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Last hopes to prevent a genocide

Mahmood Mamdani

OPINION

KAMPALA, UGANDA Everyone agrees that South Sudan “stands on the brink of an all-out ethnic civil war,” as Yasmin Sooka, of the United Nations Human Rights Council, put it. But there is no consensus on how to move forward. The debate in the Security Council mirrors an earlier one in the African Union’s five-person Commission of Inquiry set up after mass violence erupted in South Sudan in December 2013. Led by Olusegun Obasanjo, former president of Nigeria, commission members came from the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights, the Union’s office on Women, Peace and Security, and academia. I was one of the two academics. The commission spent over a year meeting diverse sectors of government and society, including President Salva Kiir, a Dinka, and his former vice president and

An African Union trusteeship might be the last option to save South Sudan from further mass violence.

rival, Riek Machar, a Nuer. As in the African Union commission, the two sides in the Security Council disagreed on whether to take a judicial approach of sanctions and indictments or a political approach of power-sharing and reform. Favored by Western countries, the judicial approach presumes a victor or outside intervention as in the Nuremberg trials. Claiming that this would exacerbate the civil war, Russia and China call for a power-sharing arrangement. Neither the judicial nor the political alternative is without complications.

The Security Council discussion on accountability for violence in South Sudan was limited to South Sudanese involved in the killing, ignoring members of the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (Unmiss) who were charged with “responsibility to protect” civilians but failed to prevent violence. Under pressure, the secretary general dismissed the Kenyan head of Unmiss forces but not the Norwegian head of the overall mission. The United Nations seemed to have learned little from the genocide in Rwanda and the Srebrenica massacre during the Bosnian war.

The violence of 2013 evoked memories of mayhem in 1991, when nearly 2,000 mostly Dinka civilians were massacred by the same contending Sudan People’s Liberation Army (S.P.L.A.) factions who assumed control of the new state in 2011. Though Mr. Machar, the first vice president of

MAMDANI, PAGE 11



A shaken nation Graves being prepared in Manaus, Brazil, for inmates who died during a prison riot. Over six days, 93 inmates were killed at four prisons. PAGE 3



A glove worn by Michael Jackson, similar to this one, is among the assets the Kleptocracy Asset Recovery Initiative tried to seize from Equatorial Guinea’s ruling family.

Restoring the fruits of official corruption

U.S. struggles to give back the assets it has seized without enriching looters

BY LESLIE WAYNE

One would think that an iconic Michael Jackson “Bad Tour” glove, covered in Swarovski crystals and worn on his first solo tour, would rest in a place of honor, perhaps at the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland.

Hardly. The bejeweled glove is thousands of miles away in the oil-rich, deeply impoverished country of Equatorial Guinea. And the people of this West African nation, most of whom live on less than \$2 a day, have paid dearly for it.

The glove, and its odd stewardship, embody the profound difficulties surrounding the Kleptocracy Asset Recovery Initiative, a six-year effort by the United States to seize assets owned by kleptocrats — government officials who use their countries’ wealth to enrich themselves. In the most recent headline-grabbing case, the Justice Department is seeking to recover \$1 billion that it says was stolen from Malaysia’s sovereign wealth fund and used, among

other things, to buy high-end real estate in the United States and finance the movie “The Wolf of Wall Street.”

This is something that few other nations attempt. Now comes the hard part: returning the seized money to the people of the countries affected without enriching a kleptocrat all over again.

“We don’t want to see the funds disappear and go back to those who caused the harm,” said Leslie R. Caldwell, assistant attorney general for the Justice Department’s Criminal Division.

Some \$3 billion, involving nations worldwide, has been frozen by the program — including a Malibu mansion and a \$500,000 Ferrari (but not the white glove) owned by a member of Equatorial Guinea’s ruling family, the Obiangs. The family’s patriarch is so wealthy that he tops Queen Elizabeth II on lists of the global rich.

This repatriation effort is getting started just as Donald J. Trump’s election as president threatens to complicate the message of the kleptocracy initiative. Mr. Trump, a Republican, has promised to avoid potential conflicts of interest between his business empire and his duties as commander in chief, and has indicated he will come up with a

KLEPTOCRACY, PAGE 8

Intervention by Russia not isolated incident

NEWS ANALYSIS

Hacking of campaign part of longtime war of information and influence

BY SCOTT SHANE

The American intelligence agencies’ report on the Russian intervention in the presidential election portrays it as just one piece of an old-fashioned Soviet-style propaganda campaign. But it was a campaign made enormously more powerful by the tools of the digital age: private emails pilfered by hackers, an internet that reaches into most American homes, social media to promote its revelations and smear enemies.

What most Americans may have seen as a one-time effort — brazen meddling by Russia in the very core of American democracy — was, according to the report, released Friday, only part of a long-running information war that involves not just shadowy hackers and pop-up websites, but also more conventional news outlets, including the thriving Russian television network RT. The election intervention to damage Hillary Clinton and lift Donald J. Trump was the latest fusillade in a campaign that has gone on under the radar for years.

For the three agencies that produced the report — the Central Intelligence Agency, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the National Security Agency — this is a heart-stopping moment: They have just told their new boss that he was elected with the vigorous, multifaceted help of an adversary, the thuggish autocrat who rules Russia.

