

Africa more secure with U.S. as partner

By George Gedda
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CAPE TOWN, South Africa — The Clinton administration has been seeking to make a positive U.S. contribution in Africa, but without public support to do very much, what's a superpower to do?

The administration has had to scramble just to get the Republican-controlled Congress to provide \$700 million in aid for Africa, equal to roughly a dollar for each person on the continent.

The dilemma has required some creative thinking. Secretary of State Warren Christopher has been traveling the continent for the past week, visiting Mali, Ethiopia, Tanzania and South Africa, pushing an idea that doesn't cost very much and attempts to address the continent's devastating humanitarian problems. At a minimum, he seems to have the attention of the Africans.

The idea is not new: putting together an all-African military force, trained and financed by the United States and other powers, for deployment in countries plagued by manmade or natural disasters. Washington would pay half of startup costs estimated at \$25 million to \$40 million. The concept has been bandied about for years, but not much has come of it.

The need for action was apparent two years ago to a

senior American official who, while flying over Tanzania, looked down and spotted what he thought were hundreds of logs floating down a river.

On closer inspection, the official realized to his horror that they were not logs but human corpses, victims of the genocide in Rwanda that claimed more than a half-million lives. Hundreds of thousands have died in ethnic fighting elsewhere on the continent, especially Burundi and Liberia.

The basic idea of the Africa Crisis Response Force, as the administration calls it, is to use African soldiers to take threatened people in a given country to a safe area where they could receive humanitarian assistance. A green light by the United Nations would be required before deployment.

Christopher seems encouraged by the response; at least five African countries have offered to volunteer troops. In Ethiopia last week, Christopher won the endorsement of Salim Ahmed Salim, secretary general of the Organization of African Unity. Ethiopian President Zenawi Meles pledged two battalions.

Such interest reflects a marked change in African attitudes from a period not long ago when non-intervention was the guiding principle of continental politics. This meant that dictators — there have been 67 military coups in Africa over the past 40 years — could repress with impunity and never have to worry about retaliation by neighbors.

But with democracy taking root in more than 20 countries, the tolerance for abusive dictators has diminished. Two months ago, a group of regional countries imposed sanctions against Burundi's military dictator in hopes of encouraging reconciliation between rival Hutus and Tutsis. More than 150,000 Burundians have been killed since 1993.

The administration senses an opportunity in these changed African attitudes. With the American public weary of rescue missions in Africa and the United Nations already overextended, the crisis force seemed to be the only option left.

The Organization for African Unity is eager to play a constructive role. It now has a coordinator for conflict prevention and is developing a capacity to act quickly in crisis situations.

Christopher's proposal won a favorable review on Saturday from South African President Nelson Mandela.

But Mandela cautioned Christopher in a meeting here that the deal won't sell if it looks like a made-in-America program. It will be accepted by Africans only if the United Nations — not the United States — plays the lead role. Mandela seemed to suggest that some Africans want to make sure that Washington doesn't have a hidden agenda.

GEORGE GEDDA has covered foreign affairs for The Associated Press since 1968.

Where Tiger Woods can't play golf

By Max Millard
THE SUN-REPORTER

Sunday, Aug. 25, was by any measure one of the most revolutionary dates in the history of golf.

That day, in a thrilling, come-from-behind victory, 20-year-old Tiger Woods became the first man ever to win three straight U.S. amateur golf championships. Hailed as the hottest new talent in golf since Jack Nicklaus 35 years ago and the greatest amateur since Bobby Jones in the 1920s, Woods announced Aug. 28 that he had turned professional. Simultaneously, Nike signed him to a five-year contract for \$40 million — unprecedented for a golfer — to promote its golf shoes and clothing.

Woods, who has an African American father and Thai mother, let loose a final bombshell on Aug. 29, when the Wall Street Journal ran a three-page ad titled "Hello World" that was repeated on network television. The ad said: "I shot in the 60s when I was eight. I shot in the 70s when I was 12. I won the U.S. Junior Amateur when I was 14... I played in the Masters when I was 19. There are still golf courses in the United States that I cannot play because of the color of my skin. I'm told I'm not ready for you. Are you ready for me?"

Nike, the world's leader seller of athletic footwear, clothing and accessories, was soon flooded with calls from the media, asking if the statement was true. Reports surfaced that the Oregon-based company had identified at least 23 private golf courses in the country where African Americans could not play. The U.S. has approximately 15,000 golf courses, of which almost 5,000 are private.

