

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

A CONVERSATION ON SECRETARY POMPEO'S MARCH 2020
TRIP TO AFRICA

Washington, D.C.

Tuesday, February 11, 2020

ANDERSON COURT REPORTING
1800 Diagonal Road, Suite 600
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone (703) 519-7180 Fax (703) 519-7190

PARTICIPANTS:

CHRISTINA GOLUBSKI
Assistant Director, Africa Growth Initiative,
Brookings Institute

WITNEY SCHNEIDMAN
Nonresident Fellow, Africa Growth Initiative,
Brookings Institute

MIKE O'HANLON
Senior Fellow and Director of Research, Foreign
Policy & Director, Africa Security Initiative,
Brookings Institute

ADDISU LASHITEW
David M. Rubenstein Fellow, Global Economy and
Development

AHMADOU ALY MBAYE
Nonresident Fellow, Africa Growth Initiative,
Brookings Institute & Professor of Economics at the
University Cheikh Anta CIOP (UCAD)

* * * * *

P R O C E E D I N G S

MS. GOLUBSKI: Hello, good morning. I think we're going to get started. Thank you all for joining us. Welcome to our media call on Secretary Pompeo's upcoming trip to Ethiopia, Angola, and Senegal. As a reminder, I'd like to ask that you please mute your line when you're not speaking.

My name is Christina Golubski, and I am the Assistant Director of the Africa Growth Initiative, here at Brookings. Today we have four experts with us. Our first speaker will be Witney Schneidman. He is the former Deputy's Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, a Brookings Africa Growth Initiative Nonresident Fellow. Then after Witney will speak, Mike O'Hanlon will speak. He's our Senior Fellow and Director of Research in the Brookings Foreign Policy Program. He's also Director of the Brookings Africa Security Initiative. Then, Addisu Lashitew will speak. He's a David M. Rubenstein Fellow in the Global Economy and Development program. And finally, Ahmadou Aly Mbaye will give us his thoughts on Senegal. He's a Brookings ADI, Nonresident Senior Fellow and a Professor of Economics

at -- now I'm going to pronounce this incorrectly -- the University Cheikh Anta DIOP in Senegal ... So, Witney, why don't you start.

MR. SCHNEIDMAN: Great, Christina, thank you very much. Good morning, again, this is Witney Schneidman, Nonresident Fellow at the Africa Growth Initiative. Just a couple remarks, high level remarks, about Secretary Pompeo's trip. It's certainly an effort by this administration to, I think, establish a positive tone on the continent. It's, in many ways, belated. This is the first time in 19 months that a cabinet official from the Trump Administration will be on the continent. The last one was the Secretary of Commerce, Wilbur Ross, in July 2018. But I think Secretary Pompeo is trying to position the U.S., certainly in the competition with China's growing influence on the continent. However, that does not obscure the fact that he has important work to do in the three countries that he will be visiting. And I'll just touch briefly on each.

In many respects, Ethiopia's, I would argue, the most important country on the continent today, with a population of 107 million people. The government, led

by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, is undertaking very bold reforms, both on the political front related to the elections that are scheduled for August of this year, and on the economic front where he's trying to refashion the economic model, from one of a state-led economic approach to one of a market-based economic approach. And, sort of, opening up an economy that has been notoriously very closed. But if he's successful, it will certainly position Ethiopia to be one of the true leaders on the continent for the foreseeable future. And, of course, there are major security challenges in the horn of Africa related to Somalia, the South Sudan, and, of course, the Grand Renaissance Ethiopian Dam with Egypt. So, Secretary Pompeo will have a lot to discuss when he is in that country.

In Angola, he has important work to do there as well. For the last two administrations, Angola has been one of several strategic partners that the United States has had on the continent. And under President João Lourenço, who took over in 2017, Angola has moved in a decidedly different direction. Lourenço has quickly become known for his anti-corruption campaign, initially

targeted against the family of the former President, Jose Eduardo dos Santos. His recent decision to freeze the assets of Isabella dos Santos, the richest woman on the continent, I think is a hallmark change of the Angolan government.