“Putin and the Russian government aspired to help President-elect Trump’s election chances when possible by discrediting Secretary Clinton and publicly contrasting her unfavorably to him,” the report says, in unusually blunt and sweeping language.

Perhaps most arresting is the assessment that Vladimir V. Putin, the Russian president, sees the election attack as payback — not offense, but defense. He has borne a serious grudge against Mrs. Clinton, who he believes denigrated him when she was secretary of state and

HACKING, PAGE 5

RUSSIANS RIDICULE MEDDLING CLAIM Russian politicians have dismissed a report that says the Kremlin aimed to help Donald J. Trump. PAGE 5

ATTACK-DOG STRATEGY HAS LIMITS The aggressiveness that served Mr. Trump in the campaign may not work as well in Washington. PAGE 5

AN ANALOG REACTION TO DIGITAL RISKS America’s long lag time between the detection of Russian intervention and the reaction to it is stunning. PAGE 6

Art that needs no canvas, but a headset

SAN FRANCISCO

Google invites painters and illustrators to hone a virtual reality program

BY FRANK ROSE

In 1949, a Life magazine photographer named Gjon Mili made a pilgrimage to the French Riviera to see Pablo Picasso. Mili had come up with a way to photograph trails of light, and he wanted to shoot Picasso “drawing” in midair with a light pen — a process that would leave no trace except on film. Picasso loved it. The result, published in Life and exhibited at the Museum of Modern Art, was Picasso’s celebrated series of “light drawings” of bulls and centaurs and the like — photographs that captured him in the act of creating the ultimate in ephemeral art.

Picasso is long gone. But some 68 years later, Google has been calling on



Glen Keane making a sketch of Ariel from “The Little Mermaid,” left, and his drawing of her made with Google’s Tilt Brush, right.



dozens of artists, animators and illustrators with a high-tech update of Mili’s concept — a virtual reality setup that enables people to paint with light that actually stays where you put it, at least for viewers wearing a VR headset. In place of Gjon Mili are Drew Skillman and Pat-

rick Hackett, a pair of video game developers turned virtual reality enthusiasts who live in San Francisco.

They were trying to build a 3-D chess application one night a couple of years ago when they discovered it had an unexpected side effect: As you moved the

chess pieces around in virtual space, they left trails of light behind. Sensing that their bug was in fact a feature, the two dropped the chess project immediately and hurled themselves at the light trails, hoping to develop a tool for draw-

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Opinion

Michelle Obama's turn

The “mom in chief” charmed late-night hosts and hula-hooped with kids, but she wasn't her full self in public.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Jodi Kantor

On Jan. 20, Michelle Obama will hand her home over to a man who rose to power in part by spreading lies about her husband and intends to pulverize much of his work. If presidential tradition and her own recent conduct are any guide, she will carry herself through inauguration morning with quiet calm and few hints of what she is really thinking. After Donald J. Trump recites the oath of office, a helicopter — no longer called Marine One, because the president will not be on board — will lift the Obamas into new lives.

Soon after, Michelle Obama will have a choice to make: Should she start — or rather, resume — speaking in public with her fuller voice?

When her husband became the 2008 Democratic nominee for president, Mrs. Obama edited herself. She had to, in the face of unceasing Republican attacks and then the challenge of being the first African-American first lady. Her statements were authentic but limited. She called herself the “mom in chief” and charmed late-night TV hosts in clips that exploded the next day on social media. Sometimes she spoke as much with her body as her

Her approach carried a price: It did not capture her true depth and originality.

voice, hula-hooping and hopscotching with children, turning appearances into marathon hugging sessions. She became a specialist in light jokes, as she

demonstrated in September, when she went on a shopping expedition with Ellen DeGeneres to CVS. “Wine in a box! How does this work?” she asked in mock wonder.

She took on issues that were vital but hard to disagree with: She was pro-veteran, anti-childhood obesity. The approach worked brilliantly, protecting and elevating her, putting her as far above reproach as anyone in the mosh pit of American politics can hope to be. The less explicitly political she sounded, the more political influence she wielded, in convention speeches and other key moments.

This approach carried a price: It did not capture the true depth, originality and directness of Michelle Obama.

In a 2008 interview with *The Times*, she recalled her years of leading young people through sometimes-painful conversations about race, and made the case for being forthright. “I hate diversity workshops,” she said. “Real change comes from having enough comfort to be really honest and say something very uncomfortable,” she said.

Does Michelle Obama still believe that? In Donald Trump's America, the hunger among Democrats for her to speak out will be enormous. But she knows better than anyone what that could cost her.

The Michelle Obama whom friends, family and aides know, whom many Chicagoans remember, is an incisive social critic, a lawyer who can drive home an argument, a source of fresh observations and pointed commentary. Long before she arrived at the White House, she had formed her own worldview, based on a life full of dramatic changes and contrasts. When she attended Princeton, one of her room-



ILLUSTRATION BY CRISTIANA COUCEIRO, PHOTOGRAPH BY NIGEL DICKSON/GETTY IMAGES

mates moved out rather than live with a black girl; one of her aunts, as it happened, worked as a maid in town. Her father was a Chicago water worker, part of the vast municipal work force. Later she worked in the mayor's office, seeing city government from a much different height.

