

Statement by Acting Assistant Secretary Donald Yamamoto
FY 2018 Budget Request
House Foreign Affairs Committee
Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and
International Organizations

Wednesday, October 11, 2017, 2:00 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Bass, and Members of the Committee, thank you for inviting us to appear before you today to discuss the Administration's FY 2018 foreign assistance budget request and to provide further detail on U.S. assistance to sub-Saharan Africa. I am pleased to be joined by my colleague, Cheryl Anderson, Acting Assistant Administrator for the U.S. Agency for International Development's Bureau for Africa.

We deeply appreciate the role this Committee and Subcommittee play in helping the American people understand why foreign affairs matter to them. Advancing the values and interests of our country and promoting stability in the world does matter to our citizens, whether it results in jobs and economic opportunity, connections between communities, or the safety and security we aim to achieve.

For far too long, images of poverty and insecurity have dominated the American perspective on Africa. Yes, these exist in Africa, and I would be remiss today if I did not express my very deep concern about the continued violence and fighting in places such as South Sudan and the Central African Republic, as well as the atrocities committed by Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa against innocent civilians of all faiths in Nigeria and across borders of neighboring states. These challenges are certainly not the whole story of what is happening on the continent, however. Countering the scourge of terrorism and resolving conflict represent just a small part of what our partnerships on the continent aim to address and to achieve.

As we consider the purpose and nature of our relationship with Africa, it is important to note two things. The first is Africa's emergence as a point of global interest and strategic convergence. What happens on the continent over the next several years will shape the world's economy, security, and well-being. Africa is emerging as a bridge from the Indo-Pacific region to the larger Atlantic community, while also connecting directly to Europe and the Middle East.

Second, as far as the United States is concerned, Africa is already a continent of friends and partners. With the African Union as the standard bearer, the vast majority of African states share our commitment to free markets, equitable trade, democracy and the rule of law, secure borders, and effective responses to global terrorist threats.

Active engagement in sub-Saharan Africa advances U.S. strategic interests. Our close collaboration with the interagency community centers on a set of jointly agreed-upon priorities for Africa. Together we remain committed to:

- Increasing economic growth and investment;
- Advancing peace and security;
- Countering the scourge of terrorism; and
- Promoting democracy, human rights and good governance.

In our efforts to advance peace and security, we are committed to working closely with Africans to address terrorist and other transnational challenges such as maritime safety and security, narcotics and wildlife trafficking, and trafficking in persons.

The President's \$5.2 billion FY 2018 foreign assistance request for Africa reflects the Administration's focus on economic and development assistance to countries of the greatest strategic importance to the United States, such as those critical to advancing U.S. national security objectives. As we worked to streamline efforts to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of U.S. taxpayer dollars, we had to make some difficult tradeoffs.

Working within the Administration's resource guidelines, the Africa Bureaus at both State and USAID worked hand-in-hand on the budget development process in order to mitigate the impact of reductions in development funding on our national interests and policy objectives on the continent.

The FY 2018 request thus addresses key priorities in Africa, including promoting U.S. national security interests by seeking to assist partner nations to defeat ISIS branches and affiliates and other terrorist organization threats and networks in Mali and the Sahel, Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin, Somalia and the Horn of Africa, and elsewhere. The request also seeks to assert U.S. leadership and influence by prioritizing funding for countries recovering from or facing violent conflict to prevent them from becoming safe-havens for terrorism and extremism.

Transnational threats, such as terrorism and crime, state fragility, and conflict, make the promotion of peace and security a critical priority for the United States in Africa. In Somalia, despite overall funding reductions, we seek to target our assistance to bolster the effectiveness of AMISOM, the African Union Mission in Somalia, and the Somalia National Security Forces to drive out al-Shabaab and support further efforts to strengthen the Somali state. In the Lake Chad Basin, our assistance is helping the regional coalition defeat Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa with support for military and civilian security operations, humanitarian support, and a defectors' strategy.

