his many, many flaws, at least Hamid Karzai did one thing, he stepped down after two terms. Now in his case it was required by the constitution, and he also knew that the United States was not going to tolerate him trying to change the constitution, but he could have tried and he didn't, and somehow he is stepping down, but the Kagames and the Musevenis aren't. So what do we do about this?

And why don't just go ahead, Matt? We'll start with you, and you can talk about Kenya, in particular, or wherever else.

MR. CAROTENUTO: I think part of the issue is linked to this policy of using proxies, right, and using, in terms of fighting against terrorism, which has dominated U.S. policy in Africa in a lot ways, and particularly you have mentioned Kagame and Museveni, are both sort of allies in conflict resolution, a bit large, right. But it's very problematic when you think about, for instance, Uganda and Rwanda's role in the DRC, and particular some parts of the DRC where it's historically, it's either fueling that conflict, playing sides off each other, profiting from it.

Even if they are donating troops to peacekeeping missions in Darfur or Somalia and, you know, at what point does those relationships sort of come into balance? And I think it is a moment where you have to sort of push back. And with the exception of Libya, right, that's been the policy. It's to sort of use sort of African soldiers to fight these large issues, is a good policy, right. You know, it's a local regional sort of efforts in Somalia or in Mali or what not, that are trying to form these coalitions of dealing with regional problems.

But to the expense, or that criticism, of these lifetime dictators, I remember in Iran in 2013, and there being an interview with Kagame, you know, and anytime a President starts to talk of himself in the third person, you know it's a problem, right.

MR. O'HANLON: Only Bob Dole should be allowed to do that. He did it in a charming way.

MR. CAROTENUTO: Yes. "If the people asked Kagame, so what should Kagame say?" Do you know what I mean? Those kinds of things are sign, right, of much, much larger problems. And I think there's a real moment here, I mean, if you look at some of the polling data, the U.S. is very popular

across the continent even today, right; extremely high numbers of popularity. And the Afrobarometer data in 2014, suggests that Africans overwhelmingly support democratic institutions developing in their country, and so you have a lot of local support outside of the upper echelons, let's say, of the quasi dictatorships in that way.

But you know -- So, how do how do you engage local civil society? How do you kind of empower these kind of empower these kinds of social movements that are happening across the continent? I don't think we've necessarily seen as much of that.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. Sarah?

MS. MARGON: So, I'm going to see “Hamilton” next week, up in New York, and there's a reason --

MR. CAROTENUTO: Congratulations.

MS. MARGON: I bought the ticket for a year. But anyway, I bring it up because if any of you listen to the sound track, which we spend a lot of time listening to at my house, there is just one song about -- with Eisenhower, Hamilton and George Washington, when they talk about wanting to step down. And as I work on so many of these African countries, particularly in the Great Lakes region, I am often struck by the fact that George Washington stepped down after two terms, and basically said, it's time to go.

And this, in fact, I recently had a conversation with a senator, who said, I'm going to start using this language with Kibela, I'm going to quote Hamilton to President Kibela, because there's an opportunity to get him to go, and we've got to make sure that happens. And I think this question for the U.S. of how you engage institutions, in many countries that the institutions are weak and nascent, versus engaging the individual is a really important one.

But I'll also say something, and the Human Rights Watch takes no position officially on, you know, term limits, but what we have noticed in many of these countries where the presidents stay endlessly and endlessly, is that there's always a parallel of track of repressiveness and human rights violations. It sometimes starts sort of in the beginning, and if you look at Congo we've seen a real escalation in attacks against peaceful protestors.

We've seen a crackdown against dissonance in civil society, young people in Congo, including some of the President's YALI representatives, were at a meeting to talk about the Congolese strategy for, you know, elections, and a number of them ended up in prison, and it was raided by the Intel services. And so you see this at the beginning, this crackdown sometimes by the Intel services sometimes by the police, and it's very, very worrisome, because it not only indicates a hardening of positions, but it also shows that any attempts to push back against that hardening by the people themselves is going to continue to squashed until they are basically either too afraid to go out of their houses; or in prison or exile, or just killed.

And so, you know, you look at countries that are much further down the line. If you look at President Museveni in Uganda, I mean the man is basically the original architect of how to stay in office. He changed the constitution like 10 years ago, so he could stick around.

And at some point, you know, I think the administration has done very well, and the president's speech was very human at the African Union, when he talked about, hey, I'd love to stay, but it's time to go. But I think people would like me to stay, right, but I'm going to go. And that was real, and it was very personal. And one of the things that strikes me is sort of making clear continually through policy as well as personal engagement, but it's not just about you and your security, which, you know, there are always ways to figure out how to do that, or what you might do after you leave office.

But it's also about letting the next generation take over, and that I bring to -- or the parallel the president's support for the young leaders across the continent I think has been incredibly important. It's not particularly a human rights issue, except that you have so many young, hungry people, many of whom are very well educated, and experienced to know how to work technology, that is a nice parallel to be able to say to some of the leaders, including ones like Kibela who are quite young frankly.

Okay, your time to go, got to let the next generation get in here. They've been taught well, they've engaged, they want to see their country move forward, and I think the President has done, that is a nice legacy issue for him, this YALI Leadership Initiative. I don't know whether it will be institutionalized, or whether the next president will take it on, maybe it's something he takes with him. But I think engaging the young population, in a very democratic and open way has been a real productive

process for him.