Though she attended Harvard Law School and worked at a top firm, the job that seemed most formative involved public-service training for young people of disparate backgrounds: University of Chicago alumni alongside veterans of housing projects and gangs. She was influenced by others, including her brainy dreamer of a husband, but she fused these experiences into her own point of view and a distinctive voice: warm, skeptical, funny, blunt.

She questioned why power was locked up in political dynasties. When she worked at the University of Chicago, she pointed out the institution's isolation amid the black South Side. A professor, Cathy Cohen, remembers Mrs. Obama telling her, “I grew up not far from here and the university never once reached out to me.” Old colleagues there, and in other jobs, too, say Mrs. Obama's ability to talk frankly about difficult issues, like performing medical trials on poor black Chicagoans, was one of her strengths.

She had a penchant for defying what others expected her to say or think. In interviews, she shredded the script of the dutiful helpmeet. “What I notice about men, all men, is that their order is me, my family, God is in there some-

where, but me is first,” she told *The Chicago Tribune* in 2004 when her husband was running for United States Senate. “And for women, me is fourth, and that's not healthy.”

A few years later, when her husband announced his presidential run, “60 Minutes” asked if she feared for his safety. “As a black man, you know, Barack can get shot going to the gas station,” she said.

Sometimes, in those early days on the trail, she sounded like a counselor, even a minister. “If there is anyone who has a broken relationship with another woman,” she said to a mostly female crowd in South Carolina in 2007, the first of six years I spent covering her, “if there was a woman in your life that you have not communicated with be-

cause of ego or embarrassment or jealousy or fear of rejection, a sister or a friend or a mother or a child who could or should be a part of your community, I ask you to reach out to that woman today.”

In interviews, longtime aides to the Obamas said that she does not yet know exactly how she wants to sound as a former first lady, that she has been focused on tying up her eight years in the White House as smoothly as possible. Mrs. Obama will be 53 when she leaves the White House, and her goal, friends and aides say, is to look at her life afresh.

Some of those aides make a powerful case that even as Michelle Obama is likely to be spending time writing a

KANTOR, PAGE 11

Trump's anti-C.I.A. crusade

His attacks on the agency aren't just bad for the agency. They threaten our national security.

Michael Morell

When I wrote in August 2016, in this newspaper, that Donald J. Trump's character traits posed a national security threat, I didn't imagine that the first manifestation of that dynamic could play out with the very organization where I spent the first 33 years of my career, the Central Intelligence Agency.

President-elect Trump's public rejection of the C.I.A., and by extension the rest of the country's intelligence community, over the assessment that Russia interfered in our presidential election is not only an unprecedented political challenge for our national security establishment — it is a danger to the nation.

While Mr. Trump's statement on Friday that he had a constructive meeting with senior intelligence officials on the Russian hacking issue was a step in the right direction, his disparagement of American intelligence officers over the last few months is likely to cause significant damage to the C.I.A.

Mr. Trump has questioned the agen-

cy's competence — repeatedly asking, often via Twitter, how we can trust the organization that incorrectly judged that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction (criticism that, in my mind, is unfair for an agency that has changed dramatically in the last 15 years). But he has also accused the agency of being biased and political, implying, in comments to *The Times*, that the C.I.A. manufactured its Russia analysis to undercut him. Mr. Trump, in essence, said that the agency's officers were dishonorable. To the men and women of the C.I.A., sworn to protect the nation, this was a gut punch.

Mr. Trump's behavior will weaken the agency, an organization that has never been more relevant to our nation's security. The key national security issues of the day — terrorism; proliferation; cyberespionage, crime and war; and the challenges to the global order posed by Russia, Iran and China — all require first-rate intelligence for a commander in chief to understand them, settle on a policy and carry it out.

How will President Trump know whether the Iranians are living up to their commitment not to produce a nuclear weapon without good intelligence? How will he know how close

North Korea is to mating a nuclear weapon to a long-range missile and detonating it over American soil? How will he know whether the Islamic State or Al Qaeda is plotting another 9/11-style attack?

The president-elect's rhetoric will undermine the effectiveness of the C.I.A. in two key ways. First, expect a wave of resignations. Attrition at the C.I.A., which has been remarkably low since Sept. 11, 2001, will skyrocket. The primary motivator for some of our smartest minds to go to work at the C.I.A. is to make a difference to national security, to play a role in keeping the country safe. All of the sacrifices — from the long hours, polygraph tests, unfair media criticism, not to mention the real dangers to life and limb — are worth it, if you are making a difference.

If the president rejects out of hand the C.I.A.'s work, or introduces uncertainty by praising it one day only to lambaste it on Twitter that afternoon, many officers will vote with their feet. These officers cannot be easily replaced. It takes years of training and, more important, on-the-job experience to create a highly capable case officer, analyst, scientist, engineer or support officer. It would take at least a decade

to recover from a surge in resignations.

