

This is a very troubling article to write. Because it is about how sinister Black Americans can agree with white Americans about how they can rip off the people of African nations for quick money. It is ugly but somebody has to call it out. Since I am the one who first noticed it, I guess it is my Christian duty to call it out. The Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) is meant to enhance trade activity and business development between entrepreneurs in Africa and the United States. It allows business transactions between firms in the certified nations of Sub-Saharan Africa and the United States to ship products from those African nations into the United States free of tariffs. In the beginning, it was a beautiful roadmap for enhanced business activity and wealth building. I was happy to see it enacted but was curious as to why two white congressmen, very conservative Philip Crane of Illinois and very liberal Jim McDermott of Washington, got together and crafted the bill. If this is a bill about African nations' economic progress shouldn't some members of the Congressional Black Caucus be involved? That was the first hint.

The bill passed with much support from Black activists. However, President Bill Clinton never got around to signing it. Eventually, President George W. Bush willingly signed the bill and trade enhancement with the Motherland was established. This made sense as President George W. Bush would do more for Africa's advancement than any other American president in history. We were all overjoyed. I remember sitting next to basketball great Hakeem Olajuwon at the White House signing, he was so happy that his motherland Nigeria would participate in this new trade agreement. We were all excited. But as the saying goes: "The wolves are of another mind".

Enter the Textile Lobby. They would hire a Black lobbyist with the assignment of working on a member of the Congressional Black Caucus. The assignment would be to craft an amendment that would open the doors for very cheap China cotton to be included in AGOA. China cotton is the cheapest cotton in the world as prisoners process it (slavery). Somehow, a CBC member agreed to it and the Third Country Fabric Exemption was amended to AGOA. Believe it or not, this allowed China to ship its cotton to African nations, make apparel and then ship it to America duty free under AGOA. This dirt cheap cotton quickly knocked our African cotton farmers and textile mills right out of business. It had a devastating impact on the Agra-Business of African nations. Instead of being an enhancer for African commerce, AGOA became a cancer.

I saw it for myself. I was in Nairobi, Kenya and the Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry took me to a new textile mill. Prior to going, the Kenyan Cotton Farmers Association met me in the lobby of my hotel and protested the fact that the United States had set up cheap China cotton to destroy their industry. They had been cut out and were going out of business. I went to the facility that was extremely high tech. There were dozens of women making clothing for \$50 per month. The facility was managed by a citizen of India

. When we observed the inventory it was ceiling high with bales of cotton that was marked "Product of China". This is what enraged the Kenyan cotton farmers. They were being cut out of AGOA via the Third Country Fabric Extension Amendment – placed by Black lobbyists and a Black congressperson. On the site were representatives of Wall Mart, Target and JC Penney's to approve the production. I became sick at the sight. I quipped to the guide "Who owns this, Kabaki?" Kabaki is the president of Kenya

. He replied "How did you know? It is in his sister's name."

The damage spreads beyond Kenya. Lesotho, Nigeria, Tanzania and many other nations in Africa

have had their textile industries destroyed by this sinister amendment. The amendment was due to expire in 2009 and I pressed to ensure the expiration. The textile industry was waiting for the NBCC and successfully prevented us from letting the expiration take affect. They extended it for another three years. It is set to expire in September, 2012. This time we will do our "homework" and create a groundswell of opposition to this sinister act. We can't let the textile industry pimp

Africa

and cannot let hired flunkies do their bidding. AGOA is a good act but we must keep it pure.

Africa

is the fastest growing economy among all the continents and we must ensure that our Motherland gets the maximum result from its efforts. Woe to those who try to get over at the expense of our Motherland!

Mr. Alford is the co-founder and President/CEO of the National Black Chamber of Commerce, Inc®. Website: [www.nationalbcc.org](http://www.nationalbcc.org) . Email: [halford@nationalbcc.org](mailto:halford@nationalbcc.org) .