MR. O'HANLON: I know. Yes. Actually I'm going to follow up -- Matt wants to ask one too. But I realize Human Rights Watch doesn't want to take a position on term limits, but it's starting to strike me more and more that maybe the U.S. government should, because if we have this play in our policy, where as long as something is constitutionally allowable, and within the checks and balances and laws of other country, we tolerate any number of terms, which is essentially our policy I think.

Then it allows people to decide for themselves if they are, you know, essential to their country's future. And in Afghanistan we had no such willingness. It was very clear, and I think it was an essential element of our policy, I can't imagine the Afghanistan mission, whatever its troubles, still being sustainable in any way if Karzai weren't in his third term, and we just had enough is enough. And he got the message, and he may try to come back, so maybe this whole example won't work very well in a year or two.

But it strikes me that with Kibela, Kagame, Museveni, others, there's a situation now where they can sort of interpret for themselves whether they deserve and exemption from sort of this international norm that two terms is generally enough, and maybe need to be a little more emphatic.

Matt, let me start with you. Is there a case for that as a broad U.S. policy, that you know, ever so often there could be, you know, in a wartime emergency setting, a one-term additional exception, but basically we have a blanket policy, two terms is enough lifetime? Would that be a good idea?

MR. CAROTENUTO: I think a lot of Africans probably would support that idea. At least, you know, the people I talk to in east Africa I think would. If you think about it, in the context -- I mean I was thinking about the Kenya case and President Moi stepping down in 2002 after 24 years of autocratic rule, it was like a wonderful moment for Kenyan democracy because you didn't have an incumbent. To trying to either rig an election with violence, or running on any sort of particular platform.

Yes, he did favor a particular candidate, but it was a real moment for, I think, people to think about change, and so when that issue of incumbency, and it's taken away at particular moments, it seems to be a great moment or the country to think about that.

The other thing I would just like to sort of mention, and I would interested when we talk in

the Q&A, from the audience, because you might know more about it than I do. Is the sense that, sort of how do we see Obama's legacy impacting the African continent after he leaves office, right? If we think about him being a fairly young individual, with the fundraising capacity of perhaps a Clinton type foundation in the future.

I mean, he did famously say, in the visit of Kenya, "You might see me back here, but next time I won't be wearing a suit." I doubt that but -- that he won't be wearing a suit, but I do think that we'll see some engagement with him after he leaves office, and I have no idea how to predict what that would be.

MS. MARGON: I just want to say, I mean one of the things we've seen in the Great Lakes region is leaders have gotten smarter, right, and more nuanced in how they go about extending their terms. So it's not all out war anymore or conflict, they just change the law, and you see time and time again, that the communities, the populations, the citizens of those countries generally protect.

I think in Rwanda, you probably would have seen a number of people out there protesting, if they knew they weren't going to get shot, or killed, or detained or disappeared, and the petition that President Kagame seem to manifest that showed lots of -- thousands and thousands of people supporting his decision to change, it's questionable.

I mean, you mentioned earlier, like the Rwanda's success -- development successes, and I think we take those with a grain of salt, because the numbers for all these development successes, are questionable to me, in a country where you can't question authority, and you can't dissent against the status quo.

What happens to you if your survey show, in fact, that the water isn't reaching everybody it should, or the public house successes aren't reaching the expected number. So the question of how dissent plays into development successes is a really important one. It's not say that people haven't benefitted in Rwanda tremendously in the last number of years, they have. That's clear.

But is it at the level that everyone has it at, and it goes to the question of, if the people of that country don't want a leader to stay, how does the U.S. engage, and what do they do? Particularly if there's a parallel track of repression and self-censorship that makes them unable to protest. And I think

that's a very concerning development.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. Let's go to you folks. We'll take two questions at a time. Please identify yourselves, if you could keep it just to one question per person. We'll start here in the first and second row, and then go to round two.

SPEAKER: Good morning. Thank you for the panel and the audience who are here today. My name is Afeme Akibi, I'm with African Trade and Development Council, and I'm Nigerian. The biggest question for us in the continent is Obama did not do enough to repair race relation between the U.S. and the African continent. So I also refer the need that he didn't discuss properly the negative inheritance of history in the continent that leaves us in this development stagnating position.

That people are saying we are progressing, some of us have doubts. That's my question, what could he -- Did he do enough on issue of our history, as into our development, and as into race relationship in the U.S., not at this (inaudible).

MR. O'HANLON: You are talking about white-black race relations primarily, not --

SPEAKER: I'm talking about slavery and the consequence of slavery and the demarcation of the continent as it stands today. We are talking Rwanda, it was never Rwanda before, before European named it.

MR. O'HANLON: Right. And then over here, please. And then we'll go to responses.

SPEAKER: Thank you very much. My name is Nia Kweti. I am now with the African Immigrant Caucus. I think the discussion has been just wonderful, the only drawback is the time has been way too short. There are so many aspects to come at it. There are few things to, you know, disagree with, but I think, Mike, your last question about U.S. relationship with these undemocratic regimes in Africa. I think that is key. The only -- I will take exception to the fact that it is because of fighting terrorism, that is true, the U.S. history of embracing dictators in Africa goes back before Africa because independent.

