African Americans, Pan African Policy Matters, and the Development of the Black Foreign Policy Constituency for Africa and the African Diaspora, 1930-1998

by

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Introduction

Throughout the 20th century, African-American involvement in Foreign Affairs often paralleled domestic civil rights participation. In many cases, the domestic fight for civil rights found an extended ally in the effort to articulate a foreign policy voice for African-Americans. In this effort to construct a voice, a constituency (although amorphous at times) has served as a vehicle for the articulation of various policy concerns. The issues and arenas of this particular constituency have primarily focused on the African continent as well as on many countries of the Caribbean. Members of this constituency have consisted of civil rights leaders and organizations as well as those and individuals functioning in the State Department as ambassadors, diplomats, and field workers. Oftentimes, the existence of such a constituency was evidenced as leaders and groups rallied in support of a particular issue. Historian Brenda Plummer argues that the major issues of this constituency have historically centered around the Italo-Ethiopian war, petitions emanating from the development of the United Nations, and the Vietnam war among others. In our day, genocide in Darfur and in other African nations garners much of the current foci of the Black foreign policy constituency for Africa and the African Diaspora. With the fiftieth anniversary of Ghana's independence in 2007, as well as the July 2008 African Union summit in Accra, focusing on the continued maturation of the Union and a revival of Nkrumah's United States of Africa, such a discussion of a Black foreign policy constituency for Africa and the African Diaspora is essential [1]

With the end of the Cold War, various groups, many whose roots are found in prior generation leaders and organizations, have emerged or re-emerged to represent a segment of the African-American voice with respect to Africa and peoples of African descent in the Caribbean. Groups consisting of influential African-American representation, such as TransAfrica, the African-American Institute, the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, Constituency for Africa, NEPAD(New Partnership for Africa) to name a few, exist to construct policy alternatives for Africa. The problem remains however that there are numerous groups but very little in the way of a sustained institutionalized framework or constituency outside of the efforts of the Constituency for Africa and the National Summit on Africa. This assessment begs the poignant question: Is there a need to form a more viable coalition of pro-African constituency groups and leaders? Furthermore, how can such a coalition, which involves active African American participation along with African and Caribbean immigrants, come into being so as to provide a collective policy voice for the African continent and African peoples, especially in the Caribbean? In my attempt to address these questions, I trace a brief history of African-American involvement in Foreign Affairs and participation in the State Department as well as the evolution of an overall Black Foreign Policy Constituency. The end goal of such a strategy is to assess the continuity and change between past and present efforts and prescribe possible policy recommendations to promote future collaborations.[2]

So far, no institutionalized constituency framework has ever been put in place-which deals with organizing and mobilizing a specific black foreign policy agenda on matters dealing with Africa and the African Diaspora. Although effective, the temporary and amorphous assemblages were left vulnerable as McCarthy red baiters and other critics took advantage of the lack of a permanent structural safeguard with which to develop a continuous and sustainable Africa policy focus and intervention method. Another challenge, found with respect to many major civil rights organizations, evidenced itself as there was apparently no bridge linking the 1960s and 70s domestic civil rights and black power generation struggles to generations of the 1980s and 90s actively seeking to end apartheid in South Africa. As a result, such a gulf continues to encourage more pervasive fracturing among groups interested in Africa and Caribbean foreign policy issues. This continued fracturing, competition for resources to promote policy alternatives, and inadequate amounts of substantial collaboration have elicited unsustained influence on Capital Hill in terms of a collective engine to advocate long-term policy recommendations.

Historical Background

African-American involvement in foreign affairs has spanned from the late 19th century to the present. Within this context, African-American participants have functioned in numerous roles, the most known of which include those of ambassadors, diplomats, civil and human rights leaders among others. Their participation has often been influenced by two different points of view.