And I think Secretary Pompeo's support for President Lourenço's efforts to instill a new transparency in that economy will be quite important. Also, President Lourenço has partnered with the International Monetary Fund in a new way, in an effort to diversify his economy away from its reliance on the export of oil and, so, whatever Pompeo can do to support that will be quite important as well. And Angola has been an important partner when it comes to the Great Lakes Initiative and the instability in the DRC. So, there will be important security issues to discuss there.

Finally, in Senegal. Senegal has been one of the steady bright lights on the continent in terms of economic reform and good governance. So, to be there to show American support for the government of President Macky Sall will be quite welcome. And there, too, Pompeo

will have important issues discussed as it relates to security matters in the Sahel. And I think the last point to make here is, you know, Pompeo's going out there with some messaging headwinds. On the one hand, the Trump Administration has been committed to promoting U.S. commerce in the competition with China on the continent. But at the same time, there have been contradictory messages coming from the administration.

When the U.S. imposed, the week before last, a travel ban on Nigeria, Eritrea, Sudan and Tanzania, I think, this sort of sends a conflicting signal to American business. Certainly, the announcement that they're considering cutting the American security assistance on the continent is also puzzling. And most recently, today, in Trump's new budget that he's sending to Commerce, there's a 32 percent cut in funds that the administration wants to allocate to the Commerce Department.

So, Pompeo's going to have his hands full in terms of explaining the different messages coming from Washington. And I think that he risks, sort of, getting caught up in, sort of, a China-China-China dynamic and

really needs to convey to African leaders that Africa is genuinely a priority for the United States and that they want to be -- the U.S. wants to be a partner when it comes to accelerated economic development. It wants to be a partner when it comes to good governance, and it wants to be a partner when it comes to enhancing the region's security. And if he can cut through and promote those messages clearly, then I think his trip will be successful.

So, why don't I leave it there, Christina, and turn to the others.

MS. GOLUBSKI: Thank you so much, Witney. All right, Mike.

MR. O'HANLON: Yes, thank you and good morning. I'm going to be very brief because Witney laid things out so well and also because I realized we only have one reporter on the line and probably want to get to your questions soon. So, let me just pick up, also, with the logic of what Witney was saying.

We have a little bit of mixed messaging, not only in the sharp cuts in the proposed budget for assistance, which is now a mainstay of the Trump

Administration every time they put out a new budget request to Congress. But also, with the Pentagon saying that because we are so focused on Russia and China in current U.S. national defense strategy, we therefore have to reduce our, already very modest, military footprint on the African continent; which was only about 8,000 troops, which is, you know, less than one percent of the American military. And now, we're cutting that by 1,000.

Now, I'm not going to nickel and dime the Pentagon or second guess every decision about whether to add 200 troops here or take 200 away there. But the idea that we should be, you know, somehow so concerned about Russia and China in their immediate neighborhoods, in Eastern Europe and Western Pacific Zones, that we pull back in Africa, to me, makes very little sense. Because, of course, Africa is a place where we're also competing with China and Russia, and where we have other interests as well, and where we already were pursuing them with a very modest military footprint. So, I think the defense community's overall inclination to, sort of, adopt a tunnel vision towards the way we think about competition

with China and Russia, in terms of making those two countries our preeminent concerns and making, geographically, the zones near their own territory as the main place we see the competitions occurring. This is potentially leading to some bad messaging from the Defense Department.

And I'll finish by just saying there's one place in particular where I'm most concerned and it's my former Peace Corps country of Congo, DRC. And I think we see some potential for positive things there under President Tshisekedi. He's, obviously, in office through somewhat suspect electoral results. I'm not suggesting he's completely independent from the predecessor Kabila regime. I'm not saying he's doing a great job. But he's made some reforms and now he's asked his military to launch a bit of an offensive in Eastern Congo where the Ebola crisis continues, although it may be ebbing a bit, thankfully. And yet, the Congolese military's not really up to the job of pacifying and stabilizing that area with the many militia's operating out there. And I would like to see the United States consider sending some modest numbers of trainers to Congo. Either as part of

the U.N. peacekeeping mission there or separately; in the goal of trying to improve the prospects for DRC to make some headway in this very troubled Eastern Zone around Kivu and other parts -- and Beni -- other parts of the country that have been so conflict afflicted for so long.