From apartheid, I know you worked on that, and other things. So it's a habit that the U.S. has of engaging dictators thinking that you can do business with them quickly, and my argument then is, to change that it would have to come from public opinion in this country to insist that as being a

democracy we have no business propping up dictatorships who are doing all kinds of horrible things on the continent. Don't leave it on the Africans, the U.S. policy has to be changed from here. I wonder if you agree or disagree. Thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. Matt, do you want to start and take either question, and then Sarah and I could come in?

MR. CAROTENUTO: Yes. I guess, when you look at some of the speeches, I'll take the historical question first; you know, when you look at his visits to Ghana, or his visits to (Inaudible) and Senegal, I think there's an acknowledgement of that past, of the colonial past, of even the legacy of slavery but, trying to undo that from that perspective, whether it's through reparations, or what not, I don't think there has been that engagement in a lot of ways.

But I think one of the lost opportunities that might be a way of repairing a lot of those sort of Atlantic world kind of interactions that we've seen throughout history, is through the new diaspora as well, as linking the old sort of African diaspora with the new diaspora. We have a huge population of African descent. People born on the continent living abroad in the United States, around the world, you know, contributing billions of dollars, 40 or 50 billion I think, up to today, a year.

They are an increasingly powerful political force, and it will be interesting to see how future administrations, I think, deal with that population's efforts to try to change things on the continent, invest, change things politically for themselves, and for their homelands in that way. I know that there are several contingencies trying to get voting rights, definitely in the Kenyan contacts, there's a large contingent of diaspora of Kenyans here, in D.C. of course, that are looking to try to -- you know, be able to vote, have a representative abroad.

I think that's a dimension that we have to consider when we think about sort of identity politics and historical connections, that is going to be an increasing important one moving forward. Maybe I'll stop there and let you fill in, please.

MS. MARGON: Maybe I'll just, quickly, on the embracement of dictatorships. I don't think it's simple anymore. I wouldn't say that there's a consummate embrace. I mean even in the case of Rwanda, with President Kagame, if you look at some of the public statements over the last three to five

years, from the State Department, there has been increasing concern about the direction that country is going in. Is it enough? Have there been consequences for the hardening of authoritarianism? No.

But it's not quite so simple. One thing I do think as you talked about stability, and I think as you see the Pentagons around the continent grow, it's much easier and perhaps more important for the Pentagon to have a stable partner, that it is for sort State Department which engages, you know, not just governments but also academics, and civil society and business. And so I think this is going to be an interesting dynamic going forward because this President has enabled a lot of private partnerships, has encouraged entrepreneurial development across the continent.

And so how that plays out in a counter to that traditional stable government, and how these Africans push back against that, is going to be, I think, something very important to watch, and frankly it could be quite a positive legacy of building up both the young and the entrepreneurs who are intolerant of that kind of support.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. We'll go to the second round. So, here in the fourth row, and then we'll go over here to the third row. She will take three this time, so we'll take both of you after her.

SPEAKER: Hi. My name Sara, I'm a legal research fellow with the American Bar Association. My question has to do with refugees and IDPs, they outnumber Syrian refugees 3 to 1 in sub-Saharan Africa. And we've sort of seen how the West, broadly, has responded to this, and I think, unfortunately, that position will just continue to be overlooked, especially as there's this emphasis on counterterrorism and other security issues. So, I was wondering if you could elaborate on that.

MR. O'HANLON: And now I'll take both these questions over here, please, together, and then the responses. To the lady first.

MS. TSADIK: My name is Hannah Tsadik, I'm from the Life & Peace Institute based in Addis. I would say that U.S. foreign policy engagement has been quite robust kind of at the bilateral level, and also with some of the strategic sub-regional organizations, such as EGAT, for example, in the Horn of Africa. But sitting in Addis and engaging with the African Union on a very consistent basis, I would say, from my perspective, the U.S. engagement at the continental level, especially vis-à-vis the AU,

has been relatively weak, especially as compared with the Europeans, and especially the European Union, even China is inching in and building buildings, et cetera.

So, symbolically, Obama gave his wonderful speech and the U.S. does have an ambassador to the African Union, but I would still say that the engagement has been weak comparison to the bilateral efforts as well as with other international actors. If you agree with that picture, what do you believe the rationale is for not coming in as strongly in terms of supporting continual-level efforts, and continental-level organizations?

SPEAKER: Thank you. I'm David Barrows, I'm retired. I was wondering, foreign policy is generally implemented by the Department of State, and very often it's initiated by the Department of State, and I'm wondering how much is African policy originate in the White House versus at the State Department, and which entity has the better record?

MR. O'HANLON: Would you like to start and take any one of the three? And we'll see if maybe we can each take one.

MS. MARGON: So, on that last question. The honest answer is, both I don't know and it depends, because I'm not on the inside. I think in some cases the White House has really been in charge of policy. I think that has been particularly true around presidential visits and in the run up to them. So on his trip to Kenya and Ethiopia there was, you know, a lot of advanced planning where they should have took the bull by the horns.