One perspective, reflective of Pan-African sentiments, believed that ties among continental Africans and those of African descent in the African Diaspora, especially in the Western hemisphere, needed to be nurtured and strengthened.[3] Advocates of this view linked domestic and global struggles via imagined and real cultural ties. Pan-African sentiments at home and abroad were espoused through the efforts of figures such as W.E.B. DuBois and the Pan-African Congresses; the efforts of Marcus Garvey and the UNIA, and organizations such as the Council on African Affairs. Adherents of this view "sought to unify peoples of African descent as a way of mobilizing the vast human and material resources of Africa in order to fulfill its potential as a world power."[4]

The other viewpoint stressed the idea that as citizens, African-Americans had a right to participate in the shaping of U.S. foreign policy. Adherents saw African-American involvement in Africa and International Affairs as the logical outgrowth of domestic strivings for civil rights and social activism. Although highly cognizant of the cultural connections to Africa and the Diaspora, this position emphasized less attention on global Pan-Africanism and focused more on securing the rights of African Americans in the U.S. This approach was used as a springboard to influence U.S. foreign policy abroad but placed priority on influencing the global through mainstream participation in the national. The group that most epitomized this point of view was the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. The NAACP, active in global matters throughout much of its early existence, began a policy of retrenchment after World War II, which highlighted the domestic civil rights front as a priority. This retrenchment occurred as threats came in lieu of the McCarthy Red Scare, prompting the adjoining fear that the federal government would rescind support for the growing civil rights movement at home.[5]

Both methods of involvement in International affairs have garnered the efforts and voices of prominent African American civil rights leaders and organizations. In addition to black foreign service officers like Edward Dudley and Theodore Brown, prominent figures, such as Ralph J. Bunche, Mary McLeod Bethune, Paul Robeson, Rayford Logan, and Mary Church Terrell lent their energies to global issues such as decolonization and the role of the United Nations in world affairs.

Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, civil rights organizations such as the NAACP, led by Walter White, Mary Church Terrell and Roy Wilkins, joined forces with groups such as Max Yergen and Paul Robeson's Council on African Affairs to create a collective voice, clamoring for connections between domestic civil rights and the global manifestations of those rights abroad. Furthermore, historically black colleges and universities (HBCU's) joined this growing constituency for African American participation in U.S. foreign Affairs; represented primarily by the pioneering efforts of Howard and Fisk Universities, HBCUs played an important role in promoting the scholarship, activism, and public policy recommendations of African Studies as a discipline.

Scholars, at these respective institutions, advanced African Studies by convening conferences and symposia on pressing international issues such as colonialism, international organization, and intergroup relations. In this way, international service created postwar opportunities for both an expansion of professional opportunities for black academic intellectuals and activists.[6] Unfortunately, intellectual-activists have been unable to develop a specific method of connecting the study of Africana studies to the construction, implementation, and evaluation of public policy towards Africa and the African Diaspora. What is needed, in our time to remedy such an academic and policy void, is the development and articulation of an Africana Cultures and Policy Studies paradigm.[7]

African-American involvement in the State Department is another area where attention has been placed on influencing U.S. foreign policy abroad, especially on the African continent and in the Caribbean. Some blacks have sought to establish legitimate claims to citizenship through careers in the foreign service as diplomats, ambassadors, and as participants in the Fulbright program. Started in 1946, the Fulbright program, a U.S. government-sponsored, international exchange program, was designed to "increase mutual understanding between the peoples of the United States and the people of other countries.[8]" Distinguished African American leaders who have served as fellows include Dr. Ruth Simmons, president of Brown University; Dr. John Hope Franklin, professor emeritus of history at Duke University; Dr. Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich, executive director of the Black Leadership Network; and Dr. William Leo Hansberry, the late Howard University professor of history and founder of the African American Institute, now the Africa-America Institute. [9]

African-American participation in the State Department represents a situation wrought with tremendous successes as well as very probing challenges. From the late 19th century to the period following World War II, most black diplomats were routinely assigned to what was known as the "black circuit" which referred to exclusive assignments on the African continent and in other areas of the black world such as Haiti.

This assignment was dubbed as such for a number of reasons. One rationale is found in the segregated nature of American society. As with black scholars and the area known as Negro Studies, black professionals in the Foreign Service faced a similar segregation that limited their mobility to the African continent and the Caribbean. Another reason involved a willingness on the part of African Americans to serve in areas to which they felt culturally connected. Dr. Barney Coleman, a pioneering diplomat who was the first African-American to serve in South Africa, supported the existence of this circuit at a time when many blacks willingly chose to serve on the continent due to their evident cultural connection with Africa. Only by following strident criticisms from black leaders and organizations of the elitism and segregation in the foreign services, in the aftermath of World War II, did a number of black diplomats such as Terrance Todman, the only black career ambassador, and Clifford Wharton Sr., begin to receive appointments outside of Africa and the Caribbean.