In Mali and the Sahel, we have a multifaceted approach to support the peace process, bring stability, and drive out terrorists. We support French military counterterrorism operations with logistical and other assistance; we are providing support to the regional states in the G-5 Sahel framework; and we are sustaining MINUSMA so that it can fulfill its role to support Mali's government. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan, the budget request supports mitigation of regional crises; provides monitoring teams, advisors, training, logistical support, infrastructure enhancements, and equipment; and supports security sector reform.

The FY 2018 request also supports efforts to prevent global pandemics by protecting funding for health programs, including the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, or PEPFAR, in order to control epidemics and diseases in key countries, and prevent their spread to the United States. The request provides sufficient resources to maintain all current patients on HIV/AIDS treatment under PEPFAR in more than 50 countries globally. In Africa, PEPFAR will continue to ensure access to HIV/AIDS services, including for the most vulnerable and at-risk groups, and will target resources to advance the U.S. government's strategy through focused investment in 12 high-burden countries that have the potential to achieve epidemic control by 2020. With the transfer of Ebola funding, the budget request also maintains funding for malaria programs. Additionally, African governments are increasingly acting to address HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases, and we continue to encourage their efforts.

The FY 2018 request aims to foster economic opportunities on the continent by supporting good governance and education programs in Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda, among others, that create a positive enabling environment for U.S. businesses. It will also provide sufficient resources to continue to partner with, and provide assistance to, key allies in sub-Saharan Africa in a manner that protects

Americans and American interests, advances bilateral and regional partnerships, opens new markets for U.S. businesses, and promotes American values abroad.

While the African continent as a whole has made important gains in democracy and institution building, those gains are fragile. Many of the biggest security threats the United States faces – including terrorism, pandemics, and transnational organized crime – are incubated and thrive in weak, failing, and failed states. Democracy, human rights, and good governance is vital to Africa’s stability and future. In order to achieve U.S. foreign policy objectives on the continent, it is important to foster strong democratic institutions. Some of the most chronic and deadly conflicts originate from the comprehensive denial of civilian participation in their own government. Therefore, we will continue to encourage the development of effective justice sector institutions, strong legislatures, robust civil societies, and independent judiciaries, media, and elections-related bodies, all of which are important to a healthy democracy. We will also work to combat corruption and improve transparency while addressing human rights violations by abusive governments. All of these efforts will help counter political fragility and support stronger and more effective governance so that corruption, failure to deliver basic services, and lack of transparency do not create vulnerabilities to violent-extremism in unstable regions, threatening the United States and its allies.

The request continues to provide support, at a reduced level, for all three components of the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI): the Mandela Washington Fellowship, the YALI Regional Leadership Centers, and the YALI Network. We will focus on developing the relationships that YALI has fostered, while enabling a smaller number of Mandela Washington Fellows to travel to the United States for YALI’s flagship exchange program. The private sector has shown interest in supporting the goals of YALI, and we will continue to encourage its support and leverage private sector funding.

The budget request also continues support, at reduced levels, for Power Africa. The United States will continue to work with host governments and communities to develop public-private partnerships that promote the most appropriate and financially sound energy solutions for each country, while simultaneously creating economic opportunities in the United States. To date, Power Africa has more than 130 private sector partners, in addition to the governments of Sweden, Norway, Canada, the United Kingdom, Japan, and France, as well as the European Union.

Across the board, we are striving to move beyond outdated models for aid and focus on the objectives that link us as partners with the private sector, African

governments, local non-governmental organizations, civil society, and citizens. We continue to use our resources and programming to leverage more contributions from host nations and other donors. This must be the way forward in terms of budget realities and in recognition of how our relationships with African partners have progressed.

As we work to streamline our approach, to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of U.S. taxpayer dollars, we will continue to prioritize resources to align with the Administration's foreign policy objective. Focusing our efforts and coordinating closely with other donors will allow us to continue to advance our most important policy goals.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I look forward to your views and questions