There is precedent for this. When President Jimmy Carter's C.I.A. director, Stansfield Turner, made it clear that, in his view, technology was making human intelligence obsolete, hundreds of officers departed. He then fired hundreds of others who questioned his approach; it took years for the agency to return to its pre-Turner strength. The Trump resignations could make the Turner departures pale by comparison.

The president-elect's rejection of the agency will weaken it in a second way. American intelligence agencies do not work alone; we rely on strong ties to parallel organizations in countless countries. Why would a foreign intelligence service take the C.I.A. seriously (and share important information with it) when the American president doesn't? A strong relationship between the C.I.A. and the president is a key incentive for other intelligence services to work with Langley. Take that away, and

our foreign relationships — which are absolutely critical in the global fight against terror, proliferation, you name it — will suffer.

And why would a foreign agent take extraordinary risks to spy for the United States if his or her information is not valued? Knowing their information is making its way to the president is an important motivator for spies. Would the modern-day Adolf Tolkachev, the C.I.A.'s most important agent within the Soviet Union — who was executed as a spy in 1986 — sign on to work for Donald Trump? I doubt it. The potential loss of critical information could be extraordinary.

Mr. Trump's attacks on the agency surprised me, but they shouldn't have. It is not a coincidence that Mr. Trump, who has never let facts get in the way of his opinion, would fight with the organization whose reason for existence is to put facts on the table. He will have fights with other government agencies, and our country will suffer for it.

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OPINION

The New York Times

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NO CLOSURE ON THE 'COMFORT WOMEN'

Despite a formal agreement with Japan, many Koreans still do not feel Japan has truly acknowledged its past crimes.

The renewed tensions between South Korea and Japan are a sobering reminder of how historical wrongs can interfere with diplomacy. A statue of a "comfort woman" installed outside the Japanese Consulate in Busan, South Korea, is reopening a major rift between the two foremost Asian allies of the United States at a most perilous time. The issue goes far beyond the statue to a deep sense among Koreans that Japan has never fully repented for the sex slavery forced on tens of thousands of Korean and other Asian women under Japanese occupation, for whom the euphemism was "comfort women."

In 2011, Korean activists installed a striking bronze statue in front of the Japanese Embassy in Seoul of a young Korean woman sitting alone on a bench, her fist clenched and her gaze fixed on the mission. The Japanese were livid, especially when more such statues popped up in Korea and in the United States.

The tension between two countries that should be jointly confronting North Korea's nuclear threat and China's spreading influence prompted Washington to mediate an agreement in December 2015 in which Japan apologized and promised \$8.3 million to care for the surviving women. The deal was meant to be a "final and irreversible resolution" to the matter.

But many Koreans, including some of the surviving women, felt the deal fell far short of their demand that Japan accept legal responsibility and offer formal reparations. On Dec. 28, the first anniversary of the agreement, Korean activists installed another statue, this one in front of the Japanese Consulate in Busan, South Korea's second-largest city. The local government immediately removed it, but then relented under acute public pressure.

On Friday, Japan recalled its ambassador to South Korea and suspended negotiations over an arrangement to help Seoul stabilize its currency, along with other high-level economic talks.

The Japanese are right to argue that the statue violates the spirit of the 2015 agreement. But the Koreans can also argue that the recent visit by Japan's defense minister, Tomomi Inada, to the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo, where a number of convicted war criminals are commemorated, is evidence that the Japanese do not fully acknowledge the crimes of their militarist past.

What is needed is recognition on both sides, and in Washington, that the December 2015 agreement cannot be allowed to collapse, along with a concerted effort to calm the waters. Alas, that is a tall order at this juncture: Park Geun-hye, the South Korean president who signed the agreement with Japan, has been suspended from office over a corruption scandal, and Washington awaits a president whose policies on Asia are far from clear. On this issue, however, the risks of inaction should be clear enough.

THE DEVASTATION OF NIMRUD

A priceless heritage site is among the countless casualties of ISIS.

The marauding forces of ISIS were finally driven last November from Nimrud, Iraq's priceless trove of Middle East history and relics situated south of Mosul. They left behind a barbaric pile of rubble after more than a year of systematically tearing apart the ancient palaces, temples and cultural treasures of what had been the capital of the Assyrian empire nearly three millennia ago.

With ISIS gone, looters have now descended on the broken remains, gleaning the scorched earth for valuable fragments. No one is protecting the ancient grounds, despite a warning from United Nations inspectors that looters are further obliterating one of the most important archaeological sites of Mesopotamia.

Nimrud is not alone: The terrorists' commitment to stamping out history and creating a fanatical caliphate has destroyed dozens of other irreplaceable sites.

In Nimrud, ISIS leaders proudly made a high-definition, seven-minute video of their organized attacks by jackhammer, bulldozer and dynamite on a civilization dating to 879 B.C. The city was leveled right up to its 140-foot-high ziggurat, a sacred stepped tower now reduced to bricks and dust. Looters pick among what remains along a 900-acre swath of devastation — fragments of ancient reliefs, chunks of cuneiform texts and pieces of statues, according to an Associated Press report.