But I will also say the U.S. ambassador in Kenya, is quite strong, and has really led on policy for a long time, so it's been one of those rare examples where you don't have only state leading, but you actually have the ambassador on the front line, so to speak, doing the leading, which I have found to be very positive. I would also, again, say that I think the Pentagon is increasingly playing a role. This is not something I've been worried about in the past couple of years, I was worried about almost a decade ago, but I have come to be re-concerned about the Pentagon and the combatant commander's role on the continent.

Not in and of itself is bad thing, but how they engage with the authoritarian regimes, security forces that are worrisome, and how they work collectively with state. Not to mention all of those

agencies that, of course, are in the dark that we don't know about on the continent.

The question, I think, your question about the AU and regional. My guess, my best guess is that it's a question of effectiveness, so EGAT and the question of South Sudan, that was obviously the regional entities, the regional governments playing a role. I know there's been a very big push in this administration to work more with the AU, but they've had a lot of speed bumps, and we've seen in a number of areas that they have been less than effective as a body on the continent. And so I think it's probably a question of its resources and effectiveness in terms of that type of continental versus regional engagement.

MR. O'HANLON: And Matt, the refugee question is still there, and whatever else you want to --

MR. CAROTENUTO: Yes. I mean, just -- I think the state -- I would probably argue again, with the kind of increasing militarization of African policy is that the Department of Defense is more involved than they may have been in the past, and sort of taking away some of those discussions that may be more forefront at the State Department. I think the White House had to push issues because African and African affairs were never at the top of the agenda, so unless the White House pushed it, it wasn't going to reach that level, internally, you know, in those debates.

In terms of the refugee question, I think it's a very important one, and IDP, internally displaced peoples, is a big issue. You know, if I take east Africa, for example, many of you might be found the current debate of current deciding to close one of the largest refugee camps in the world, the Dadaab, basically, have used it as a threat to gain more money from the international community for funding. Have some real security concerns with either radicalization within that refugee population or the porous border regions, and trying secure it, so I can acknowledge that.

However, you know, their efforts to basically close this camp by the end of the year, really flirt with sort of violations of the international law. And so, where has, you know, the public been? Where has the international community been, to really be vocal opponents to that? And I think it's been a relatively weak response with even the U.N. making some sort of concessions towards these Kenyan demands recently.

So I think it's an example of some of the problems of dealing with the refugee situation for a variety of reasons. Of course each reason has its own complexities and its own issues, but if you take that as an example, I mean, the security relationship with Kenya, the security relationship with Kenya and their involvement in Somalia seems to be trumping. Again, the ability to really engage with these human rights questions in terms of refugees and its own security on the ground.

MR. O'HANLON: I have one more point before we go for another round of questions, which, I'm glad for the attention to AFRICOM, and I share a number of the concerns and theory, but I also want to make the perhaps politically slightly incorrect statement, I could also see in some ways that Africa policy hasn't been militarized enough, and here is what I mean by that. We have let Libya stay in chaos, and the number one reason is because the White House did not want to stay engaged in Libya after the overthrow of Gaddafi.

There is an enormous irony, and I'm a supporter of President Obama on balance. I voted for him twice, and I've written more favorably than unfavorably about his foreign policy, but there's an enormous irony in the person who came to office lambasting George Bush for having had no plan to stabilize Iraq after the overthrow of Saddam Hussein, overthrowing Gaddafi with even less of a plan for what to do afterward, except hope the Europeans do it right.

And so in this case, what we needed from the get-go, and still today, is a more serious concept for development of regional security forces in Libya in particular. And this point I'm not even sure you can do it, at a national unity level. We have a colleague in Italy who has written a paper on the Brookings website about how we may even need to think about autonomous zones in Libya at this point.

It may be too late to realistically aspire to a national army or police, at least in the short term. But I think we actually have been too willing, and this is not because of AFRICOM, it's because of the White House. We've been too willing to just let chaos reign in Libya.

One more point I would make and, again, sort of building off this slightly flip comment of mine, that we haven't militarized Africa policy enough. As many of you know the Department of Defense's top goal in Africa for decades has been to minimize its role there. And in AFRICOM, in the case of AFRICOM, part of the purpose of AFRICOM, is to keep a ceiling on any kind of engagement to a very

modest level.

Yes, a little more than before, but still at the level primarily of military-to-military exchanges, and limited training, and I have a concept for DRC that I've been promoting for the last couple of years. I don't think the moment is right until we see elections there, but I would like to see the United States take one of these wonderful brigade concepts that we've developed in Iraq and Afghanistan called an Advise and Assist Brigade, or our Security Forces System Brigade, where we break down the unit into a number of mentoring teams, have them go out into the field.

And there are logistics support, some command and control, and some rapid reaction if anything happens that goes awry, and we try to actually help the indigenous military get better at their own operations. All reports to the contrary, notwithstanding, it's showing some headway in Afghanistan, over the years, and I think we should do it with the Congolese army, once we had a new leader, assuming a successful presidential transition.

Because right now the U.N. force in Congo is essentially just sitting on the problem. It's 20,000 strong, which is a tiny force for a country of that size, the Congolese military is not really getting better, and so this is just an indefinite need for a Band-Aid on a problem that, luckily, isn't quite as bad as it was a decade ago, but also isn't getting any better.

