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From: Schnittger, David <david.schnittger@squirepb.com>

Sent: Monday, April 19, 2021 8:24 PM

Subject: US Secretary of State Blinken highlights Angola's Sun Africa project

In remarks today to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation in Annapolis, MD, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken highlighted the Sun Africa project in Angola, a US-backed project – made possible by Angolan President Joao Lourenço’s unprecedented program of economic reform and modernization – that will create the largest solar energy facility in sub-Saharan Africa.

Sun Africa’s project was recently awarded the 2020 “Deal of the Year” by [TXF/Trade & Export Financing](#), a development underscoring the degree to which Angola is turning to international best practices to improve the country’s business climate and secure a better future for its people.

The official transcript of Secretary Blinken’s remarks is below my signature, and can also be seen online [here](#).



Dave Schnittger

Principal

Squire Patton Boggs (US) LLP

2550 M Street NW

Washington, DC 20037

M +1 202 536-7600

david.schnittger@squirepb.com | squirepattonboggs.com

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[Secretary Antony J. Blinken Remarks to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation: “Tackling the Crisis and Seizing the Opportunity: America’s Global Climate Leadership”](#)

04/19/2021 07:00 PM EDT

Antony J. Blinken, Secretary of State

Annapolis, Maryland

Philip Merrill Environmental Center

SECRETARY BLINKEN: Well, good afternoon, everyone. And Will, thank you for a wonderful introduction. And thank you for lending us this absolutely spectacular setting and backdrop – certainly the

best setting and backdrop I've had in my brief tenure as Secretary. And thanks so much to the Chesapeake Bay Foundation for your lasting commitment to save the Bay.

The Chesapeake Bay was formed nearly 12,000 years ago by melting glaciers. Today, it stretches 200 miles and is home to over 3,600 species of plants and animals. A hundred thousand rivers and streams feed over 50 billion gallons of water into the Bay every single day. More than 18 million people live in the watershed, and many rely on it for their livelihood. The local seafood industry alone provides some 34,000 jobs and nearly \$900 million in annual income.

And yet, as Will alluded to, warming temperatures caused by human activity are transforming the Bay. Its water is rising. And the land – including where I stand right now – is sinking due to the melting of the glaciers that formed the Bay. If this continues at the current pace, in just 80 years, the Bay will extend inland for miles, overtaking the homes of 3 million people, destroying roads, bridges, farms. Many of the Bay's plants and animals will die out. So will the fishing industry. To my children's children, the landscape will be unrecognizable.

We have to stop this from happening while we still can.

That's why President Biden took steps to rejoin the Paris Agreement right after taking office, and named Secretary Kerry as our nation's first Special Presidential Envoy for Climate to lead our efforts around the world. It's also why President Biden invited 40 world leaders to Washington this week for a summit on climate.

And it's why the Biden-Harris administration will do more than any in history to meet our climate crisis. This is already an all-hands-on-deck effort across our government and across our nation. Our future depends on the choices we make today.

As Secretary of State, my job is to make sure our foreign policy delivers for the American people – by taking on the biggest challenges they face and seizing the biggest opportunities that can improve their lives. No challenge more clearly captures the two sides of this coin than climate.

If America fails to lead the world on addressing the climate crisis, we won't have much of a world left. If we succeed, we will capitalize on the greatest opportunity to create quality jobs in generations; we'll build a more equitable, healthy, and sustainable society; and we'll protect this magnificent planet. That's the test we face right now.

Today, I want to explain how American foreign policy will help us meet that test.

Not too long ago, we had to imagine the impact of climate change. No one has to imagine it anymore.

For the last 60 years, every decade has been hotter than the one that came before it.

Weather events are becoming more extreme. During the cold wave this February, temperatures from Nebraska to Texas were more than 40 degrees below normal. In Texas alone, thousands were left homeless, over 4 million people went without heat and electricity, more than 125 people died. It may seem

counterintuitive that global warming leads to cold weather. But as the Arctic warms, cold weather gets pushed south. And that can contribute to record cold spells like the one in Texas.

The 2020 wildfire season burned more than 10 million acres. That's more than the entire state of Maryland. We saw five of the six biggest wildfires in California's history, and the single biggest wildfire in Colorado's history.

Together, natural disasters in 2020 cost the United States around \$100 billion.

Meanwhile, 2019 was the wettest year on record for the lower 48 states. Heavy rains and floods prevented farmers in the Midwest and Great Plains from planting 19 million acres of crops.

And from 2000 to 2018, the American Southwest experienced its worst drought since the 16th century – the 16th century.

We're running out of records to break.

The costs – in monetary damage, livelihoods, human lives – keep going up.

And unless we turn this around, it's going to get worse.