In a telephone interview, Donna Gibbs, Nike's director of corporate communications said, "We had an independent research company verify that information." But, the ads were also based on some of Wood's own experiences. "He received death threats at the Los Angeles Open in 1992," Gibbs said "and at the Byron Nelson Classic in Irving, Texas, two years ago, two women armed with pistols were arrested at the course where Woods was practicing."

Nike's public relations manager Jim Small said the ads were not intended to target particular clubs but to "get people talking — that golf has not been an inclusive sport for minorities and women."

MAX MILLARD is a reporter with the Sun-Reporter in Florida.

What's on your mind?

Send your comments to The Charlotte Post, P.O. Box 30144, Charlotte, N.C. 28230 or fax (704) 342-2160. You can also use E-mail — charpost@clt.mindspring.com. All correspondence must include a daytime telephone number for verification.

VP candidates out to help the boss look good

By Terence Hunt
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Amid all the cheerleading for their bosses, Al Gore and Jack Kemp had another pressing assignment last week: show off their own presidential skills and, above all, don't mess up.

Despite their insistence that they were battling only for the men at the top of the ticket, the Gore-Kemp vice presidential debate was also something of an early audition for the White House race four years from now.

A challenge for Gore was to appear less stiff, more human. For the long-winded Kemp, it was whether he could complete a thought and stop talking within the 90 seconds allotted for answers.

Yet, for all the talk about the year 2000, there's a big difference between vice presidential debates and presidential face-offs.

Fewer people watch the under studies. The stakes are lower, because Americans vote for the person running for president, not vice president. And,

vice presidential candidates don't make policy, they echo the decisions of their leaders.

Vice presidential debates tend to be more combative and caustic than presidential debates. The expectation of good manners is less.

This time, Dole's status as a senior citizen may prompt a closer look at Kemp, who would take over the presidency in case of incapacity or death.

The history of vice presidential debates is not very long — the first one was in 1976.

In the very first vice presiden-

tial debate, Dole wound up with a reputation as a political hatchet man for saying that Vietnam, World War II and the Korean War were "all Democrat wars."

George Bush marred his debate with Geraldine Ferraro by boasting of his effort in off-color language the next day.

Dan Quayle compared himself with John Kennedy, only to have Democratic rival Lloyd Bentsen fire back: "I knew Jack Kennedy. ... And you are no Jack Kennedy."

And Retired Adm. James Stockdale, Ross Perot's running

mate in 1992, became the butt of jokes with his opening debate remark: Who am I and why am I here?

In reality, debates have not altered the outcome of presidential races. The leader going into the debates has been the leader coming out every time and has gone on to win the White House. But still, they are a campaign staple.

TERENCE HUNT has covered the Reagan, Bush and Clinton presidencies as chief White House correspondent for The Associated Press.

Don't blame yourself for what racism has done

By Conrad Worrill
SPECIAL TO THE POST

How many times have you heard someone of African ancestry say that "Black people are our own worst enemy?" If you have lived among African people in this country for any length of time, I am sure you have heard this remark made many times.

Unfortunately, the system of white supremacy developed in far too many African people in America to believe that the problem we face as a people is "us."

We must remind ourselves, time and time again, that African people in America were captured from Africa and brought to America against our will. As the 1974 Black Capital article asserted "Our introduction to the West was in the form of a commodity raped from Africa to be used as labor, capital, chattel and currency to build a nation for someone else."

In the article, it explained that "...our history tells us that we were below slaves and less than human. We were things who were traded for horses, our women used as breeders and our children raised like chickens."

Finally, the Black Capital arti-

Black condition hasn't changed much in America since arrival

cle pointed out that during the slavery process. "The level of our existence was based upon the skill and the will of those who owned us. They had the right to deem that which was best for their property. Therefore, the profit motive and the skill of the slave master determined how this black wealth would bring the highest return on his investment."

This formula is still at work today. Just examine the role of African people in the entertainment and athletic industry. White people own and control these industries and use African people to "bring the highest return off their investment."

If African people are going to ever have a serious mental breakthrough in terms of how we analyze our condition in America, we will have to resolve the question "are we our own worst enemy," or has the system of white supremacy created a set of conditions that continue to keep us in an oppressed state?

We must accept responsibility for answering this question as well as accepting responsibility

for solving all the problems we face as a people. But in accepting responsibility for addressing the problems we face as an African people in America, we must have a framework out of which to properly conceptualize our problems.