So I can see the case for actually a greater degree of focused American Military engagement in Africa, but I'll finish on this point. I think we are going to need to resolve a couple of these issues about how we think about democracy and elections, so the military can operate within a proper foreign policy construct that hasn't yet been provided to it. So we don't -- The Military doesn't know whether to try to think creatively about how to engage with the DRC's army, because no one has really told us if we should think of that army as a partner or as a problem. It's actually both.

But until we have a broader, higher level political guidance on how to think about cooperation with DRC, it's not going to be realistic to think that the military is going to have new, creative ideas. So, I'll just throw that additional thought into the mix, and my colleagues may come back at me in a couple of minutes on any of those points.

But first, we'll go to you. So, we'll do one more round in the front, and work our way back.

These two gentlemen here, starting over here on my right, please?

MR. LAGOKE: Thank you very much, sir. My name is Naka Lagoke, I'm from the Ivory Coast. When I saw the topic I didn't want to miss it, because all of us, you know, we have interest in Africa, and with President Obama. I am one of those millions of Africans who, of course, were very happy to see a black president in the United States, in the light of the history of America. But people like me, millions again, who area very disappointed about -- with Obama's policy in Africa.

And I know you guys are Americans, you have your way of speaking, but the first two Africans who spoke, you know, they spoke about the history of Africa. And sometimes when we listen to Americans speaking even though many of you, you know, believe in human rights, in democracy and freedom, sometimes, you know, we have the impression that you are -- You know, you underestimate, you know, the stigma of the African history on the African realities.

And when I had the opportunity to debate with Corrine Dufka on April 1st, on "Democracy Now," when I was talking about the (inaudible) dimension in Ivory Coast crisis, she wanted to dismiss it four days after our debate. When we see France, a former colonial master, with the U.N., going into a crisis in Ivory Coast to bomb presidential palace and universities and everything, there is no other name than neo-colonialism in African politics.

And President Obama sometimes, you know, he did not take into account. This is one thing I wanted to say, and today, I'll do -- when you see Libya and Ivory Coast, how people that we have admired, maybe the next President Hilary Clinton, or even President Obama, talking about democracy in the case of Libya, and we know that those who were going after Gaddafi, were not democrats.

And then today we can see, you know, the consequence of American foreign policy in Libya, and the same thing in Ivory Coast. Babu is in prison, and Babu's wife is in prison, hundreds of people are in prison in Ivory Coast, and there is no democracy in Ivory Coast, but all of a sudden, all those who are talking about democracy, in the case of Ivory Coast, they became silent.

So, this is my suggestion, that when you guys are doing all those conferences, please do not forget the history of Africa, and also how those colonial -- former colonial masters are evolved in African domestic politics, and how they take side in order to advance their interest, and people like me,

we think that sometimes when it comes to those conferences, you know, we have to take -- in a very respectful way, we would like to bring that to your attention. That will be -- That's my contribution.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you.

MR. LAGOKE: Thank you very much for your patience.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you, sir. Over here.

MR. STOUT: Brian Stout, Foreign Policy magazine. You sort of mention the U.S. D&G funding -- or the U.S. Security and Development Funding comes at the expense of funding for democracy and governance assistance, and in Africa among the international elite, that is a discussion whether what should come first democracy or development.

Indeed, it was the theme topic for the Mo Ibrahim Foundation Summit last year, in Accra, and the Ethiopian foreign minister came down very heavily on the side that Ethiopia has a plan for us to be able to be a consolidated democracy someday, we need to develop and have a higher standard of living first.

And that has been the pattern of historical development of countries is that before consolidating democracy, looking globally here, that they tend to have a solid foundation of the rule of law of the market economy, and that allows democracy to grow. Just as an example, France was not a consolidated democracy until the 1870s, and Britain not until the 1880s.

So, my question for the panel, and Sarah in particular, is why should Africa be different? Why is there an urgent impetus to put the cart of democracy before the horse of development?

MR. O'HANLON: And I think that, Matt, will probably want to speak to that as well, so go ahead.

MS. MARGON: I don’t think I'm saying put it first, I'm saying don’t squash it, right. I think what we see in countries, Rwanda and Ethiopia being two very prime examples, you have countries that have succeeded in a lot of development initiatives, Ethiopia gets extraordinary amounts of development aid right now. And I'm not saying they don't have a need for this, that they shouldn’t get it, but what I am questioning is why that continues at this -- unabashedly, and yet there is very little comment when you see political rights being completely undermined or restricted.

And so, they don't have to come in a sequenced way in my mind, you will likely, as I'm sure you know, the guidance and theory goes that if you have a community that has more bread and more water, they are going be more interested in their rights, because they've got their basic needs taken care of. But I think what we are seeing, is that's -- what I'm saying is, that may well be true, but what we are looking at is a government from the top who is now allowing those opportunities for political rights to develop.

And so, how you can encourage development without supporting at the same time, the opening of political space in a country is to me very problematic.

MR. STOUT: Would you say that all government aid are (inaudible)?

MS. MARGON: Generally, we don't -- I mean, Human Rights Watch doesn't support conditionality on development aid, it's going directly to the people. We, as an example, don't call for large-scale sanctions on a country, we are more targeted sanctions on individuals. It's not the people that we, as an organization, necessarily want to see impacted by bad -- it's not the people -- And bad decisions are made by a government and harmful decisions are made, it's not the individual people and population that we want to see impacted negatively, it's the government that needs to change.