More frequent and more intense storms; longer dry spells; bigger floods; more extreme heat and more extreme cold; faster sea level rise; more people displaced; more pollution; more asthma.

Higher health costs; less predictable seasons for farmers. And all of that will hit low-income, black and brown communities the hardest.

The last part's important. The costs of the climate crisis fall disproportionately on the people in our society who can least afford it. But it's also true that addressing climate change offers one of the most powerful tools we have to fight inequity and systemic racism. The way we respond can help break the cycle.

These are all reasons why we must succeed in preventing a climate catastrophe. But the world has already fallen behind on the targets we set six years ago with the Paris Agreement. And we now know those targets didn't go far enough to begin with. Today, the science is unequivocal: We need to keep the Earth's warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius to avoid catastrophe.

America has a key role to play in hitting that mark. We only have around 4 percent of the world's population, but we contribute nearly 15 percent of global emissions. That makes us the world's second biggest emitter of greenhouse gases. If we do our part at home, we can make a significant contribution to addressing this crisis.

But that won't be enough. Even if the United States gets to net zero emissions tomorrow, we'll lose the fight against climate change if we can't address the more than 85 percent of emissions coming from the rest of the world.

Coming up short will have major repercussions for our national security.

Pick a security challenge that affects the United States. Climate change is likely to make it worse.

Climate change exacerbates existing conflicts and increases the chances of new ones – particularly in countries where governments are weak and resources are scarce. Of the 20 countries the Red Cross considers most vulnerable to climate change, 12 are already experiencing armed conflicts. As essential resources like water dwindle, as governments struggle to meet the needs of growing populations, we'll see more suffering and more strife.

Climate change can also create new theaters of conflict. In February, a Russian gas tanker sailed through the Arctic's Northern Sea Route for the first time ever. Until recently, that route was only passable a few weeks each year. But with the Arctic warming at twice the rate of the rest of the global average, that period is getting much longer. Russia is exploiting this change to try to exert control over new spaces. It is modernizing its bases in the Arctic and building new ones, including one just 300 miles from Alaska. China is increasing its presence in the Arctic, too.

Climate change can also be a driver of migration. There were 13 Atlantic hurricanes in 2020 – the highest number on record. Central America was hit especially hard. Storms destroyed the homes and livelihoods of 6.8 million people in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador, and wiped out hundreds of thousands of acres of crops, leading to a massive rise in hunger. Months after the storms, entire villages are still subsumed in mud, and people are carving off pieces of their buried homes to sell as scrap metal.

When disasters strike people who are already living in poverty and insecurity, it can often be the final straw, pushing them to abandon their communities in search of a better place to live. For many Central Americans, that means trying to make it to the United States – even when we say repeatedly that the border is closed, and even though the journey comes with tremendous hardships, especially for women and girls who face heightened risk of sexual violence.

All of these challenges are placing greater demands on our military. The U.S. Naval Academy is only five miles north of here, and Naval Station Norfolk, the largest naval base in the world, about 200 miles to the south. Both bases – and the critical missions they support – face an imminent threat from climate change. And these are just two of the dozens of military facilities that climate change puts at risk. What's more, our military often responds to natural disasters, which are getting more frequent and more destructive. In January, Secretary of Defense Austin announced that the military would immediately integrate climate change into its planning and operations and how it assesses risk. As Secretary Austin put it, and I quote, "There is little about what the department does to defend the American people that is not affected by climate change."

Having said all that, it would be a mistake to think about climate only through the prism of threats. Here's why. Every country on the planet has to do two things – reduce emissions and prepare for the unavoidable impacts of climate change. American innovation and industry can be at the forefront of both. This is what President Biden means when he says, and I quote, "When I think of climate change, I think jobs," end quote.

To give you a sense of scale, consider that, by 2040, the world will face a \$4.6 trillion infrastructure gap. The United States has a big stake in how that infrastructure is built. Not only whether it creates

opportunities for American workers and businesses, but also whether it's green and sustainable, and done in a way that's transparent; respects workers' rights; gives the local population a say; and doesn't mire developing countries and communities in debt. That's an opportunity for us.

Or consider the massive investments countries are making in clean energy. Renewables are now the cheapest source of bulk electricity in countries that contain two-thirds of the world's population. And the global renewable energy market is projected to be \$2.15 trillion by 2025. That's over 35 times the size of the current market for renewables in the United States. Already, solar and wind technicians are among the fastest growing jobs in America.

It's difficult to imagine the United States winning the long-term strategic competition with China if we cannot lead the renewable energy revolution. Right now, we're falling behind. China is the largest producer and exporter of solar panels, wind turbines, batteries, electric vehicles. It holds nearly a third of the world's renewable energy patents. If we don't catch up, America will miss the chance to shape the world's climate future in a way that reflects our interests and values, and we'll lose out on countless jobs for the American people.

