

Oppose the nomination of Dr. Susan Rice as representative to the United Nations

An open letter to Senator John Kerry, Foreign Relations committee of the U.S. Senate, 7 December 2008

Dear Senator Kerry,

I write as a scholar with more than 30 years experience in southern Nigerian studies to oppose the nomination of Dr. Susan Rice as U.N. ambassador.

As Bill Clinton's undersecretary of state for African affairs, Rice played a disgraceful role in ending the democratic hopes of Nigeria. As everyone knows, the only credible election in Nigerian history was held on 12 June 1993 and won by Moshood Abio.la, a charismatic businessman with genuine populist tendencies -- and for this reason feared by elites in Nigeria, Britain and the U.S.

Under mortal pressure from the Nigerian army and probably also from British MI6 (as reported to me anecdotally by Prof. Abimbo.la, who was senate majority leader at the time), cowardly General Babangida cancelled the presidential election which he had organized with backing from some credible elements of civil society, and appointed Chief Ernest S.onekan (the chairman of U.A.C./Lever Brothers, Nigeria, the former Royal Niger Company) as caretaker until General Abacha felt comfortable enough to seize overt control five months later.

When Abio.la tried to reclaim his stolen presidency in June 1994, Abacha jailed him, bought off the Yoruba elite and stomped on civil society despite heroic resistance from elements of the Lagos press, many of whom had been nurtured in Abio.la's Concord publishing group (see the wonderful account by Kunle Ajibade, "Jailed for Life; a Reporter's Prison Notes", Heinemann, Ibadan, 2003, ISBN 9781295597).

Abacha died in mysterious circumstances in June 1998, and a month later Abio.la (in perilously fragile health after 4 years of torture) was visited in custody by Tom Pickering, number three in Clinton's state department, accompanied by Dr. Susan Rice as political head of the Africa desk. By all reports, Pickering amplified the threats previously uttered to the prisoner by Kofi Annan, Emeka Anyao.ku. and British minister Tony Lloyd, telling Abio.la that he would never be released unless he renounced his presidency. This fact alone proves how the "international community" was unanimously complicit with the military dictatorship they postured to dislike. We knew this already when Bill Clinton himself, during his trip to South Africa in 1997, was reported by the NY Times as welcoming Abacha's plan to convert himself into a Museveni-like civilian dictator. Thanks a lot, Bubba!

While resisting Pickering's threats, Abio.la collapsed and died literally at Pickering's feet -- shortly after Rice had served tea. Poisoning was not proved, but that was a red herring to the plain fact that our government was muscling the president elect in the interest of the gang of thugs called the Nigerian military. Abio.la's daughter Hafsat has said that she found most disgusting the kabuki theater of Pickering trying to administer mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to her dying dad -- talk about the "kiss of death"!

Abio.la's elimination conveniently cleared the way for the U.S. favored candidate, General O.basanjo. (a friend of Jimmy Carter) to be installed in a fake election in 1999, and ever since then, Nigeria has continued down the path of corruption, authoritarianism and mass misery, during the highest oil price in history. General O.basanjo. himself retired into disgrace last year after handpicking his successor, another corrupt failure. Nigeria's agony has no end in sight.

I interpret Rice's presence at Abio.la's snuff scene as her mafia-style induction into the U.S. power elite, under the watchful eye of Pickering, a notorious heavy who had previously served as our ambassador to Nigeria, the Soviet Union and coincidentally enough the U.N.

From her silence, Susan Rice saw nothing wrong with threatening the elected president of Nigeria in jail, and she has never expressed the slightest remorse at the tragic consequences -- in other words, she is now a made member and a blooded soldier in the mob. The people of Somalia, Sudan, Congo and Zimbabwe are in for a rough ride, and so is the hope for improved U.S. reputation in Africa.

Please contact me to obtain documentary support for any of the statements in this letter. In fairness please also feel free to share this letter with Dr. Rice -- my googling skills are insufficient to locate her email address -- in case she wishes to present a specific defense.

Sincerely,

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Abacha's *Quid-Pro-Clinton*

Update to Open Letter, with a minor date correction, 20 December 2008

NYTimes has reported that Clinton Foundation received between 1 and 5 million USD from Chagoury on behalf of Abacha at an undisclosed time, plus almost a half million more to a Clinton-referred project. Excerpt below.

In the final graf, the *Times* does not fail to note the intermediary role of Susan Rice in Abacha's lobbying of Clinton via Chagoury. By tacit editorial code known to readers, the *Times* saves key nuggets for the end of sensitive news stories, so we can be sure that this teasing placement is significant, suggesting more to come about Rice and Nigeria.