And so it's those individuals that need to be conditioned or sanctioned. But I think what we do question is the legitimate development successes when you have communities that are unable to speak their mind freely, to conduct independent research and assessments. That doesn't mean there aren't successes, but what it does is it makes those questions the full scale viability of complete successes that are being attended.

MR. O'HANLON: Matt, do you want to comment?

MR. CAROTENUTO: Yes. Just kind of briefly on that. I think the converse is also true. I mean, if you look at somewhere like Rwanda and Ethiopia which is, you know, developing, right, at least in terms of the macro numbers, what happens when that slows down? I mean, what is the call going to be at the local level? Are they going to accept the kind of, you know, autocratic rule that someone like Kagame is wielding when the country is not forward at a pretty rapid rate?

I mean, if you look at the early 1990s at the end of the Cold War and the sort of removal

of some of the aid packages to these, you know, big dictatorial leaders of the post-Colonial era, you know, that coincides with the real local push for democratization at the local level, and so it's because the economy was in crisis, in places like Kenya in the late 1980s, and early 1990s, that you get -- one of the reasons is that you get the push from multi-party politics.

In terms of the historical question, I mean, thank you, I'm a historian, so absolutely. You know, colonialism, and the legacy of colonialism is a real thing and something we cannot dismiss, you know, we are only 50 years removed from it. The players are still there, both, you know, why is France leading the charge in Francophone African security initiatives? Well, obviously, because they have post-Colonial, you know, economic and political interests and they form the colonies; and maintaining that influence, and we need to always be aware of that.

You know, the other question is also that the Colonial legacy, at least up until recently, has also impacted the African leadership's situation. I mean, I remember in 2007 in the run up to the elections in Kenya there was an effort by the Kenyan police forces to root out an organization called Mungiki. And they used the technique where they basically surround a slum called Mathare one day, and they decided to round up all the young Kikuyu men as guilty until proven innocent.

Well, that was led by the Ministry of Defense in the interior at the time, was a former Colonial officer, who had been in power since independence, and actually was in power during 1954 when the British led something called Operation Anvil, in Nairobi, where they basically surrounded the city, and over a course of several weeks rounded up all the young Kikuyu men during the Mau Mau crisis and arrested them.

And so, where were those techniques founded, where were they talked about? We have to kind of think about them, not just in the perspective of abroad, and I think for instance, when we mention AFRICOM, right, the rollout to AFRICOM in 2007, and particularly those, it was very much about what? This is a neo-Colonial institution.

I think Africans has a point, right, in thinking of it that way. Is this the United States Military playing a more much active role by forming this organization, particularly off the continent and thinking about it this way? So I think the historical dimension, thank you for raising it, I means is very

important, and we can't dismiss it.

MR. O'HANLON: I have one more point though on this, with all due respect, and I'm very glad you brought west Africa. I'm not going to let a defensive bog (inaudible) be the last word on the Ivory Coast. Not that you were defending, you were defending his political and legal rights, as I heard you, but I think I'm at least as nervous about western countries saying Africa is too hard. Certainly in the United States debate. This is more often our problem than over-meddling in my judgment at this point.

I think in Ivory Coast the French did a good thing in helping the Ivory Coast population which had democratically elected someone else sustain the rule of law in their own country. And we've seen west Africa become a relative bright spot in the continent in recent years, mostly because of what west Africans themselves have done, but occasionally, with targeted piece of work from the outside. So that would be my interpretation of what's happened in Ivory Coast, but nonetheless others will obviously disagree including you.

We are going to go another round. So, let's go to the far back and I see a woman in the red shirt, and then someone else in a gold shirt. We'll take those two, please.

SPEAKER: Thank you very much. My name is Megan McNulty, and I'm at Robert F. Kennedy Center for Human Rights. And so I want to go back to the political rights and human rights, that we, as America, but also President Obama's administration, have not been able to secure or help secure. And you've mentioned several times, Ethiopia and missed opportunities, and Kenya and Nigeria. But I'm also thinking of times where our political ties have overshadowed those human rights; specifically, Morocco and the western Sahara, and our kind of lack of attention and effort there.

And so, I'm wondering what we can do. So we talked about what has happened, and what President Obama has done or not done, but in the last six months of his presidency as well as whatever administration is to come, where should be focus our efforts. If we are to avoid a neo-Colonial concept, or kind of theme of actions, where does that take us, and what does that look like. Thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: And then one more question here. Yes, ma'am?

MS. CACHO: Good morning. I'm Joyce Cacho, principal of Adinura Advisory, an independent strategic advisory firm. I've been living and working and working in Africa since 1977. Don't

ask me my age. So, two questions in reference to, in the opening statement, Sarah, you refereed to D&G funding going down, and the militarization of the budgets that do go to Africa. And, as a person that has a bit of longer perspective on Africa, and where it's been, and where it is today, how it got there, I get concerned -- I got concerned on how D&G messaging was delivered to the continent.

Without acknowledging the short history of the United States in D&G, and as the messengers didn't know their own history, and their own perspective, they delivered in a form that said it's a static thing. One of the great speeches amongst the many of President Obama, was to remind us that democracy is a process that continually needs the citizens, and citizens' responsibility to improve.