Now, let me be clear: Goal number one of our climate policy is preventing catastrophe. We're rooting for every country, business, and community to get better at cutting emissions and building resilience.

But that doesn't mean we don't have a stake in America developing these innovations and exporting them to the world. And it doesn't mean we don't want to shape the way countries reduce their emissions and adapt to climate change. So how can we do that?

We can start with leading by the power of our example. As we work to meet our ambitious climate targets, the following core principles will guide our approach.

We will significantly increase our investment in clean energy research and development, because it's how we will catalyze breakthroughs that benefit American communities and create American jobs.

In all our climate investments, we will aim not only to promote growth, but also equity. We'll be inclusive, focusing on providing Americans across the country – and from a range of communities – with good-paying jobs, and the opportunity to join a union.

We'll empower youth, not just because they will bear more of the consequences of climate change, but also because of the urgency, ingenuity, and leadership they've demonstrated in confronting this crisis.

We will enlist states, cities, businesses large and small, civil society, and other coalitions as partners and models. Others have been doing groundbreaking work in this field for a long time. We'll lift them up and share best practices.

And this is important: We will be mindful that for all the opportunities offered by the unavoidable shift to clean energy, not every American worker will win out in the near term. Some livelihoods and communities that relied on old industries will be hit hard. We won't leave those Americans behind. We'll provide our fellow Americans with pathways to new, sustainable livelihoods, and support as they navigate this transition.

Right after taking office, President Biden created the Interagency Working Group on Coal and Power Plant Communities and Economic Revitalization. It's working across the government to identify and deliver federal resources to revitalize the local economics of coal, oil, gas, and power plant communities, and ensure benefits and protections for workers in those same communities. And as part of his American Jobs Plan, the President proposed a \$16 billion upfront investment to put hundreds of thousands of people to work in union jobs plugging abandoned oil and gas wells and mines.

If we can stay true to these principles while meeting our climate targets, we'll demonstrate a model that other countries will want to partner with and follow.

With those values in mind, here's how the State Department will leverage our foreign policy to deliver for the American people on climate.

First, we'll put the climate crisis at the center of our foreign policy and national security, as President Biden instructed us to do in his first week in office. That means taking into account how every bilateral and multilateral engagement – every policy decision – will impact our goal of putting the world on a safer, more sustainable path. It also means ensuring our diplomats have the training and skills to elevate climate in our relationships around the globe.

Now, what it does not mean is treating other countries' progress on climate as a chip they can use to excuse bad behavior in other areas that are important to our national security. The Biden-Harris Administration is united on this: Climate is not a trading card – it's our future.

I am particularly delighted that President Biden named my friend John Kerry to serve as our Special Presidential Envoy for Climate. No one is more experienced or effective in convincing other countries to raise their climate ambitions. We need the whole world focused on taking action now, and through this decade, to promote the achievement of net-zero global emissions by 2050.

I am with John 100 percent in this effort. The leaders of our other U.S. Government agencies, they are as well. And his leadership will be indispensable in weaving climate into the fabric of everything we do at the State Department.

Second, as other countries step up, the State Department will mobilize resources, institutional know-how, technical expertise from across our government, the private sector, NGOs, and research universities to help them. In the last few weeks alone, we announced new funding for clean energy entrepreneurship and more efficient renewable energy markets in Bangladesh and to help India's small businesses invest in solar energy. These investments move us toward our climate goals and bring energy access to people who had never had it before.

Third, we'll emphasize assisting the countries being hit hardest by climate change, most of which lack the resources and capacity to handle its destabilizing impacts. Now, that includes Small Island Developing States, a number of which are literally sinking into the ocean because of rising sea levels. In 2020, only 3 percent of climate finance was directed toward these countries. We've got to fix that. To that end, America is deploying experts and technology to vulnerable islands in the Pacific and the Caribbean to improve early

warning and response systems, and we're investing in building resilience in areas like infrastructure and agriculture.

Fourth, our embassies will lead on the ground. They already are – helping governments design and implement climate-smart policies, while looking for ways to draw on the unique strengths of America's public and private sectors. Just last month, the U.S. company Sun Africa broke ground on two massive solar energy facilities in Angola, including the 144-megawatt Biopio site. When finished, it will be the biggest solar facility in all of Sub-Saharan Africa. The project will provide enough power for 265,000 homes and eliminate 440,000 gallons of carbon-intensive diesel fuel that Angola imports and burns each year. Plus, this project is expected to use around \$150 million in solar energy equipment exported from the United States. This effort is good for the Angolan people, good for climate, and good for American jobs and business. And it simply wouldn't have happened if not for the efforts of our diplomats.