Ambassador Todman, who has served in Spain and Argentina among other countries, considered it critical for black foreign service officers to break the color line with regard to assignments. For Todman, this rupture was critical because it would open up more opportunities for blacks and provide options that were once closed during the era of segregation. In addition to Ambassador Todman and Dr. Coleman, a number of other African Americans served distinguished careers in the foreign services although the numbers have been disproportionately low with respect to their representation in the overall U.S. population. Other notable African-American foreign service officers include Ralph J., Bunche, Patricia Roberts Harris, Mercer Cook, Barbara M. Watson, Elliott P. Skinner and others.[10]

Challenges faced by African-Americans who have held careers in the State Department center around issues of access and recruitment, retention, and mentoring. In terms of access and recruitment, African Americans have faced tremendous barriers in gaining entry into the foreign service. Traditionally, an elite organization, African-Americans, women, and those who did not possess an Ivy League education were barred from admission to this exclusive club. After World War II, although the service expanded its recruitment reach beyond America's elite private institutions, access to African-Americans and women continued to be severely undermined. As mentioned earlier, a large number of the early African-Americans who gained entry into the foreign service were relegated to serve in either Africa or another area of the black world. This position proved less than effective in terms of dramatically altering U.S, foreign policy, considering the fact that most U.S. administrations, during the Cold War, showed a genuine disinterest in Africa and the Caribbean, except for keeping them away from Communist influence or infiltration.

There were even times, Dr. Coleman and Ambassador Todman admitted, where diplomats, ambassadors, and other officials differed in assessments of handling situations in a given country and even, on occasions, outrightly opposed the administration's position. Functioning in the capacity as government officials, few options were given to dissenting persons. Furthermore, it was not uncommon for the administration in office to completely ignore recommendations offered by black foreign service officers, especially with regard to Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America. Evidence of such negligence in relation to foreign policy concerns can be determined by examinations of the lack of a substantial response from the U.S. government to colonialism in Africa and the Caribbean and its handling of the 1960 Belgian Congo crisis.

Another challenge faced by African-Americans in gaining access into the foreign service has been the difficulty of passing the entrance examination. The exam, composed of a written and an oral section, has been criticized over the years by African Americans and other minorities due to incredibly low success rates associated with it. Added criticism has been placed on the oral part, which had been labeled as a purely subjective exercise that, at one time, heavily discriminated against African Americans and women. In lieu of these criticisms, in recent years, the State Department has undergone more aggressive evaluations of the exam itself in addition to stepping up efforts to recruit more minorities and women.[11]

Although some progress in terms of recruitment of minorities into foreign service careers has been made, Ambassador Todman and Dr. Coleman agree that much more needs to be undertaken. Other areas of concern include retention efforts designed to provide quality mentorship to current officers and equal opportunities to elevate them into middle and senior level positions. At the 8th annual TransAfrica Foreign Policy Conference held on July 9, 1989, the focus was placed on the subject of African-Americans and their under-representation in international affairs. While the emphasis was placed on the severe under-representation in the foreign service, the same predicament characterized black involvement in multilateral organizations, international business, non-governmental organizations, the media, consultancies, other federal agencies, and academia. In terms of intervention strategies, various methods were suggested such as increased partnerships between the State Department and historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs).[12] Recent examples of such model partnerships include Lincoln (Pa.) and Howard Universities. Despite these advances, much needs to be done to bring the State Department up to par in terms of equality of opportunity for African-Americans, other racial minorities, and women. Former NAACP head Kwesi Mfume captured best this viewpoint which was echoed by all the panelists at the 1989 TransAfrica conference. Mfume argued that the diminished role of African-Americans in foreign affairs [13]"is not by accident, some sheer twist of fate, did not happen overnight and will not be overcome by some sort of mysticism."[14]

Evolution of a Black Foreign Policy Constituency

When one speaks of the concept of constituency among African-Americans, perhaps consideration should be given to the presence of multiple constituencies and to the presence of a dynamic constituency that is in constant reshaping and rearrangement. Due to the absence of a monolithic black community, the idea of one solid uniform black constituency has existed as a romanticized notion only. Although more sustained collaboration is needed between organizations, black American participants within a foreign policy constituency have never seen fit to demonstrate a blanket uniformity in responding to policy issues or positions.