Almost certainly correlated with Abacha's remittance via Chagoury and Rice, was Clinton's abrupt pro-Abacha shift, which came in early 1998 (and not late 1997, as I half-remembered). Clipping below. Safe to assume that neither Hillary nor Dr. Rice will volunteer to explain the precise timing during their confirmation hearings, but otherwise there is no public explanation for Bubba's sudden bath of warm feelings towards Nigeria's goggle-eyed maximum ruler and perhaps also to the successor (and Abio.la's terminal jailer) General Abdulsalami. Of course U.S. oil interests can never be discounted, but the "personal touch" often works wonders in politics!

-VM

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9A01EFD8143BF93BA15750C0A96E958260>.

March 28, 1998

CLINTON IN AFRICA: THE POLICY; U.S. Stance Toward Nigeria And Its Ruler Seems to Shift

By R. W. APPLE JR.

President Clinton appeared today to signal a change in American policy toward Nigeria, Africa's most populous country.

Mr. Clinton, asked during a news conference here about his Administration's stance toward Nigeria's military ruler, Gen. Sani Abacha, said that "if he stands for election, we hope he will stand as a civilian." He said he had sought advice on the matter from President Nelson Mandela of South Africa.

Previously, senior American officials said the United States would find it unacceptable if General Abacha ran as a civilian candidate in elections scheduled for August. Although Nigeria, along with its neighbors Equatorial Guinea and Gabon, supplies almost a quarter of United States petroleum imports, Mr. Clinton did not visit it on this trip as a sign of disapproval of the regime.

Asked about the remarks today, American officials said Mr. Clinton meant that if General Abacha released political prisoners, showed respect for human rights and supported a genuine transition to civil government, then the United States would not object to the general's candidacy.

Samuel R. Berger, the President's national security adviser, said this evening that what really mattered in Nigeria was "whether there is truly an election that is free and fair." As things seem to be going, he added, it would be "very difficult" for the United States to accept the outcome of the election no matter who runs.

"The President spoke loosely, but there is no policy change," another White House official declared, speaking on condition of anonymity.

General Abacha seized power in 1993 after the military annulled the results of presidential elections. Many political prisoners, including the presumed winner of the 1993 races, remain in jail, although General Abacha has promised a return to democracy.

Nigerian Opposition Surprised

LAGOS, Nigeria, March 27 (Agence France-Presse) -- Nigeria's opposition coalition expressed surprise today over Mr. Clinton's statement.

"There is no justifiable cause for Washington to change its earlier position," said Senator Abraham Adesanya, the national president of the National Democratic Coalition.

"Abacha handing over to himself -- either as a military man or as a civilian -- is not acceptable to Nigerians," Mr. Adesanya said. "It is immoral."

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/19/us/politics/w19clinton.html>

December 19, 2008

In Clinton List, a Veil Is Lifted on Foundation
By PETER BAKER and CHARLIE SAVAGE

WASHINGTON -- Former President Bill Clinton has collected tens of millions of dollars for his foundation over the last 10 years from governments in the Middle East, tycoons from Canada, India, Nigeria and Ukraine, and other international figures with interests in American foreign policy.

Lifting a longstanding cloak of secrecy, Mr. Clinton on Thursday released a complete list of more than 200,000 donors to his foundation as part of an agreement to douse concerns about potential conflicts if Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton is confirmed as secretary of state in the Obama administration.

The donor list offers a glimpse into the high-powered, big-dollar world in which Mr. Clinton has traveled since leaving the White House as he jetted around the globe making money for himself and raising vast sums for his ambitious philanthropic programs fighting disease, poverty and climate change. Some of the world's richest people and most famous celebrities handed over large checks to finance his presidential library and charitable activities.

With his wife now poised to take over as America's top diplomat, Mr. Clinton's fund-raising is coming under new scrutiny for relationships that could pose potential conflict-of-interest issues for Mrs. Clinton in her job. Some of her husband's biggest backers have much at stake in the policies that President-elect Barack Obama's incoming administration adopts toward their regions or business ventures.

Saudi Arabia alone gave to the foundation \$10 million to \$25 million, as did government aid agencies in Australia and the Dominican Republic. Brunei, Kuwait, Norway, Oman, Qatar and Taiwan each gave more than \$1 million. So did the ruling family of Abu Dhabi and the Dubai Foundation, both based in the United Arab Emirates, and the Friends of Saudi Arabia, founded by a Saudi prince.

Also among the largest donors were a businessman who was close to the onetime military ruler of Nigeria, a Ukrainian tycoon who was son-in-law of that former Soviet republic's authoritarian president and a Canadian mining executive who took Mr. Clinton to Kazakhstan while trying to win lucrative uranium contracts.