The prime casualties of ISIS's rampage across Syria and Iraq are the thousands of innocent lives destroyed. But to them must be added the priceless heritage of one of the world's earliest empires. Previous excavations in the last century revealed hundreds of cuneiform tablets describing ancient treaties and palace life, and stores of jewels and gold in royal tombs.

ISIS propagandists maintain their mission will continue as relentless destroyers of the region's "idols." "Whenever we take control of a piece of land, we remove the symbols of polytheism and spread monotheism in it," a jihadi declared to the video camera in Nimrud, after which a massive detonation leveled the palace of King Ashurnasirpal II of Assyria — which, until ISIS, had managed to stand since the ninth century B.C., despite repeated bouts of warfare.

These kids die of climate change



Nicholas Kristof

TSIHOMBE, MADAGASCAR She is just a frightened mom, worrying if her son will survive, and certainly not fretting about American politics — for she has never heard of either President Obama or Donald Trump.

What about America itself? Ranomasy, who lives in an isolated village on this island of Madagascar off southern Africa, shakes her head. It doesn't ring any bells.

Yet we Americans may be inadvertently killing her infant son. Climate change, disproportionately caused by carbon emissions from America, seems to be behind a severe drought that has led crops to wilt across seven countries in southern Africa. The result is acute malnutrition for 1.3 million children in the region, the United Nations says.

Trump has repeatedly mocked climate change, once even calling it a hoax fabricated by China. But climate change here is as tangible as its victims. Trump should come and feel these children's ribs and watch them struggle for life. It's true that the links between our carbon emissions and any particular drought are convoluted, but over all, climate change is as palpable as a wizened, glassy-eyed child dying of starvation. Like Ranomasy's 18-month-old son, Tsapasoa.

Southern Africa's drought and food crisis have gone largely unnoticed around the world. The situation has been particularly severe in Madagascar, a lovely island nation known for deserted sandy beaches and playful long-tailed primates called lemurs.

But the southern part of the island doesn't look anything like the animated movie "Madagascar": Families are slowly starving because rains and crops have failed for the last few years. They are reduced to eating cactus and even rocks or ashes. The United Nations estimates that nearly one million people in Madagascar alone need emergency food assistance.

I met Ranomasy at an emergency feeding station run by Catholic nuns who were trying to save her baby. Ranomasy had carried Tsapasoa 12 hours on a trek through the desert to get to the nuns, walking barefoot because most villagers have already sold everything from shoes to spoons to survive.

"I feel so powerless as a mother, because I know how much I love my child," she said. "But whatever I do just doesn't work."

The drought is also severe in Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe, and a related drought has devastated East Africa and the Horn of Africa and is expected to continue this year. The U.N. World Food Program has urgently appealed for assistance, but only half the money needed has been donated.

The immediate cause of the droughts was an extremely warm El Niño event, which came on top of a larger drying trend in the last few decades in parts of Africa. New research, just published in the bulletin of the American Meteorological Society, concludes that human-caused climate change exacerbated El Niño's intensity and significantly reduced rainfall in parts of Ethiopia and southern Africa.

The researchers calculated that

human contributions to global warming reduced water runoff in southern Africa by 48 percent and concluded that these human contributions "have contributed to substantial food crises."

As an American, I'm proud to see U.S. assistance saving lives here. If it weren't for U.S.A.I.D., the American aid agency, and nonprofit groups like Catholic Relief Services that work in these villages, far more cadavers would be piling up. But my pride is mixed with guilt: The United States single-handedly accounts for more than one-quarter of the world's carbon dioxide emissions over the last 150 years, more than twice as much as any other country.

The basic injustice is that we rich countries produced the carbon that is devastating impoverished people from Madagascar to Bangladesh. In America, climate change costs families beach homes; in poor countries, parents lose their children.

In one Madagascar hamlet I visited, villagers used to get water from a well a three-hour walk away, but then it went dry. Now they hike the three hours and then buy water from a man who trucks it in. But they have almost no money. Not one of the children in the village has ever had a bath.

Families in this region traditionally raised cattle, but many have sold their herds to buy food to survive. Selling pressure has sent the price of a cow tumbling from \$300 to less than \$100.

Families are also pulling their children out of school, to send them foraging for edible plants. In one village I visited, fewer than 15 percent of the children are attending primary school this year.

One of the children who dropped out is Fombasoa, who should be in the third grade but now spends her days scouring the desert for a wild red cactus fruit. Fombasoa's family is also

ready to marry her off, even though she is just 10, because then her husband would be responsible for feeding her.

"If I can find her a husband, I would marry her," said her father, Sonjona, who, like many villagers, has just one name. "But these days there is no man who wants her" — because no one can afford the bride price of about \$32.

Sonjona realizes that it is wrong to marry off a 10-year-old, but he also knows it is wrong to see his daughter starve. "I feel despair," he said. "I don't feel a man any more. I used to have muscles; now I have only bones. I feel guilty, because my job was to care for my children, and now they have only red cactus fruit."

Other families showed me how they pick rocks of chalk from the ground, break them into dust and cook the dust into soup. "It fills our stomachs at least," explained Limbiaza, a 20-year-old woman in one remote village. As it becomes more difficult to find the chalk rocks, some families make soup from ashes from old cooking fires.

