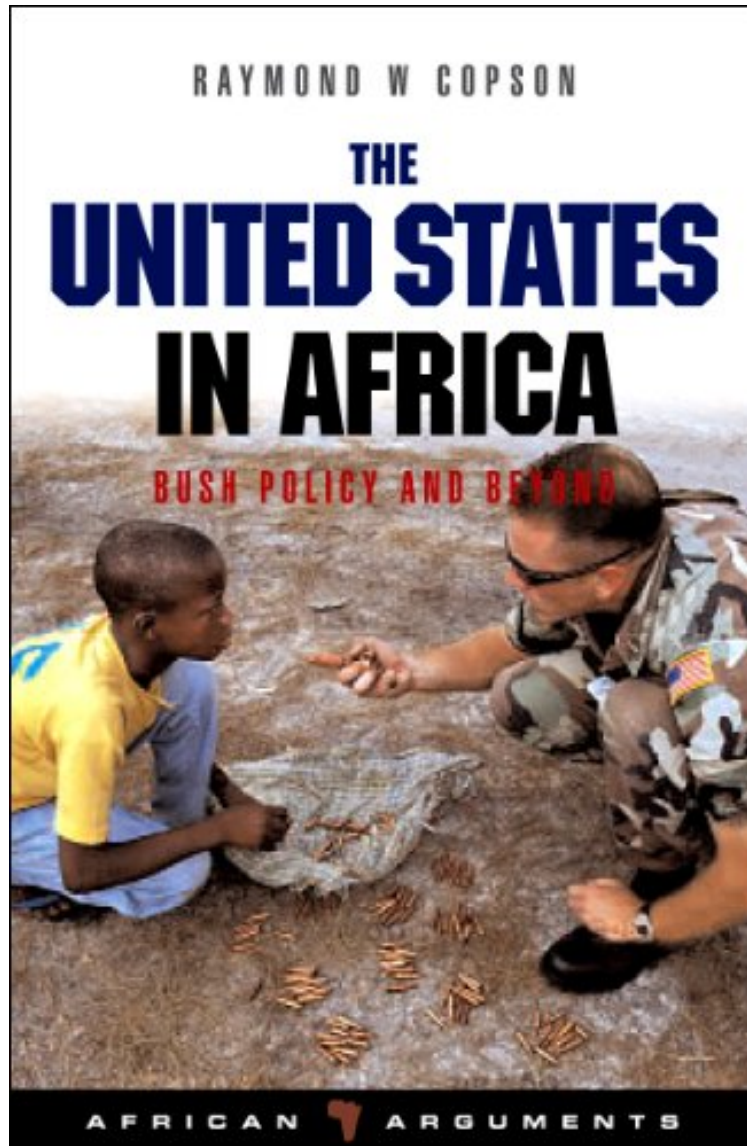


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The United States in Africa: Bush Policy and Beyond (African Arguments)

Raymond W. Copson

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Raymond W. Copson : The United States in Africa: Bush Policy and Beyond (African Arguments) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The United States in Africa: Bush Policy and Beyond (African Arguments):

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Jaded View of U.S. Africa Policy By not me "The United States in Africa" is a brief but well-informed critique of the Bush Administration's Africa policy. The author, Ray Copson, is a well-known "Africanist," who worked for years at the Congressional Research Service. He understands how policy is

formed (and deformed) in DC. He knows how policy plays out on the ground in Africa. He can pick apart a budget, navigate jargon (ACOTA, PEPFAR, ECOWAS, AGOA, etc.), and separate cant from reality. In short, he has everything needed to write a smart "insider/outsider's" book -- and that's exactly what he's done. Readers should know, however, that the book isn't really a history of U.S. relations with Africa since 2001. Instead, Copson takes stock of U.S. policy, asking whether it has been just and fair. He wants to know whether the U.S., as the richest and most powerful country on earth, has done enough to bring peace and a better life to Africans. He concludes that the U.S. has fallen short in many areas, from development assistance to democracy promotion. However, he doesn't single out the Bush Administration for blame. Most U.S. administrations have failed Africa. The book's only real shortcoming is a querulous tone that mars a few sections. The discussion of Bush's (idiotic) abstinence policy, for example, takes up more space than the discussion of ARV programs, which are keeping alive thousands of people with AIDS. Similarly, Copson devotes more pages to chastizing the slow U.S. response to Darfur than he does to the diplomacy that brought peace to Southern Sudan. Maybe it's inevitable that anyone specializing in Africa will grow bitter over time and despair of ever seeing a constructive U.S. policy. However, Copson's occasional glass-half-empty negativism was enough of a problem for me to knock one star off my review. Otherwise, his book is highly recommended.

The George W. Bush administration maintains that in sub-Saharan Africa it is making major new contributions in fighting disease, promoting development, fostering democracy, and promoting peace. Yet, despite the rhetoric, is the Bush Administration really working to bring about a fairer and more just Africa? Though aid has increased and a major AIDS initiative launched, Copson argues that US policy in Africa falls well short of meeting reasonable standards of fairness or justice. Foreign aid is losing its focus on development as political priorities come to the fore; U.S. barriers to African exports remain substantial; and the AIDS program is in danger of flagging due to unilateralism and ideological controversy. An increasingly military approach to fighting the 'Global War on Terror' in Africa and securing energy imports carries serious risks for the region. Copson concludes by assessing the prospects of a more equitable policy emerging in future administrations.

'Ray Copson casts a dispassionate eye on recent U.S. policy toward Africa - on trade, development aid, support for democracy, counter terrorism, and HIV-AIDS - and lays bare the gap between high-flown rhetoric and the often disappointing reality. An essential book.' Jon Sawyer, Director, Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting `Copson provides a fascinating insight into an area of foreign policy which has major implications for both Africa and America. This book's fairness and moral clarity make it compulsory reading.' Congressman Donald M. Payne 'Raymond Copson's analysis is rigorous and his approach to policy-making is promising. This book needs to be read by all concerned about Africa.' Marcel Kitissou, George Mason University
About the Author Raymond W. Copson is an independent scholar specializing in African affairs and U.S. relations with Africa. He teaches at the George Washington University's Elliott School of International Affairs and is editor of the Online Africa Policy Forum at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. Until 2005, he worked at the Congressional Research Service of the US Library of Congress. He has previously lectured in international relations at the University of Nairobi, Kenya, and the University of Ibadan, Nigeria.