I am hoping that in November we all take that very seriously here in this country. So in terms of effectiveness of messaging, I think that if one is going to focus on D&G budgeting, we need to know ourselves better, and certainly the ones delivering the message on democracy and governance need to deliver that message, acknowledging our own history.

Secondly, as one looks at the budgets, I wonder, I wonder. You hinted at it on the private -- the emergence of the private involvement in the young leaders, I would encourage you to look at the perspective that we, U.S. investors, yes, we U.S. investors, are also interested in stability for all the flows of capital that we are interested in diversifying our pension funds into, et cetera, et cetera.

So please take into consideration capital market issues, because the mortar between the bricks of this very confusing world that we are living in, is the financial capital markets.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. Okay. If either of you wish to start?

MS. MARGON: I actually have a question to the question of the woman in the red shirt, just to clarify.

MR. O'HANLON: Sure.

MS. MARGON: You sort of said: What should "we" be focusing on? Is we the U.S. government, is we the people in this room? I don't know who we is, to better answer your question.

MR. O'HANLON: The microphone back, please?

SPEAKER: The next administration in the next six months of President Obama administration, but I think also being in human rights, what can we kind of blow the whistle on, because

we are concerned about neo-Colonialism all the general concerns already talked about, but you can answer whatever option you want really.

MS. MARGON: Okay.

MR. O'HANLON: Please?

MS. MARGON: I guess I can start there. I mean, I think six months is not a lot of time for major changes, and what we have sort of seen not just in Africa, but the administration is increasingly moving to sort of transactional engagement. So release the political prisoners, successful military operations where nobody is harmed, and local communities can go back. But you have processes in countries that are not aligned to the U.S. either budget or its own election process.

And so I think I if look sort of big, one of my -- sort of my bugbears, so the areas I think I've spent a lot of time looking at, is increased your security systems and I'm sure you've all heard me say a million times. But sort of how that plays out on the continent, how the U.S. engages with security forces, and how the tie to that issues of accountability, issues of rules of engagements, civilian protection, monopoly of force, all these things are really important.

The Peacekeeping Summit that the president hosted almost a year ago, has the potential to have some very strong outputs down the road, but that's one piece of how the U.S. engages the security forces on the continent. There's obviously many more projects. So that's (a), and then (b), I would say civil society support -- and here to your D&G question, it's a completely fair point.

When I think of D&G funding now, I think of U.S. support for civil independent -- real independent actors, a whole range of them, who look at sort of more difficult issues, like, you know, accountability, transparency, basic rights, lawyers who are supporting political prisoners, that type of support. But also independent media, using new and creative tools to engage in increasingly restrictive environments, that type of support is so important.

Yes, getting political prisoners or journalists out of jail is always wonderful, it's wonderful for them, it's wonderful for their families and friends. But it seems often, that once somebody comes out of prison, there's someone else swept up in the process, and so it's looking at how the U.S. can do a better, and some cases a more creative job, of providing that support those groups, so that they can

flourish and be the ones who can keep a check on the government in question.

MR. CAROTENUTO: Yes, just a few things. I mean, I think if we look at history in the perspective of our recent U.S. policy history, I mean, in the last years of the last two administrations we've seen some pretty big African initiatives come into focus. You know, AGOA comes into focus in the later years of the Clinton administration, which has just been renewed. I think that commercial diplomacy has to be an integral part to engage those entrepreneurs at the local level, but if you look at the history of something like AGOA, you have it heavily favoring oil-producing states and South Africa, in general.

So, it's not regionally balanced, it's not across the continent that these kinds of programs were being felt. You know, right in the later years of the bush administration you have the big push for HIV/AIDS funding, which has seen some impact. I think, you know, Nigeria saw 500 percent increase in funding over the last 10 years, and has seen a decrease, a sizeable decrease, roughly 18 percent of HIV/AIDS infection rates.

So the risk, you know, you'd have to look closer at the correlation of those two numbers, but there is some, you know, precedence for pushing for some big African policies and initiatives during the last, kind of, years of the presidency.

In thinking a little bit about what to do, I think also supporting, you know, I agree with Sarah definitely, supporting local media expression, freedom of expression, one of the things we haven't mentioned is during the Obama administration, seeing the proliferation for social media across the Continent, and African actors really being a kind of civil local journalists in that way. I mean, I was watching in real time, you know, the opposition leader in Uganda being arrested for just standing outside of his home. So did others, even though there was a block by the Ugandan government on social media, people found a way around that.

And supporting those kinds of initiatives I think really do increase local dialogue and have shown that not just sort of supporting local initiative, but even supporting African's image abroad, how it's being portrayed. Some of you may have remembered in 2013, 2014, up until the presidential visit to Kenya in 2015, CNN got quite a bit of flak for calling Kenya hot bed of terrorism.

And, you know, one of the biggest push backs was from Kenyans with the hashtag,

someone-tell-CNN. They mocked that organization, so much so that the vice president flew to Nairobi to apologize, which shows not just the power of that social industry, but the power of an emerging market like Kenya, for CNN's bottom line. So, I mean, that's a powerful kind of tool moving forward that we haven't necessarily talked about, but the successive administrations are going to have to deal with.