Scientists used to think that the horror of starvation was principally the dying children. Now they understand there is a far broader toll: When children in utero and in the first few years of life are malnourished, their brains don't develop properly. As a result, they may suffer permanently impaired brain function.

"If children are stunted and do not receive the nutrition and attention in these first 1,000 days, it is very difficult to catch back up," noted Joshua Poole,



Though cactus pads provide little nutrition, Fidine must use them as the one meal of the day for her two nephews, standing behind her, and her own two children.

the Madagascar director of Catholic Relief Services. "Nutritional neglect during this critical period prevents children from reaching their full mental potential."

For the next half century or so, we will see students learning less in school and economies held back, because in 2017 we allowed more than a million kids to be malnourished just here in southern Africa, collateral damage from our carbon-intensive way of life.

The struggling people of Madagascar are caught between their own corrupt, ineffective government, which denies the scale of the crisis, and overseas governments that don't want to curb carbon emissions.

Whatever we do to limit the growth of carbon, climate problems will worsen for decades to come. Those of us in the rich world who have emitted most of the carbon bear a special responsibility to help people like these Madagascar villagers who are simultaneously least responsible for climate change and most vulnerable to it.

The challenges are not hopeless, and I saw programs here that worked. The World Food Program runs school feeding programs that use local volunteers and, at a cost of 25 cents per child per day, give children a free daily meal that staves off starvation and creates an incentive to keep children in school.

We need these emergency relief efforts — and constant vigilance to intervene early to avert famines — but we can also do far more to help local people help themselves.

Catholic Relief Services provides emergency food aid, but it also promotes drought-resistant seed varieties and is showing farmers near the coast how to fish. It is also working with American scientists on new technologies to supply water in Madagascar, using condensation or small-scale desalination.

American technology helped create the problem, and it would be nice to see American technology used more aggressively to mitigate the burden on the victims.

For me, the most wrenching sight of this trip was of two starving boys near the southern tip of Madagascar. Their parents are climate refugees who fled their village to try to find a way to survive, leaving the boys in the care of an aunt, even though she doesn't have enough food for her own two daughters.

I met the boys, Fokondraza, 5, and Voriavy, 3, in the evening, and they said that so far that day they hadn't eaten or drunk anything (the closest to catch back up," noted Joshua Poole,

is several hours away by foot, and fetching a pail of water becomes more burdensome when everyone is malnourished and anemic). Their aunt, Fidine, began to prepare the day's meal.

She broke off cactus pads, scraped off the thorns and boiled them briefly, and the boys ate them — even though they provide little nutrition. "My heart is breaking because I have nothing to give them," Fidine said. "I have no choice."

At night, the boys sometimes cry from hunger, she said. But that is a good sign. When a person is near starvation, the body shuts down emotion, becoming zombie-like as every calorie goes to keeping the heart and lungs working. It is the children who don't cry, those quiet and expressionless, who are at greatest risk — and the two boys are becoming more like that.

I don't pretend that the links between climate change and this food crisis are simple, or that the solutions are straightforward. I flew halfway around the world and then drove for two days to get to these villages, pumping out carbon the whole way.

Yet we do know what will help in the long run: sticking with the Paris agreement to limit global warming, as well as with President Obama's Clean Power Plan. We must also put a price on carbon and invest much more heavily in research on renewable energy.

In the short and medium term, we must step up assistance to climate refugees and sufferers, both to provide relief and to assist with new livelihoods that adjust to new climate realities. (For individuals who want to help, the organization most active in the areas I visited was Catholic Relief Services, which accepts donations for southern Madagascar.)

The most basic starting point is for the American president-elect to acknowledge what even illiterate Madagascar villagers understand: Climate change is real.

As the sun set, I told Fidine that there was a powerful man named Trump half a world away, in a country she had never heard of, who just might be able to have some impact, over many years, on the climate here. I asked her what she would tell him.

"I would ask him to do what he can, so that once more I can grow cassava, corn, black-eyed peas and sorghum," she said. "We're desperate."

Mr. President-elect, are you listening?



Many rivers and wells have dried up in southern Madagascar, forcing people to buy water that is trucked in.

NICHOLAS KRISTOF/THE NEW YORK TIMES



South Sudan on the edge of genocide

MAMDANI, FROM PAGE 1

South Sudan, repented publicly for his role in 1991, many see the violence in 2013, when government soldiers and policemen targeted people from the Nuer ethnic group, as payback for 1991.

By pinning responsibility for mass violence on individual perpetrators, the criminal approach obscures its political dimensions. Court cases focusing on guilt or innocence make for winner-take-all solutions and exclude those criminalized from the political process. The political approach seeks to include all sides in the political process. The focus on power sharing in the absence of political reform mirrors the focus on individual perpetrators in the criminal approach. I believe that judicial and political approaches are complementary: Rule of law needs a viable political order, but neither is possible without all-around reform.

When South Sudan got its independence in 2011, its army was an uneasy coalition of three factions. Mr. Kiir's faction, Mr. Machar's faction and a third faction trained by the Sudanese Army. Though they fought on opposite sides, all laid claim to the brand name S.P.L.A.