Historian Brenda Gayle Plummer has written extensively on the evolution of a black foreign policy constituency. In consideration of the role of this constituency, Plummer argues that the 20th century Black American experience "provides a unique opportunity to examine issue formation and development in the context of both rapid social change and fundamental debate about the national interest.[15]" Plummer goes on to examine this constituency through the lens of two of its most important features: its particular audience and the issues supported by such an audience. Traditionally, this audience has consisted of a core group of politicians, clergy, press, intellectuals, and cadres of individuals developing Christian social welfare and peace organizations. Following their lead, this audience has expanded to include conventional civil rights groups and organized labor leaders.

A thorough examination of the notion of a black foreign policy constituency evidences the influence of ethnicity upon U.S. foreign policymaking, especially in terms of the inequality inherent in the selection of individuals and issues with which to concentrate upon. In 1986, the then Joint Center for Political Studies sponsored a series of roundtable discussions on the subject of ethnocentrism and U. S. Foreign Policy. In the opening address, President Eddie Williams discussed the effect that ethnocentrism had on U.S. foreign policy. Williams argued that ethnocentrism tainted U.S. foreign policymaking by distorting our perception of Third World nations, analysis of events, and our assessments of major political figures. He went on to add that harboring such a distorted lens "can trap us in fruitless policy approaches or tempt us to take actions that backfire."[16]

Pervasive throughout much of 20th century mainstream American culture, this ethnocentrism has historically supplanted notions that African-Americans had no viable foreign policy concerns to address or articulate. Furthermore, external critiques of the U.S. race problem were considered off limits and unworthy of consideration. In such an environment, support for American citizens to travel abroad and dramatize U.S. race relations were limited to those which offered patriotic and safe characterizations, debunking the notion that any problem existed within the confines of national borders.

As the Cold war ensued and the threat of Communism loomed ever so large, African-American critics of the American social structure were summarily given an ultimatum: either comply with U.S. policy perceptions or risk cessation of support for much desired civil rights initiatives or worse.[17]

Included in this latter category was the tactic employed by McCarthy supporters of equating dissident positions with Communism in an attempt to ruin the careers and lives of those labeled as troublemakers. More than a few African-American proponents of foreign policy involvement in Africa and other areas of the black world met this untimely fate, the most notable being W.E.B DuBois, Paul Robeson, and Josephine Baker. The same policy was practiced against African and Caribbean nationalist leaders who challenged and critiqued Western imperialism.

As this situation ensued, misinformation was often fed from the African continent to the Diaspora and was allowed to breed mistrust and thwart attempts to form a global constituency among the international black community. In this manner, there existed a well-defined, and seemingly unbridgeable gulf, between the interests of African-Americans, continental Africans, and others of African descent in the Diaspora. The continued presence of this gulf bears witness to the detrimental effects that can occur as a result of the lack of a strong institutional connection between homeland and its various constituency groups. Strong relationships between homeland and ethnic constituencies residing in the U.S. are vital to the preservation of an effective foreign policy voice. Further evidence of a cleavage in the nexus between homeland and constituency with respect to peoples of African descent was apparent in the divisive utilization of African Studies as a Cold War containment policy and other efforts designed to stifle a sustained and institutionalized constituency for Africa and the Diaspora. To this end, Plummer articulates the idea that the black American experience sheds light on the nature of ethnic politics as traditionally practiced in the United States and raises significant questions about the role of ethnicity in constraining rather than facilitating discourse and participation across the political spectrum, including input in foreign policy decisions.[18]

The key to African American productivity within this constituency has been the involvement of a number of black institutions which have served as vehicles for the promotion and dissemination of ideas relative to policy positions as advocated by individuals and leaders. These key institutions, namely the black press, civil and social justice organizations and churches have been those that have functioned as the centerpieces of African American advancement within U.S. borders. African American participants have achieved greatest success when the black press, organizations, and churches have been able to mobilize together as a collective force around a common agenda in order to effectively influence policy. Oftentimes, the formation of these constituencies has been characterized by tendencies to rally in response to a particular issue or, as in the case of the post-World War II period, to ride the winds of change during peacetime.