In addition, the foundation accepted sizable contributions from several prominent figures from India, like a billionaire steel magnate and a politician who lobbied Mrs. Clinton this year on behalf of a civilian nuclear cooperation agreement between India and the United States, a deal that has rankled Pakistan, a key foreign policy focus of the incoming administration.

Such contributions could provoke suspicion at home and abroad among those wondering about any effect on administration policy.

[...]

Mr. Clinton's foundation has raised \$500 million since 1997, growing into a global operation with 1,100 paid staff members and volunteers in 40 countries. It said it had provided medicine to 1.4 million people living with H.I.V./AIDS, helped dozens of cities reduce heat-trapping gases and worked to spread economic opportunity.

Mr. Clinton's advocates said that the disclosure on Thursday showed he had nothing to hide and that most of his largest contributors were already known.

Yet while unprecedented, the disclosure was also limited.

The list posted on the foundation's Web site -- www.clintonfoundation.org -- did not provide the nationality or occupation of the donors, the dates they contributed or the precise amounts of their gifts, instead breaking down contributors by dollar ranges. Nor did the list include pledges for future donations. As a result, it is impossible to know from the list which donations were made while Mr. Clinton was still president or while Mrs. Clinton was running for president.

Many benefactors are well-known Americans, like Stephen L. Bing; Alfonso Fanjul; Bill Gates; Tom Golisano, a billionaire who ran for New York governor; Rupert Murdoch; and Barbra Streisand. Bloomberg L.P., the financial media empire founded by Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg of New York, contributed, as did Freddie Mac, the mortgage company now partly blamed for the housing market collapse.

Another potentially sensitive donation came from Blackwater Training Center, part of the private security firm hired to protect American diplomats in Iraq. Five of its guards have been indicted for their roles in a 2007 shooting that left 17 Iraqi civilians dead.

The potential for appearances of conflict was illustrated by Amar Singh, a politician in India who gave \$1 million to \$5 million. Mr. Singh visited the United States in September to lobby for a deal allowing India to obtain civilian nuclear technology even though it never signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty. He met with Mrs. Clinton, who he said assured him that Democrats would not block the deal. Congress approved it weeks later.

Other donors have connections with India, a potential flashpoint because of tensions with Pakistan. Among them was Lakshmi Mittal, a steel magnate and, according to Forbes magazine, the fourth-richest person in the world. Mr. Mittal, who donated \$1 million to \$5 million, was involved in a scandal in 2002 in London, where he lives. After Mr. Mittal made a large donation to the Labor Party, Prime Minister Tony Blair helped him persuade Romania to sell him its state steel company.

Another donor [in the USD 1 and 5 million bracket, see below -- VM] was Gilbert Chagoury, a businessman close to Gen. Sani Abacha of Nigeria, widely criticized for a brutal and corrupt rule.

Mr. Chagoury tried during the 1990s to win favor for Mr. Abacha from the Clinton administration, contributing \$460,000 to a voter registration group to which Democratic officials steered him, according to news accounts. He won meetings with National Security Council officials, including Susan E. Rice, who is now Mr. Obama's choice to be ambassador to the United Nations.

Kitty Bennett, Don Van Natta Jr. and Margot Williams contributed reporting.

<http://projects.nytimes.com/clinton-donors/>

Clinton Foundation Donors: Search

Former President Bill Clinton released a list of thousands of donors to his charity, the William J. Clinton Foundation. The list is partial and will be updated as new data becomes available.

Donations larger than \$25,000,000

- The Children's Investment Fund Foundation
- UNITAID

Donations from \$10,000,001 to \$25,000,000

- AUSAID
- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- Stephen L. Bing
- COPRESIDA-Secretariado Tecnico
- Fred Eychaner
- Frank Giustra, Chief Executive Officer, The Radcliffe Foundation
- Tom Golisano
- The Hunter Foundation
- Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
- The ELMA Foundation
- Theodore W. Waitt

Donations from \$5,000,001 to \$10,000,000

- Government of Norway
- Nationale Postcode Loterij
- Haim Saban and The Saban Family Foundation
- Michael Schumacher
- The Wasserman Foundation

Donations from \$1,000,001 to \$5,000,000

- S. D. Abraham
- Absolute Return for Kids (ARK)
- Sheikh Mohammed H. Al-Amoudi
- Alltel Corporation
- Nasser Al-Rashid
- Smith and Elizabeth Bagley
- The Eli & Edythe Broad Foundation
- Richard Caring
- Gilbert R. Chagoury
- Citi Foundation
- Clinton Giustra Sustainable Growth Initiative - Canada
- Victor P. Dahdaleh & The Victor Phillip Dahdaleh Charitable Foundation

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