Militia leaders negotiated questions of rank and pay with the army command. A program meant to downsize the army let demobilized soldiers keep their guns. Small arms proliferated, and the society was further militarized.

The S.P.L.A., according to African Union data, was made up of 200,000 soldiers and 45,000 veterans but lacked a roster of its men. With 700 generals, it had a higher ratio of generals to soldiers of any army in the world. These AK-47-toting soldiers and their commanders had not won the war, did not constitute a coherent force and had no more than a slim civilian base. Yet they took the driver's seat at independence.



President Salva Kiir of South Sudan visiting Sudan People's Liberation Army soldiers at the military hospital in the capital city of Juba last month.

Michelle Obama's turn

KANTOR, FROM PAGE 9

memoir and giving speeches, she will be most effective if she sticks to the calibrated tone she has employed for her husband's two terms. She has always admired Laura Bush's restrained approach, they say. Mrs. Obama never longed for a particularly public life and does not relish the fray. Leaving the spotlight could be a relief, as it was for Mrs. Bush: "After nearly eight years of hypervigilance, of watching for the next danger or tragedy that might be coming, I could at last exhale; I could simply be," she said of leaving the White House in her 2010 memoir.

Besides, the best way for Mrs. Obama to preserve her popularity and authority may be to hold back, to avoid jeopardizing what she has worked to build. Even when she is bathed in admiration, she is the target of revolting attacks — a prominent Trump supporter recently insinuated she was a male ape — and speaking out more could provoke worse. As first lady, she used hints, invitations, art, sometimes even clothing to convey her viewpoint. If she mostly avoided controversial topics, her mere presence spoke volumes, and was there really any mistaking the fundamentals of what she believed?

On Friday morning, Mrs. Obama's eyes glossed as she gave her final

This outcome was backed by the United States, Britain and Norway, which organized themselves as Friends of IGAD (Inter-Governmental Authority on Development, the regional trade bloc). Convinced that the main threat to peace after independence would come from the north, the troika pushed for a hasty transition, bypassing democratic reform.

The 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (C.P.A.) was premised on a militarist assumption that only those who waged war should determine the terms of the peace. The talks excluded political and civic groups, strengthening the armed dictatorship in the North, and introducing one in the

South Sudan is not a failed state but a failed transition.

The closest South Sudan came to initiating an inclusive political process was the October 2010 All South Sudanese Political Parties Conference. Its resolutions to create an all-party transitional government of national unity, to hold a Constitutional Conference and an election within two years were ignored after independence in 2011. South Sudan has never had an election. Mr. Kiir was elected vice president of Sudan, but never president of a state called South Sudan.

Assured unconditional international support, South Sudan's rulers acted with impunity. Uninterested in reform, this political class remains incapable of reform on its own. The simple fact is that the very political and institutional foundation for the existence of a state — as a political process that legiti-

mates sovereign power, and the creation of an administrative, technical and legal infrastructure as the means for exercising that power — has yet to be forged.

South Sudan is not a failed state but a failed transition. It needs a second transition, this time under an authority other than the United States, Britain and Norway, whose project has failed, or IGAD, whose members have conflicting interests in South Sudan.

The one body with political credibility to take charge of a second transitional process is the African Union. Its credibility rides on its all-Africa composition and on the record of its High Level Implementation Panel for Sudan and South Sudan. Led by the former South African president Thabo Mbeki, this panel has engaged different groups in North and South Sudan on questions of reform for over a decade. The United States, Britain and Norway should provide resources for it as admission of responsibility for their failed project in South Sudan. This second transition should include all sides to the conflict, but not fuel the conflict with a steady flow of arms to all sides.

The idea of an African Union trusteeship has three key elements. The three-person High Level Oversight Panel and its leader should be Africans appointed by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and jointly mandated with the United Nations Security Council.

The panel should oversee the appointment of a three-person Transitional Executive drawn from the Equatoria, Upper Nile and Bahr el Ghazal regions of South Sudan and chosen through broad consultation, vetted by an expanded all-South Sudan Political Parties Convention and ratified by Parliament.

Responsible for the violence that followed, all members of the South Sudan cabinet dissolved in July 2013 should be barred from participation in the Transitional Executive. And the Parliament, the one institution that reflects the full diversity of the country but was not directly involved in the extreme violence, should be revitalized.

While it will take a major shift in regional and international opinion — signified by a consensus in the Security Council and the African Union — to get contending factions in South Sudan to agree to such a proposal, an African Union trusteeship has become necessary as the crisis deepens.

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Erasing President Obama

Timothy Egan

Contributing Writer

For a soon-to-be nowhere man, he's everywhere. Sensing "time's winged chariot hurrying near," as the poet had it, President Obama is using every hour left in his presidency to ensure that Donald Trump will not erase it all.

It's one part vanity project. What president doesn't want to put a dent in history? One man freed four million slaves. Another created national parks and forests that left every American a rich inheritance of public land. A third crushed the Nazis — from a wheelchair, while dying.

And Obama? He bequeaths the incoming president "the longest economic expansion and monthly job creation in history," as my colleague Andrew Ross Sorkin noted. Trump, the pumpkin-haired rooster taking credit for the dawn, has already tried to seize a bit of that achievement as his own. Thanks, Obama. But he's also likely to screw it up, perhaps by a trade war, or a budget-busting tax cut.

