

Pivot to Africa: A new focus for the United States?

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Leaders at the 2022 U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit

Hailey Brown - At last week's [U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit](#), the first in eight years, Biden announced his plan to visit Africa next year, part of his goal to expand U.S. relations with the continent. Africa boasts a number of countries with a large and growing population, substantial representation in the U.N., and an abundance of natural resources. All of which makes continuing to develop relations with African countries an important tool in bolstering U.S. power as the geopolitical environment shifts to meet the growing continental presence of other powers.

The U.S. has long sought to spread and uphold the values of democracy, freedom and liberty as part of its role in ensuring the security of the U.S. and its allies. This is one element of the U.S.'s [geopolitical code](#), which determines how the U.S. should interact with other countries on the global scale. The Biden administration's recent focus on Africa is evidence of this important U.S. role in the global environment. As part of Biden's effort to boost U.S.-African relations, he announced funding to help different African countries carry out free and fair elections next year, as many countries face important elections for the state of their governments and democracy. Biden also pledged to spend \$55 billion over the next three years on government programming. The new initiatives also include efforts to benefit intercontinental trade, improve food security, and more. Building a stronger coalition with African leaders will foster greater cooperation between the U.S. and African countries in confronting global issues and has the

potential to improve the quality of many Africans across the continent.

The summit and the Biden administration's newfound focus on Africa teeters on the edge of ongoing [relational power](#) play with China. China has invested in Africa on a greater scale than the U.S., tilting power relations in their favor when it comes to the continent. The United States has been a hyperpower in the geopolitical system for decades, but this status is threatened by the rise of other great powers, such as China. The challenge of great power competition is thus of rising importance to the U.S. So, while the administration shifted the focus away from China at the summit and in announcements, it was certainly part of the calculation.

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