In 1852, the great African thinker in America, Martin R. Delany, wrote one of the most important books that accurately described our condition at that moment in history that is still applicable to our condition today. The title of the book is "The Condition, Elevation, Emigration and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States."

Delany wrote: "Unfortunately for us as a body, we have been taught that we must have some person to think for us, instead of thinking for ourselves. So accustomed are we to submission and this kind of training, that it is with difficulty, even among the most intelligent of the colored people, an audience may be elicited for any purpose whatever."

Further Delany wrote: "and

the introduction of any subject is treated with indifference, if not contempt, when the originator is a colored person. Indeed, the most ordinary white is almost revered while the most qualified colored person is totally neglected, nothing from them is appreciated."

In resolving the question of whether "we are our own worst enemy", we should reflect that for over 300 years white people openly discussed African people as a problem (1600-1900).

As Dr. Anderson Thompson has written on the discussions that white people have had on what they have historically called the Negro Problem, Dr. Thompson writes: "There is a duality in the story of western white man and his culture, which, paradoxically, is thrown into sharp relief wherever the Black man appears (or is dropped) on the scene." Dr. Thompson says "Whenever or wherever the white man exists in proximity to the Blacks the Negro Question appears."

The idea of the Negro Question is discussed further when Dr. Thompson writes: "The Negro Question in Western society has been a perennial subject of endless international debates, actions, decisions, wars, riots, lynchings

Turner-Warner merger could bring on some headaches

By Farrell Kramer
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — If nothing else, Time Warner's tortuous quest to buy Turner Broadcasting rams home one important point: Americans take their television VERY seriously.

Almost every scuffle on the road to Time Warner's multibillion-dollar purchase, which was completed Thursday, involved the TV assets of both companies. There were competitor concerns about access to Time Warner's cable systems. Regulators worried about the same thing.

The political world entered the debate over what airs on TV in

a way not seen before. And the attention? Ted Turner, Gerald Levin and Rupert Murdoch couldn't sneeze without a phalanx of cameras recording the event.

"With the exception of sleeping, we do spend more time watching television as a society than virtually anything else," says Charles Firestone, director of the communications and society program at the Aspen Institute, a think tank.

That fact, of course, is something Time Warner and Turner know well, and are actually counting on as they try to make their combination work. Notice, you don't hear many people calling TV the "boob tube" anymore.

Looking for a minute at its collection of TV programming and distribution, industry jargon for TV shows and the ability to air them, the new Time Warner has an awesome collection. It's cable systems reach 11.8 million subscribers, making it the nation's second-largest. It has HBO, CNN, TNT, the Cartoon Network and more to grace America's living rooms.

Of course, the combined company also offers the Warner Bros., Castle Rock and New Line movie studios; magazines like Time, Sports Illustrated and Life; and Warner Music Group, with its host of labels.

Somehow, though, it all keeps coming back to TV.

The first major problem Time Warner Inc. faced after announcing the takeover on Sept. 22, 1995, was the Federal Trade Commission, which worried that joining the nation's No. 2 cable operator with Turner Broadcasting System Inc., the owner of CNN, would stifle competition.

Eventually an agreement was reached. Among other things, Time Warner agreed to carry a second cable news channel, MSNBC, on some of its systems in addition to CNN.

"The thing that really got interesting is the FTC got involved in content for the first time," said Tom Wolzien, a media industry analyst at the

brokerage firm Sanford C. Bernstein & Co.

The issue set up another round of difficulties for Time Warner and Turner, this time from Rupert Murdoch's Fox News, which happened to be starting a cable news channel of its own. It claimed Time Warner had agreed to carry its new Fox News Channel but then backed out, which Time Warner disputes.

Murdoch sued Time Warner on Wednesday, most likely aiming to push Levin, its chairman, to reconsider. Ted Turner, Time Warner's new vice chairman, gave no quarter, calling the suit a "frivolous piece of junk."

TV, again, took center stage.

Then, in something of a surprise, the Fox issue brought local politicians barreling into the matter like the FTC before them. New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani is trying to get Time Warner to carry the Fox channel on a public access channel it controls. New York State's attorney general is investigating the dispute, and related issues, on antitrust grounds.

"There are 100 or more start-up cable networks, all of which would like carriage on Time Warner's Manhattan system," said Larry Gerbrandt, a senior analyst at Paul Kagan Associates Inc., a media research firm.