So, I think that the Pentagon may be interfering with any possibility of having that discussion just because of, perhaps, an overly narrow fixation on pulling forces out of Africa and elsewhere in order to get them closer to Russia and China. And I would question that kind of logic. So, I'll stop there.

MS. GOLUBSKI: Thank you so much, Mike. Addisu, let's turn to you.

MR. LASHITEW: Thank you, Christina. So, I'll briefly add to the points mentioned by Witney and Michael about Secretary Mike Pompeo's visit to Ethiopia. I agree with Witney's view that Ethiopia's quite an important as a U.S. ally. Not only because of its size and growing economy but also, it's currently going through historical change. So, one of the first things that should be on the agenda as the Secretary leaves for

Ethiopia is it'll be the growth, the aid, in assisting Ethiopia's ongoing political and economic reform. And another issue would be the ongoing negotiation over the Nile Dam in Ethiopia.

So, it's about now two years since Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed came to power in Ethiopia but he's still in the process of consolidating his power. So, he has started a number of projects to that end. You know, he won the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize for establishing peace with Eritrea and also, he's starting a process of democratization in Ethiopia. He has a number of economic reforms that including privatizing the telecom monopoly and other state-owned enterprises; liberalizing the telecom sector, joining the World Trade Organization, etcetera. And Ethiopia has quite a lot of financial support from the IMF and the World Bank.

Just last month the IMF pulled about \$3.9 billion U.S. dollars in loans, in addition to what is being provided by the World Bank. For that, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has some incentives to make sure that his reforms are effective because he will be facing a competitive national election in just about half a year.

And I suspect that he will seek some kind of support; policy or financial support from the U.S. to implement these reforms.

Another issue would be -- that would be on the agenda by Secretary Pompeo, I believe, is the issue of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. The project started in 2011 and it's currently about 70 percent complete. But after years of dialogue, the Egyptian, Ethiopian and Sudan have failed to reach an agreement. In November of last year, Egypt's President, el-Sisi, invited President Trump to come in as a mediator. The White House subsequently invited the foreign ministers of Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan for a final round of negotiations.

The foreign ministers held a series of meetings in December of last year and also January of this year in Washington, D.C. The meetings were attended by the President of the World Bank and the (inaudible). However, they have not reached a final agreement on the basis of filling the dam. And I believe that, in addition, Secretary Michael Pompeo will be trying to make a final push to get Egypt to sign an agreement. President Trump seeks to get the credit for -- as the

deal maker for resolving this issue. So, I suspect this will be one, too. So, overall, these two key issues will be keeping the Secretary busy during his visit in Ethiopia. Thank you, Christina.

MS. GOLUBSKI: Thank you, Addisu. Aly, let's turn to you. Aly, don't forget to unmute yourself.

MR. MBAYE: Okay, so I'll be very brief too, since most of the issues I deem important for the discussion have already been covered by my predecessors. I'll just pick up three main points that should be pivotal in Secretary of State Pompeo's interaction with his African host.

The first one is security in the Sahel. As you know, Senegal is part of the Sahel region, which includes, beyond Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Mauritania, and Chad. And all these countries are grappling with very serious jihadist attacks. And jihadist movements are gaining momentum in the Sahel. They're controlling territories, they're inflicting very serious losses to regular armies and they're developing their own economy which is completely illicit; mainstreaming the old kind of -- the old types of

traffic. And I think the signal the U.S. government is said to have sent that they are withdrawing from Sahel will be very, very worrisome in Senegal and in the Sahelian countries. And this should be a very important talking point during his visit.

The second point is related to climate change. You can see that the official stance of the U.S. government regarding climate change is to dispute existing evidence regarding climate change. But the Secretary of State is going to visit the Sahel, which is the hardest hit region by climate change. In the Sahel, climate change is drying out the most important sources of livelihoods. Don't forget that, in this region, up to 70 percent of the population are drawing their livelihoods from natural resources and climate change are drying out these sources of livelihoods. In agriculture, in the fishing sector, in the livestock sector; all these sectors are having very important trouble related to climate change. And there is also a growing body of evidence linking climate change with the recent trends we observe in migration and conflict in the region. So, discussing with his counterpart in

Africa, I think this topic of climate change should not be ignored.