Fifth, we will use all the tools in our kit to make U.S. clean energy innovators more competitive in the global market. That includes leveraging instruments like the financing provided by the Export-Import Bank to incentivize renewable energy exports; the proposed expansion of tax credits for clean energy generation and storage in the President's American Jobs Plan; and the Administration's ongoing efforts to level the global playing field for American-made products and services.

Support like these can have an outsized impact, particularly because the current market for renewables is only a small fraction of the market to come. Beyond solar panels, wind turbines, batteries, there are more than 40 additional categories of clean energy, including clean hydrogen, carbon capture, and next-generation renewables like enhanced geothermal energy. No one has staked a dominant claim to these promising technologies yet. And, with a lift from our domestic and foreign policy, every one of them can be American-led and American-made.

A Massachusetts start-up called Boston Metal shows how this can be done. The company pioneered a new process that can produce steel and other metals more efficiently and at lower costs, while also producing less pollution. Most of the U.S. steel sector already uses clean technologies, but the company's CEO, a Brazilian immigrant, saw an untapped market in countries like Brazil, where Boston Metal is partnering with industry to replace older, dirtier ways of making steel. This company is creating good-paying, quality jobs in the United States. Steel is a \$2.5 trillion global industry, and many of the world's producers will need to make a similar leap. America can help them do it.

Sixth, our diplomats will challenge the practices of countries whose action – or inaction – is setting the world back. When countries continue to rely on coal for a significant amount of their energy, or invest in new coal factories, or allow for massive deforestation, they will hear from the United States and our partners about how harmful these actions are.

And finally, we'll seize every chance we get to raise these issues with our allies and partners, and through multilateral institutions. At NATO, for example, there is consensus that we need to adapt our military readiness for the inevitability of climate change and reduce the reliance of the Allies' forces on fossil fuels, which is both a vulnerability and a major source of pollution. I know that Secretary General Stoltenberg, who has called climate a "threat multiplier," is as serious about addressing climate change as we are.

We will convey a strong message to the meeting of the G7 next month, whose members produce a quarter of the world's emissions. And I'll also represent the United States at next month's ministerial meeting of the Arctic Council, where I'll reaffirm America's commitment to meeting our climate goals and encourage other Arctic nations to do the same.

All of these efforts, at home and abroad, will allow us to lead from a position of strength when the world comes together in November for the United Nations Climate Conference in Glasgow.

I spend a great deal of my time focused on threats to America's security and interests – aggressive actions by Russia or China, the spread of COVID-19, the challenges facing democracies. But an equally grave threat to the American people – and an existential one over the long term – can be seen right here, on the Chesapeake Bay, where the costs of climate change are already manifesting themselves.

Yet from this very same place, we can also see examples of American innovation and leadership that – if taken to scale – can prevent a climate catastrophe and benefit American workers and communities.

Maryland has committed to cutting the state's emissions by at least 40 percent by 2030, and to 100 percent clean energy by 2040. Maryland also offers farmers strong incentives to plant cover crops, which help trap carbon dioxide. More than 40 percent of the state's farmers are now using these crops. And countless others are doing their part to prevent climate change on the Bay – and often benefiting American jobs in the process.

Just consider the Merrill Center building right here, from which I speak. When it opened 20 years ago, it was the first LEED Platinum Building in the entire world, a U.S. standard for energy efficiency that has since become the gold standard globally. Around a third of its energy comes from solar power. It uses 80 percent less water than most buildings its size. Nearly half of the building – the building materials, excuse me, came from within 300 miles. Its design saves \$50,000 a year in energy costs alone.

A newer facility the Chesapeake Bay Foundation built in 2014 is even more efficient, reflecting advances in American design and manufacturing. It produces more energy than it consumes, and all the water it uses is captured rainwater. Its solar panels come from Oregon, its wind turbines from Oklahoma. These solar panels and wind turbines are American-designed, American-owned, American-built. And people from around the world have come to study these buildings.

It's changes like these that will help preserve the Bay as we know it, and all of the communities and livelihoods that it sustains.

This is the blueprint for American leadership on climate. Bringing together innovation from government and the private sector, communities and organizations. Not just meeting targets for controlling climate change, but doing it in a way that's open, that's a good investment, that creates opportunities for American workers.

The climate crisis we face is profound. The consequences of not meeting it would be cataclysmic. But if we lead by the power of our example – if we use our foreign policy not only to get other countries to commit to the changes necessary, but to make America their partner in implementing those changes – we can turn the greatest challenge in generations into the greatest opportunity for generations to come.

Thanks for listening.

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