MR. O'HANLON: Well said. I think we'll look for one last wrap up question and then see how quickly we can get through to finish up more or less on time. So, let's see; the woman here in the white dress; let's see if your question can bring us to tying it all together.

SPEAKER: Elise Mesfin, Ginbot 7 Movement for Democracy. This is specifically a question for Sarah. You mentioned the Obama policy in Ethiopia has been terrible, thanks for saying, that's what a lots of Ethiopian say. Anyway, we have lost complete hope with this administration, so this administration is a lost cause as far as Ethiopia is concerned. What is your -- Now, as you might be aware, Senator Cardin introduced a resolution, a very strongly-worded resolution, that's co-sponsored by who of who of the Democratic members of Congress.

And so going forward, is the message, not for this administration, but for the next administration, because something has to change in Ethiopia or else Ethiopia is going to implode. I mean the status quo is just untenable in Ethiopia. So, working on Ethiopia for a long time, you know it as front and back of your hands. What's your recommendation for the next administration, whoever that might be?

MR. O'HANLON: We'll, take one last quick question for Matt. If anybody has final last quick for Matt, and we'll give them, each, the floor one more time, and if not then I'll just -- Okay, sir? And then we'll finish up.

SPEAKER: Hi. I'm Jack Ferretti. Dr. Carotenuto was my advisory in college, so I'll go since.

MR. CAROTENUTO: We didn't plant you there, don't worry.

SPEAKER: So I'm just going to piggyback off the refugee question from earlier. You mentioned the Dadaab situation. Is there a path forward for citizenship in Kenya for those people? Is there a production role that the administration can play the current administration can play and because,

you know, keeping the people in perpetuity in camps and a solution there? Thanks.

MR. O'HANLON: So, Sarah? And then Matt; and we'll be done.

MS. MARGON: Thank you on the Ethiopia question. It's a really tough one, because as Addis plays and increasingly central role on the continent, I don't expect the next administration whoever is in office to change significantly, U.S. policy to Ethiopia, and so I think policy change lies with Congress and the introduction of that Ethiopia resolution in the Senate, and a similar one in the House actually, to me, were indications that they have gotten engaged again on Ethiopia policy. For the first time we saw any standalone legislation even though it's not binding since 2007, 2008.

And so I think there are, if you look at language in the appropriations bills, to be honest, there's a lot to restrict. I mean Ethiopia doesn't get tons and tons of foreign military financing and other security systems, but here are ways to make clear to Ethiopians that if they continue the status quo, oppressive initiatives, if they don't open up the election, the next election and allowed to be legitimately be free and fair and not bogged opposition, either with being in jail or with bureaucratic hurdles.

That there are going to be consequences for that action, which is what was quite surprising to me, to be honest about the president's visit, was that there didn't seem to be any sort of consequences for inaction. The two laws that on the books really work, as you know, well, hand-in-glove to make it virtually impossible for anybody to stand independently, and there has been a lot of conversations about opening things up, but yes, unless those laws are either amended or repealed, or I don't see how that's going to happen unless something fall by the wayside and stop being implemented.

And so I think Congress needs to drive this policy forward in the way it has done with many other policies on the continent. Sudan, and now South Sudan, it has been for many years, Congress, that pushed forward. As many of you remember, like 2004 and '05, it was Congress that pushed forward on Darfur and South Sudan, more so than the administration at that time. So, I do think that Congress is going to have to stand up and play an increasing role on Ethiopia-U.S. policy.

MR. O'HANLON: I just want you all to remember, you heard it here first, a defensive Congress' role on foreign policy, and at least a muted applause for some of what it's done recently. Matt, over to you for the last word.

MR. CAROTENUTO: I think that the refugee question particularly in Kenya is a very important one in dealing with that. You know, Dadaab is an issue, but is an issue that's targeting a very specific community, and we'll be clear that this is an issue that's targeting the Somalia community. There's a huge ethnic Somalia population in Kenya itself, who, indigenous to the northeastern parts of the country, as well as, I think, very limited efforts by the Kenyan administration.

For a variety of reasons, one of which is funding, you know, to support the refugee camp that has a (inaudible) the size of 500,000; is an enormously expensive and difficult endeavor. So I do have sympathy for some of the security issues that are being -- You know, are there but are not solely there. I think it's a much, much larger question, and I think, you know, the international community should engage with sort of regional settlement issues.

I think that if you polled in Dadaab, would they like to become Kenyan citizens, and be able to settle, I think you'd get a large number of people that would say yes. But let's be honest. I mean, we think about the refugee question in Kenya as the Dadaab camp is being -- you know, talked about as being closed, there's another big camp, up in northern Kenya, called Kakuma, that's actually expanding.

And so it's not a comprehensive refugee policy, it's a policy, I think, some people are thinking about that Kenyatta and Ruto regime are trying to use as, are people getting tough on security in the run to next year's election because of the horrific terrorist attacks that have occurred in Kenya under their watch. And so I think it's a much more complex question I think.

MR. O'HANLON: Don't forget to buy Matt's book, which will be available very soon. Don't forget to look for Human Rights Watch's Report. Thanks to all of you for coming today, please join me in thanking the panel. (Applause)

MR. CAROTENUTO: Thank you.

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