The last point is about trade and investment, trade with Africa and investment in Africa. Everybody can see that China is clearly overtaking the West in terms of trade with Africa and investment in Africa. And the narratives, the official narratives, of the U.S. government is that China is taking advantage of Africa. And to me, this narrative should change because it is very badly felt by African partners. I think what African governments and states are expecting from the U.S. is to propose alternatives to China, in terms of trade and in terms of investment. But just declaring, stating, that China is taking advantage is very badly felt by most African leaders, and this narrative should change. At least, during the discussion he is going to have with his counterpart. But I'll leave it here for now, thank you.

MS. GOLUBSKI: All right. Thank you, Aly. I guess, let's turn to the journalists. If you have any questions, please just introduce yourself and give your outlet. Thanks.

MR. PILLING: So, this is David Pilling from the Financial Times and I had a few questions, but I don't want to dominate the time. So, you know, take which ones you want. I have three, I guess. One of them was just touched upon, really, which is that the narrative of the U.S., as viewed from Africa and to some extent from Europe, seems to be very much framed as, you know, stop China. China's doing this, we don't like it, China's doing the other, we don't like it. It comes across as a very, sort of, negative position and I wondered whether you thought, you know, Mike Pompeo could, should, address this? I was also interested in what, precisely, you thought he was going to propose, in terms of the Dam and the solution to the Dam, as far as Ethiopia and Egypt are concerned. Whether we really might be nearing a point when both parties could sign up to a deal. And if there were time, and I won't ask it now, but if there was time later, I had a question on Sudan.

MR. O'HANLON: If I could start --

MS. GOLUBSKI: Okay.

MR. O'HANLON: It's Mike O'Hanlon, could I

start quickly with the question on China?

MS. GOLUBSKI: Absolutely.

MR. O'HANLON: So, thank you for an excellent question, or series of questions. The one on China I think is right on the money because the United States is understandably concerned, as are many, as you well know, many recipient countries about the terms of Chinese loans and grants. And they're often shaded in, you know, unreasonable terms of repayment and then default, you know, default measures that would give ownership of an asset to China or its representatives in the event of a lack of payment. We've seen pushback in South East Asia and some of these kinds of Belt and Road initiative type loans. And I think what the United States needs to do is to empower individual governments that feel they're being exploited by such kinds of terms. Or governments that are so corrupt that they don't care, to put pressure on China over these specific cases. And otherwise to acknowledge there can be some good that comes out of Belt and Road and other infrastructural investment and I think the more specific we can be, the better.

I think, for example that, you know, Pakistan and Malaysia have shown some pushback on some of the Chinese projects that were going to leave them deeply in debt and involve, primarily, Chinese companies in the construction efforts. And, of course, Sri Lanka lost out on some of its assets because of these kinds of loans. I think we should try to create almost a clearinghouse of information that, to the best of our knowledge, would show where Chinese loans are most suspect. Rather than simply conflate any and all Chinese activity anywhere on Earth, which of course, is of some strategic interest to us and potentially strategic concern. But to conflate that with bad loans and shady dealings is unfortunate, and it's not going to be very helpful.

So, what we need to do is elevate Chinese investment to a higher standard of transparency and fairness, rather than to get paranoid about wherever it may occur. You know, because countries need the Chinese help and some of them actually do benefit from it. So, that's where I think we just need to be more discriminating and I would suggest some kind of a white paper or even an ongoing internet site where we,

essentially, create a clearinghouse of information. These kinds of loans are bad or questionable. These kinds of loans or grants look okay to us, let's help empower the local governments and local actors to assess for themselves where China's being helpful and where it's, essentially, being predatory rather than painting everything with the same brush. I'd be curious if any of my colleagues agree or want to sharpen those points or, you know, edit them in some way.

MR. SCHNEIDMAN: Yeah, I'd like to just jump in here. I think Michael's right, David. I suspect Pompeo's going to double down on the notion that the U.S., one of its priorities is to prevent, sort of, China, quote unquote, from taking over Africa. Which is really problematic. However, you know, we do have some resources that are new and that he, Pompeo, will be able to point to, such as the U.S. Development Finance Corporation and its \$60 billion contingent liability, which is in its early phases of coming to life as a new agency.

