

Why Africans should pray for Trump's re-election

As America heads to elections on November 3, speculations have been mounting across the world around the most likely outcome and its implications for the rest of the world. Among Africans, unlike other peoples with clear interests, the tendency has been to mimic and transpose American desires onto themselves. This ought to change. Unless the argument is that Africans have no interests, an assessment of the Trump administration's policy and attitude towards our continent is necessary to articulate the expected terms of future interactions with the United States.

Currently, the polls appear to be in favour of the democratic candidate, Joe Biden. Scholars such as Zachariah Mampilly and Jason Stearns are advocating [a new direction for U.S. Foreign Policy in Africa](#), which they portray as a 'progressive' approach but one that is riddled with the same old white saviourist patterns of thought and practice. Africans who find white saviourism problematic (and it should be to all Africans) should reject this alien agency that claims to speak on their behalf and express without equivocation their desire to see the Trump administration extended rather than replaced. When it comes to Africa, Trump has been clearer, more predictable, and more beneficial to Africa. Here's why.

First, the fact that "Trump's conception of the continent ranges from disinterest to outright contempt" as Mampilly and Stearns argue, shouldn't elicit the outrage of Africans. If it does, the outrage is misplaced. Instead, Africans should consider Trump's disinterest as an opportunity to reflect on the Africa we want to build without the usual unsolicited saviourist lectures from liberal American presidents, media, NGOs and think-tank "experts." During the Trump administration, these saviours have lost much of the

credibility to lecture Africans because the moral pedestal on which they stood has crumbled. Indeed, their recalcitrance only exposes their hypocrisy. Africans ought to celebrate this development unless they fear the repossession of the agency they need to speak and act on their aspirations rather than outsourcing this to “benevolent” – but actually self-serving – foreign actors.

Western interest in Africa has mainly reflected forms of violent disruptions – through colonialism, neo-colonialism, CIA-backed coups and assassinations targeting pro-people, Pan-African leaders and Human Rights crusades leading to ‘humanitarian’ interventions in mineral-rich African countries; they have been constant force of instability that has prevented the continent from claiming its rightful place as a respected member in the community of nations. In light of this, a rational African would wish for maximum disinterest from one of the most violent empires the world has ever seen.

It should be treason to ignore all the violent intrusions on the altar of the contemptuous reference to the continent as constituting “shithole countries.” Indeed, it ought to be myopic to trade away the strategic advantage that Trump offers on the basis of a racist expression that results from America’s deep entrenched racism of which Trump is only the mirror and of which liberals are similarly likely to express behind closed doors.

Trump’s sin is that he lacks the sophistication that characterized his predecessors and career politicians in government whose covert contempt for Africa expresses itself through lectures about “the need for strong institutions” in which America is ironically the inspirational model.

Similar contempt is displayed by America’s foot soldiers – the media industry, human rights and democracy NGOs activists and other “expert” lecturers – who are happy to feed a largely ignorant American public – Trump included – with narratives

and images of a war-torn and famine-stricken continent – a shithole – that needs saving. In other words, Jeffrey Smith is Trump in cleaner clothing. That Trump places the mirror in Smith's face for all to see explains the anger that American liberal saviours have against him. The difference between the two is the strategic advantage that ought to clearly demonstrate who ought to be favourable for Africans: how to ensure that those holding contemptuous (read racist) views, overt or covert, are unable to act on them. This is why Trump's "disinterest" ought to be celebrated and rewarded with four more years, if Africans had the voting power. Since they are a praying people, Africans out to pray for this outcome. This is a no-brainer unless one was educated in America to perpetuate American interests.

Secondly, Trump's apparent lack of sophistication and his thuggish approach have removed any pretence that America's intervention abroad is in pursuit of democracy and in the defence of human rights ideals and laid bare the greed and white supremacist ideology driving American 'humanitarian' interventions, sanctions and other regime change tools at its disposal, including the media, NGOs and think-tank experts.

Consider Zimbabwe. Obviously, no sane person believes that the sanctions-stricken [Zimbabwe represents an extraordinary threat to the U.S foreign policy](#) unless U.S foreign policy is committed – for example during the fight against the apartheid regime in neighbouring South Africa – to maintaining the economic subjugation of black people by returning the land to the thieves. Nor would any principled person defend the idea that Sudan [must pay 330\\$ million to the U.S to be removed from a list of states sponsoring terror.](#)

The abandonment by the U.S of any pretence of defending democracy and human rights should be an eye-opener for Africans and we should appreciate this transparency coming from a man who has refused to apply the vast number of tools of deception, which were applied by his predecessors.

Assuming Africans have learned any lesson from this unprecedented transparency, they ought to develop a consciousness that asserts itself on matters regarding Africa without waiting for any saviours. It is the only way to prevent the recurrence elsewhere of what happened – and is still happening – in Libya, where a humanitarian “solution” for dictatorship has been slavery.