Already, Trump has flirted with treason, flouted conflict-of-interest rules, bullied dissidents and blown off the advice of seasoned public servants. He has yet to hold a news conference since winning the election. And did another day just pass without a word of the promise to "reveal things that other people don't know" about Russian interference with our election? Maybe he's waiting for more whispers in his ear from the Kremlin.

In advance of his farewell address next week, the president has tried to Trump-proof a climate pact that commits the world's second leading producer of earth-warming pollutants — the United States — to making this little orb of ours a less perilous place for Sasha's and Malia's and Ivanka's kids. Trump has promised to go rogue on the planet, as quickly as he can.

Until Day 1, Trump is just a 70-year-old man with a twitchy Twitter account. But on Jan. 20, he becomes what Grover Norquist wished for in a pliantly conservative president: "A Republican with enough working digits to handle a pen."

With that pen, the new president can take health care from 20 million Americans, free Wall Street to once again wildly speculate and smash things up



DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

for the rest of us, and require schools to let people carry guns into classrooms — all campaign promises.

Make America Sick Again is the slogan floated by Senator Chuck Schumer, who is much better at messaging a negative than Obama ever was at messaging a positive. The people who stand to lose most are Trump supporters. The Affordable Care Act has saved countless lives in red states, and slowed medical costs. So why toss it, without a plan to replace it? To spite the guy on the way out.

The people who stand to lose most are Trump supporters.

The intent of Republicans, poised to push through the most far-reaching conservative agenda in nearly

a hundred years, is to act as if Obama never existed — the George Bailey of presidents. It won't take long for Bedford Falls to become Pottersville.

Trump will cut taxes on the rich, and for those born on third base, eliminate an estate tax that was one of Teddy Roosevelt's solutions to inequality. He may try to defund Planned Parenthood — for many poor women, the only chance to catch cancer early. He may deport Dreamers, more than 740,000 young people who have been allowed to obtain temporary work permits and avoid being thrown out of the country under Obama.

On his first day in office, Trump will "repeal every single Obama executive order." That's the promise of Vice President-elect Mike Pence. Obama issued just under 270 executive orders, well

below the number proclaimed by Ronald Reagan, Dwight Eisenhower, Harry Truman, Franklin Roosevelt and even that conservative paragon, Silent Cal Coolidge.

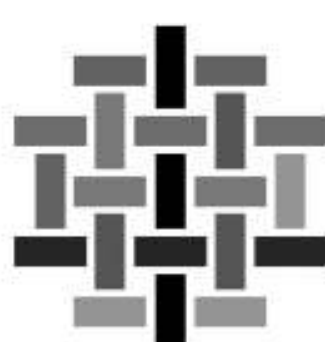
A significant Obama order protected gays in the government contracting system from discrimination. Another prohibited federal employees from texting while driving. There were sanctions against criminals, mobsters and other international monsters, and upgrades in pay for federal employees who earned less than their private sector counterparts.

Obama leaves office with his highest job approval ratings in four years. Most Americans like him and his policies. Trump will enter office with the lowest transition approval ratings of any president-elect in nearly a quarter-century. About half of all American don't like him, and of course, he got nearly three million fewer votes than Hillary Clinton.

Most of the Trump agenda — building a wall, cutting taxes on the rich, ramping up oil and gas drilling at the expense of alternative fuels, taking away people's health care — is opposed by clear majorities. Trump will erase Obama's policy legacy at his peril.

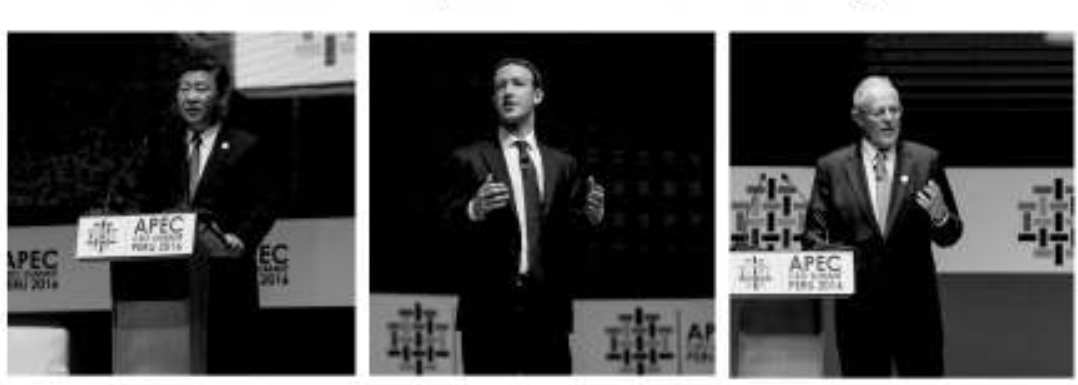
What he cannot do is erase the mark of the man — a measured and rational president, a committed father and husband, who is leaving his country much better off, and the office without a trace of personal scandal.

TIMOTHY EGAN, a former national correspondent for The Times, writes about the environment, the American West and politics.



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