You know, Prosper Africa is another initiative that, again, is still in its early phases but there's

certain efforts underway. But to go Michael's point, I think Pompeo would be much better served by not putting Africa in an either-or position. You know, saying to the African governments, choose us over China, as opposed to pointing out that when American companies come into the continent they hire locally, they promote locally, they train locally, they, by-and-large, observe the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. They observe environmental standards; they observe labor standards; and I think this is the kind of message that African governments want to hear. And he would be well served to take that kind of approach and look for the opportunities to promote U.S. investment in that way.

MR. LASHITEW: I would like to say something about the Dam issue in Ethiopia. So, it pretty much is a technical argument having to do with the pace of filling in the reservoir for the Dam. So, Ethiopia naturally wants the Dam to be filled within a relatively short time period to be able to generate electricity as soon as possible. Egypt, from the other hand, wants to fill in the Dam at a slower pace to make sure that it doesn't affect water supply at home. So, there are country

progress in working out the details of the agreement on how quickly to fill in the reservoir. But those documents have not been finalized and also signed by the parties. So, what the U.S. can do -- what the Secretary can do during his visit to Addis Ababa, perhaps, put some pressure on the Ethiopian side to accept some of the conditions that they are resisting now. This has to do much about conditions of droughts and how much water should be allowed to flow down the river on both situations. There is a significant labor issue at the currently because the expense is about a billion dollars in a year on all kinds of aid programs, but also funding Ethiopia's development through the IMF and the World Bank and other multilateral banks.

So, probably the U.S. will not have to commit new resources to be able to address the situation that's in its leverage. I believe what he would be doing would be putting pressure, fine tuning the agreements to make sure that's acceptable on the Egyptian side. Thank you.

MS. GOLUBSKI: Thanks, Addisu. Aly, did you have something to say as well?

MR. MBAYE: Yeah, sure. On the China-Africa

relationship I would like to strongly support what has been said by my predecessors, these are really good points. And I would like just to add one more. From an African perspective, you need to realize that the needs for investment are huge, in particular, in terms of infrastructure investment. And, the opportunities to finance those big investments are really limited. This kind of space is creating a hole. And access to international finance is very limited. So that's why resources provided for by China are very welcome in Africa. So, the right questions the West in general, the U.S. in particular, should ask is what alternatives should we bring to African countries in terms of filling this gap, in terms of investment, and in particular, infrastructure investment. I think the existing routes the West and the U.S. are using have shown their limitations. The World Bank and Western international organizations provide very little to fill in these gaps. So, I think, in the discussion, we should explore existing alternatives or alternatives that should be also tried in order to fill in these gaps because if you remove China, you have almost nothing left in terms of

financing investment and infrastructure investment in Africa. Thank you.

MS. GOLUBSKI: Thanks, Aly. Do any of my experts have anything else to add? If not, we'll take another question.

MR. TANDON: I can jump in if nobody else wants to. This is Shaun Tandon over at AFP. The -- as much as they're getting some of the cuts in some areas in Africa, in particular with the proposed cuts for the Pentagon and I know this is of great concern, particularly for the French due to their efforts in Sahel. How much of an issue do you think this will be for Pompeo when he's coming to Africa? I mean, Witney's talking about a greater relationship, a closer relationship. How much is this hanging over us, the fact that the U.S. is actually looking, in the security realm, to, grant, potentially to do less?

MR. SCHNEIDMAN: Christina, why don't I jump on that since I, sort of, initiated it. Look, I think the challenge that Pompeo's facing in Africa is, explaining the contradictory messages coming from Washington. It's not just the budget cuts at Defense and Commerce. It's

the travel ban, it's Presidents derogatory remarks about Africa. It's the lack of attention that's been paid. It's, you know, that fact that Bolton rolled out this Africa strategy 14 months ago and since then very little has been accomplished where many other nations have moved forward. So, I think his major challenge is addressing the question: Is Africa a priority for the United States?