Thirdly, besides the capitalist greed and despite the white supremacist ideology informing U.S foreign policy, the Trump administration’s behaviour regarding trade has been consistent. For Trump, trade has mainly evolved around threatening with and slapping tariffs on products from any country preventing the U.S from enjoying the upper hand in trade relations!

Unlike his predecessors, Trump’s ideals on trade have not been selective. Trump’s administration has been as invested in sabotaging the implementation of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement as it was in encouraging the Brexit. In so doing, and contrary to his predecessors, Trump makes no secret of his preference to engage with weaker entities rather than stronger continental and regional blocks which have more bargaining power and leverage.

A consistent actor is predictable. A reasonable person would rather deal with an adversary whose terms and motivations are clear than with one that keeps moving goalposts or one that conceals his or her real objectives behind some respectability politics or slogans like “Together We can” during the day while ordering precision drones strikes by night. By sabotaging the AfCFTA, Trump is telling us he is going to shoot us before he actually pulls the trigger and gives us the opportunity to accept exploitation as isolated negotiators or come together fast and furious before he pulls the trigger. If Africans see this threat, then Trump is unwittingly organising Africa, in spite of its self-sabotage and unwillingness to get out of its own way. Four more years and it’s sink or swim for

Africans.

Fourth, the perceived threat posed by China's growing influence in Africa has pushed the Trump's administration to shift America's response to Africa [from patronising propaganda that mocked 'naïve African leaders falling for China's debt trap' to doubling the BUILD act budget up to \\$ 60 billion](#), a decision that would naturally lead to more investment in Africa. While one cannot simply dismiss concerns about the ability of African countries to reimburse their loans, Africans should neither spit on the opportunity to negotiate better conditions for the reimbursement: Better conditions become an option in an environment where there are multiple actors willing to put their money on the table, regardless of their motivations.

If this shift materialises, the issue for Africans will be more fundamentally about what to do with the loans rather than how to get the loans and the potential to get exposed to manipulation and control, such as was the case when Africa, without bargaining leverage in the 1980s, exposed itself to the ruinous Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) of the World Bank and the IMF as well as the subsequent Washington Consensus of the 1990s and 2000s. This shift ought to return agency to Africans who should seize this opportunity and make the most of it.

How, then, could one reject these beneficial terms afforded by Trump's ascendancy and prefer the liberal white saviourism approach that pretends to care for Africans only to weaponize 'aid' for political control of African governments?

Unfortunately, Africans don't learn, which explains the recurrence of violence and exploitation at their expense. Despite the advantages that Trump brings, many paradoxically still prefer to see Biden elected. As an African sister in the struggle educated me recently, the paradox of the oppressed in which an abused woman hangs on dearly to an abusive "lover", a

condition known as Stockholm syndrome. Maybe, what they prefer is covert racism over honest interactions.

Or maybe they long for the babysitting that Trump has denied them so far. This is the group of those who generally consider western countries as the stick with which to discipline African governments and fail to acknowledge the vicious circle this constant and violent intrusion has created, where African leaders are only accountable to foreign interests.

While they argue – rightly – that regardless of whoever occupies the white house, U.S foreign policy will always involve some level of interference, they refuse to say why, if that is the case, Biden is the better choice. After all, [we are constantly reminded](#) that Joe Biden was the vice-president of an administration that “turned an African country with the highest standard of living on the continent into a lawless, war-torn failed state where Africans are now being sold in slave markets.” How does such a terrible record inform the African perspective while reflecting on the choice between Trump and Biden, for instance?

Moreover, if Biden represents an opportunity to lower existing tensions between American and its western allies, then it follows that he is a bigger threat to the non-western world than Trump ever was given the history of the alliance towards the latter. It ought to be obvious that no prey in its right mind would wish for the regrouping of its hunters for them to come for it in a coordinated manner. It’s akin to the fish in the pan urging for the replenishment of firewood where there is a scarcity.

To be sure, the support and prayers that Africans should extend to Trump in his quest for re-election is predicated on Trump as an idea and an attitude (of detachment and disinterest) rather than the person, per se. In other words, should Trump’s attitude towards Africa change to mimic the intrusive patterns of his predecessors, then patriotic

Africans would be compelled to resist him. It wouldn't be the first time. Resistance against imperialism is what most Africans have done throughout history regardless of wins and (temporary) losses and irrespective of the reactionary instincts of African collaborators (in governments, the media, think-tanks, NGOs, etc) who in the historical struggle their insider knowledge, a natural infiltrator, has proved them to be worse than the enemy himself.

If none of these considerations is compelling enough to embrace Trump's re-election, then, surely, Africans have been conditioned to conflate their interests with those of America in particular and those of the western world in general.

Undoubtedly, a politically stable empire – whose high standards of living have been predicated on the destruction of other civilizations and can only be sustained through exploitation abroad – is a bigger threat than an unstable one that affords the exploited an opportunity to regroup and give themselves a chance. If Trump represents political instability, then victims of destructions and exploitation have a clear choice to make.