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Contemporary Development of the Black Foreign Policy Constituency

Current manifestations of the Black foreign policy constituency, or what could be called an institutionalized Pan-African, transnational, global intellectual and policy community, have found expression in the form of a number of organizations. The most notable of these groups participated in a 1998 discussion about ways to open doors to Africa. Moderated by Melvin P. Foote, the President and CEO of Constituency for Africa, a group that builds key linkages and coalitions among organizations, institutions, and individuals interested in African affairs and policy development, leaders from four Africa-advocacy organizations engaged in a dialogue, covered in the pages of Emerge magazine.

In addition to Foote, the dialogue participants included: Salih Booker, senior fellow, director of Africa Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations, and board member of the Association of Concerned Africa Scholars; Mora McLean, president of the African-American Institute; Ernest J.Wilson III, director of the Center for International Development and Conflict Management at the University of Maryland at College Park; and Mike Williams, chief of staff for Rep. Jim McDermott (D-Was.).[19]

This group gathered together for the purpose of discussing the impact of former President Bill Clinton's trip on U.S. policies toward Africa and the role of African Americans in helping to frame that policy. Issues raised included the meaning of an African Renaissance to U.S. policy in Africa, the composition of a constituency for Africa, and the need to develop institutional networks between Africans and African Americans. When questioned about the meaning of an African Renaissance to U.S. policy on the continent, Dr. Wilson asserted that Africans themselves were becoming more and more accountable for their own destinies than ever before. In prescribing possible U.S. strategies toward such a renewed vision evident on the continent, Wilson mentioned the need to acknowledge and work with the new African leadership. In this light, he stated a lesson learned by Clinton, one which is applicable to President Bush: the U.S. can no longer afford to view African heads of state simply as inconsequential Cold War relics. Wilson firmly believed that the president and secretary of state had to shift their traditional approach towards Africa away from a Cold War attitude to viewing the continent and its leaders in a new and more equitable light.[20]

Other panelists addressed the issue of the composition and reconfiguration of the constituency for Africa. African-American Institute President Mora McClean cautioned that a very critical component of this constituency that needed to participate more vigorously would be the "neo-diaspora." By neo-diaspora, McClean was referring to the presence of larger populations of recent African immigrants in the U.S. She believed that in terms of political activity and economic position, this particular group would serve a critical role in the newly evolving constituency. Salih Booker took a different approach to the constituency issue.

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Booker believed that the focus of the constituency had to remain African-Americans while African American groups and institutions would continue to be vital to its overall success. Booker writes:

I think we have to be very clear that African-Americans are the strategic constituency of all these multiple constituencies interested in U.S. policy toward Africa. But as far as the U.S. government is concerned, in a way, and particularly the Congress, they're never going to do more for Africa than what African-Americans are demanding they do. And that's almost always been the case, and that is why the role of the Congressional Black Caucus, or I'd rather say the potential role, is so important. That's why the role of the Black media is so important in educating our own community on realities in Africa. And this is where we really do need a lot of work.[21]

In addition, Booker affirmed the importance of establishing institutional mechanisms whereby Africans could talk more constructively with African-Americans. This suggestion was coupled with the necessity that America honestly acknowledge its largely negative past relationship with Africa and other areas of the black world, particularly its involvement in the slave trade, support for colonialism and imperialism, and Cold War policies that propped up and protected dictators and apartheid loyalists. Booker ends this statement with a reminder concerning America's most important challenge facing it in redefining its relationship to Africa. The same message can be applied to other areas of the black world as well. Booker states:

The sooner more Americans are prepared to acknowledge honestly the importance of this history and its impact, the better we'll be in dealing with the negative legacy that we still live with.[22]

Seeing as many Americans adhere to leadership of some kind, strong and genuine examples of this acknowledgement must come from the Bush administration and other major leaders in the public and private sector.

Where Do We Go From Here? : Policy Recommendations

In terms of policy recommendations, I determine three to be the most pertinent in light of the information presented herein. The first recommendation involves the convening of a national working conference or a series of workshops involving all the major organizations involved in policy development for African nations and other areas of the black world. This working meeting would include groups such as Constituency for Africa, the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies' Office of International Affairs, the African American Institute, TransAfrica, Africare, Association of Concerned Africa Scholars, as well as other representatives affiliated with the National Summit on Africa.

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Other participants could include scholars and other representatives from research institutes in the area and beyond as well as researchers involved with African and Caribbean Studies, members of the Congressional Black Caucus, Non-governmental organizations, and major civil rights groups such as the Black Leadership Network, the National Urban League and The NAACP. In this sense, a look at the history of black foreign policy constituency-building reveals successes achieved by the involvement of leaders from each of the above-mentioned groups and others in a coordinated network.

