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THURSDAY, JUNE 16, 2005

Black Church Leaders To Bush: We're No Fools

by Michael in New York on [6/16/2005 12:09:00 PM](#)

Black church leaders in the US are realizing that Bush's actions don't match his words. (Maybe his pro-lynching buddies in the Senate were a tip-off.) Condi Rice met with leaders to try and gain cover -- I mean support -- for Bush's actions in Africa. According to the LA Times, once they saw what Bush actually did -- refuse to increase aid, drag his feet on releasing the money he has promised and de-funding international health organizations doing great work in Africa -- those **top black pastors have backed away from the White House.**

The criticism came in a letter delivered Tuesday to the White House from five of the nation's most high-profile African American pastors. They called on the president to give his "ardent" support to a proposal by British Prime Minister Tony Blair under which industrialized nations would double their aid to Africa by 2010. Bush rejected the proposal last week....

The pastors' letter also marked the second time this week that the administration has faced public criticism over its Africa policy. On Monday, leaders of several African nations told Bush at an Oval Office meeting that bureaucracy was delaying the delivery of needed relief funds through one of the president's signature programs, the Millennium Challenge Account....

The letter couched African relief as **a national security issue, saying that U.S. aid was an important defense against the rise of Islamic fundamentalism.** Some pastors made that point to Rice last month, contending that **a greater role for black churches in Africa would help block efforts by terrorist groups to recruit the millions of orphans resulting from the AIDS epidemic.**

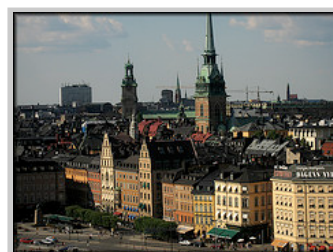
"Our failure as a nation to adequately support Africa is fundamentally a failure to adequately support our own national security," the letter said.

Jakes, Blake, Long and Rivers all represent large churches, and each has developed a high profile through television, radio or books. White House officials view the pastors and their large churches as a key entry point to a voting bloc that has long sided overwhelmingly with Democrats.

Maybe the cynical links between the far right and African American religious leaders -- based solely on their shared hatred of gays -- will continue to fray. Sorry Bush, you have to actually fight poverty in Africa if you want credit for fighting poverty in Africa.



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