I think a lot of his interlocutors are very keen to shore up relations with the United States. So, they're not going to be focusing on those contradictory messages. I think they're going to be much more pragmatic and ask: what can we get done here while Pompeo's in our capital visiting us? And, you know, what are the outcomes and what's the follow up? So, where these contradictions exist, I think his interlocutors are going to be very much more pragmatic and focused on how can we shore up and expand our existing relationships.

MR. TANDON: Sure. Can I just be specific a little bit? You mentioned, of course, the reported derogatory comments by President Trump regarding Africa.

How much do you think this is in the minds of the African leaders or even the African public? Is this something that we think about more in Washington or do you think that that does really hang over a lot of these discussions that he might have there? And also, the fact that it's been nearly two years and he hasn't actually been to Sub-Saharan Africa yet.

MR. SCHNEIDMAN: So, I think it feeds into the larger public narrative. You know, I think Americans have a hard time really understanding Africa, so our understanding of the continent is, sort of, fixed in time of about 20 years ago and these derogatory comments just sort of feed into a negative narrative. But, at the same time, when you look at most leaders, I think they're very keen to work with the United States and if they were offered a White House meeting, they would take it. If there's an investment summit with the United States, they would come. I think they tend to be very pragmatic about these kinds of things and look to shore up their own governments, their own legacies and, I think, partnership with the United States still remains a priority for most African governments.

MR. TANDON: Thank you.

MS. GOLUBSKI: Thank you. Do we have any other questions?

MS. ANNA: Yes, if I could jump in. This Cara Anna with the Associated Press. Excuse me. You mentioned that quite some time has passed, 19 months, since a cabinet official has visited. So, I suppose why now especially? Just out of curiosity, when will Trump visit Africa? And in terms of private conversations, maybe not ones that will emerge publicly, but what are the chances of Pompeo addressing the issues of climate change? Because it is so important across Africa. And what's the possibility of him quietly meeting officials or leaders from other African countries? Thanks.

MR. SCHNEIDMAN: Well, the "why now", that's a really interesting question and I think that, you know, it's -- I think when you look at how a Secretary of State apportions his or her time, you know, they generally try to visit all regions during the course of their tenure, at least once, if not twice. So, I think it's come time for Pompeo to visit Africa. And in the context of Bolton's comments, in an effort to elevate

Africa on the foreign policy agenda, I think his visit has to be seen in that context. But at the same time, we ask, you know, will it be a one-off, or will it be something more? What kind of deliverables will he be making? What kind of announcements will he make while he's on the continent?

You know, the U.S. Ambassador in South Africa, in her presentation of credentials, President Ramaphosa spoke about the fact that President -- that she had invited President Ramaphosa to co-host an investment summit with President Trump this May in Washington. And, you know, if indeed that happens, and it hasn't been confirmed by the White House, but if it were to happen you could look at Pompeo's visit as the kick off to that kind of event; which I think would be very welcome by all parties. If there is no summit, if there is no investment summit and the Ambassador's invitation was, sort of, a random comment then, you know, we're sort of left here asking: where is the Trump Administration and Africa after Pompeo's visit? I think we just have to wait and see what his real objective is on the continent.

MS. GOLUBSKI: Thanks, Witney. Do any of my other experts have anything to add?

MR. MBAYE: Yeah, Christina?

MS. GOLUBSKI: Yes, Aly?

MR. MBAYE: Yeah, on the issue of climate change, again. It's a very critical issue right now in Africa. Because agriculture is being hit, as I said earlier. The sea level is rising, and all this is contributing to generate some important set of challenges. Thus, compounding the already existing development challenges in Africa. And in this context is the official narrative about climate change of the U.S. government is very disturbing, and I don't think China is doing more than the U.S. in terms of curbing climate emissions. But they have a much better official narrative regarding climate change, from an African perspective because what is happening in the U.S. is the private sector is not following the official stance of the U.S. government.

You have a lot of support, I mean, effort from the private sector, in terms of curbing the climate emissions trends. But the official narrative will pose

problems in this context where climate change is perceived as doing a lot of harm to the economy and to the society.

MS. GOLUBSKI: Thanks, Aly. Do any of my experts -- other experts have anything else to add?