One possible model for a proposed series of workshops is the kind which was convened in 1986 by the Joint Center for Political Studies (now Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies) entitled, "The Distorted Lens: Ethnocentrism and U.S. Foreign Policy."

This series of roundtables, held on April 17, 23, and 30, 1986 at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington, brought together a great mixture of the black foreign policy constituency including academicians, elected officials, foreign service professionals, business people, members of the press, and American and foreign ambassadors. As a follow-up to the successful gathering, a conference report was drawn and written by two Joint Center consultants, Susan Kalish and Ian McNett.[23]

Secondly, I would recommend a massive campaign by all the above-mentioned groups to educate the general public about Africa and other areas of the African Diaspora such as the Caribbean and Latin America. With this in mind, education campaigns must be conducted in conjunction with school systems in the district and with the assistance of African and Caribbean Studies scholars and institutes like the Institute for Caribbean Studies, members of the Association of Concerned Africa Scholars, and the African Studies program at Georgetown University. Also, as suggested earlier, institutions such as the black press and other pertinent black media outlets need to be utilized in the education campaign along with the increased involvement of recent African and Caribbean immigrants. Perhaps, with the assistance of research programs, institutes, and community groups concerned about issues and policy affecting the African continent and the rest of the black world, a massive series of educational workshops could be held at predetermined sites on university campuses, in churches, and at public and charter schools. Committees could be organized so that multiple workshops could occur at the same time in different places so as to reach out to the greatest possible audience.

The third recommendation would be to call town hall meetings, in the model of those administered by the Constituency for Africa, where members of the first and second groups could meet to talk and dialogue about ways to work together. In this way, the policy process goes in a two-way process that is equally both top-down and bottom-up in its approach, involvement, and impact. Only through a policy process that is both bottom-p and top-down can the strongest and most viable constituency be built and maintained.

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Furthermore, as all participants in the policy process are involved, there will be greater opportunity to achieve a real and sustained nexus between policy, theory and practice. Too often, policies are developed and implemented without the input of the most significant participants in the process: community residents and marginalized populations. Lastly, if policies are to be effective and make the most efficient use of human, economic and other resources, they must be comprehensive and relevant to people of all class levels.

The goal of these three recommendations is to help build a more viable constituency for Africa and the African Diaspora that involves full participation in the policy process, including policymakers and government leaders such as current Washington, D.C. Mayor Adrian Fenty; researchers and academics; other interested professionals such as clergy and business leaders, as well as community residents and activists.

This approach takes into account the tremendous diversity that has characterized African-Americans historic participation in international affairs and policy development in the black world. In assessing the relevance of a black foreign policy constituency, one must keep in mind that no one organization or individual can hold the responsibility alone. The lack of more consistent and far-reaching mechanisms hinders the overall promotion and attainment of constructive policy development for Africa and the African Diaspora. While recognizing the shoulders we stand on, we can also critically assess the strengths and weaknesses of past approaches so as to maintain continuity where it is needed and alter strategies that were either unsuccessful or required to be altered to fit present circumstances. While African and African-American members and institutions need to be mobilized, all Americans must play a crucial role in the achievement of the greatest success for this multi-dimensional constituency.

Many organizations, including those mentioned herein, have contributed significant groundwork and garnered significant support for Africa and the African Diaspora in the United States and around the world. However, what is needed today is the creation or revival of an institutionalized umbrella organization, similar to Malcolm X's Organization of African American Unity, a renewed and expanded TransAfrica, or a version of the United Nations which can specifically formulate and implement domestic and international policy agendas for Africa and the African Diaspora. In this sense, a Pan-African policy must be defined, articulated, and implemented with regard to a global agenda for Africana human rights. The best and brightest Pan-African leaders (grassroots and national), scholars and intellectuals, policy makers, and others must be organized, coordinated, and mobilized into a permanent and sustainable coalition of interdependent think tanks, advocacy groups, and concerned citizens around the development of creative and workable solutions to the challenges facing people of African descent throughout the world.

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The most important element in devising this renewed constituency is the development of a mechanism which will ensure the proper coordination of local, national, and global Pan-African unity-a unity without uniformity. It is now time for Africa and the African Diaspora to truly unite in order to ensure a more prosperous future for all.

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