

Panel Discussion

Obama's Africa Agenda: Bush Reloaded?

June 2, 19.30 – 21.00
Beletage, Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung
Schumannstraße 8, 10117 Berlin

The election of the first US President with African roots has raised great expectations about Washington's future Africa agenda. Memories of Obama's first Africa tour in 2006 have further boosted an unprecedented 'Obamania' on the continent.

Four months into Obama's presidency, however, Africa remains the continent where the reorientation of US foreign policy – at least in its tone – is the least visible. The first outline of the new US Africa agenda, presented by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton earlier this year, is largely congruent with that of the Bush administration: defending American security and energy interests, increasing international pressure on Mugabe and Bashir. Obama's staffing decisions, such as the nomination of career diplomat Johnnie Carson as Assistant Secretary on African Affairs and the appointment of Air Force General Scott Gration as Special Envoy to Sudan, equally indicate continuity rather than radical change.

Against this background it is worth asking if and how the Africa agenda of the new US administration will be different from that of its predecessor. Has the widespread African 'Obamania' increased the US government's scope of action on the continent? What place does Africa hold in the reorientation of US foreign policy under Obama and Clinton? Have the strategic interests of the United States in Africa shifted at all under the new administration? And, finally, what are the ramifications for the German and European Africa policies?

Discussants:

Prof. Nicholas van de Walle

Director, Mario Einaudi Center for International Studies, Cornell University and John S. Knight, Professor of International Studies, Department of Government, Cornell University, Ithaca/New York

Prof. Macharia Munene

Professor of History and International Relations, United States International University (USIU), Nairobi, Kenya

Ambassador Andebrhan Giorgis

Expert on African security policy, former Senior Africa Advisor, International Crisis Group, London

Moderator:

Kirsten Maas-Albert

Head of Africa Department, Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, Berlin

The panel discussion will be held in English. Simultaneous translation is not available.
Participation is free, no registration necessary