MR. PILLING: It's David Pilling, again, from the Financial Times. I wondered if I could ask about Sudan? I mean, obviously, I know Pompeo's not visiting Sudan, but Ethiopia has played some role in kind of mediating the positions in Khartoum. Clearly, Sudan is still on the American list of nations that support terrorism, and many people see this as a huge block to progress. The ability of Abdalla Hamdok to make any progress economically to attract investments in an attempt to survive this transition period, you know, some people have a real, sort of, sense of urgency here. Is there any sense that anything is moving, and that Pompeo might shift position or even hint at a shift of position during this visit?

MR. SCHNEIDMAN: Michael, do you have any thoughts on that? I can just do a couple.

MR. O'HANLON: I'll give a couple, although

it's not really a prediction of what Pompeo will do, it's more a thought of what he should do. In the sense that, as you well know, Sudan, in addition to having made some impressive initial progress moving beyond the kind of governance it used to have, is also what people like John Hannah, at Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, and other people have called one of Africa's pivotal states. And for someone like Trump or for the American voter, Africa is just such a, you know, a multitude of nations and regions.

But you can simplify it if you think in terms of six or eight big countries that together have more than half of the continent's population and probably, you know, set more than half of the major political and strategic trends. And we've already talked about most of them today and Pompeo's visiting two of the three, Angola and especially, of course, Ethiopia. And you would add Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, DRC, and Sudan to that list I think that would sort of be your key countries in Africa. It's a way to simplify understanding of the continent. So, if you see something good happening in one of those places, you want to seize

on it and build on it. That's the way to construct the narrative about how we see Africa's future and U.S. interaction with Africa.

And secondly, I would say that the Trump Administration might also feel a certain temptation here to achieve a narrative that says, listen we're not against rehabilitating our relations with countries that improve their own policy. And this would be almost the same kind of thing that President Obama said in his first inaugural, we'll reach out our hand to those who would unclench their fist. And Trump's trying to do that, of course, with North Korea but he's sort of stuck. And he could actually use the Sudan example to say, here's a place where, if the country gets its act together, and gets rid of the old bums and stops supporting extremism, we can really engage and we're not beyond forgiveness. You know, we're willing to do that.

Now, whether Sudan has reached every single milestone that's necessary to justify full-fledged resumption of cooperation is a separate question. But I think getting Sudan off the terrorism list, as a first step, makes a lot of sense and could be part of this

broader narrative, which I think could help the Trump Administration also explain, and perhaps even give a boost to, its policies around the world; with other regimes like North Korea that, you know, are considering coming out of their past modes of behavior and their past shells but haven't yet quite gotten them gumption to do so. So, in other words, it's a political argument that Trump can almost integrate into his platform for reelection about what his foreign policy is trying to achieve around the world, and that might make it a more tempting place if he would think of it in those terms. So, that's pretty much my only thought. I'm not saying Pompeo's likely to do that, but there is an opportunity.

MR. SCHNEIDMAN: And I would say the trendline is moving positive in support of this happening. Certainly, Prime Minister Hamdok recently had a very positive visit in Washington. A number of NGOs that were absolutely opposed to this have come around in support of Sudan getting off the state-sponsored terrorism list. I think congressional support is growing for that as well. So, you know, will it happen on this trip? I don't

know, but you know, hopefully it happens sooner rather than later, as Michael said. It could be a victory for Trump's Africa policy if it does happen sooner rather than later.

MS. GOLUBSKI: Thank you, Witney and Mike. Do we have any other questions from our reporters? Okay, I think that's it for questions, then. Mike, Addisu, Aly and Witney, are there any final thoughts that you'd like to add?

MR. O'HANLON: No, thanks. I appreciate it.

MR. SCHNEIDMAN: I'm good, yup.

MR. LASHITEW: Fine, thank you very much. It was great.

MS. GOLUBSKI: Okay, great. Thank you, again, for joining us and have a good day.

* * * * *

CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

Carleton J. Anderson, III

(Signature and Seal on File)

Notary Public in and for the Commonwealth of Virginia

Commission No. 351998

Expires: November 30, 2020

ANDERSON COURT REPORTING
1800 Diagonal Road, Suite 600
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone (703) 519-7180 Fax (703) 519-7190