GOODBYE PRESIDENT BUSH

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Category: Politics

Of late, I've avoided talking about politics on this blog, but the inauguration of President Obama gives me the excuse to say a few words about the outgoing President. Now, most readers of this blog will know that I've not been a fan of George W. Bush, but I would like to mark his passing from the political scene by saying a couple of positive things about him:

Firstly, under George Bush, the United States has had a better record for providing aid to Africa than at any other nation on the planet. During his tenure, the United States:

- Pumped $18bn into fighting HIV/Aids, much of it in Africa
- Backed cancelling $34bn worth of debt for 27 African states
- Launched initiative that has halved Malaria in 15 African countries
- Led condemnation of Sudan's record in Darfur as genocide
- Pressed for north-south peace deal in Sudan
- "Saved millions of lives", according to aid activist Bob Geldof (read more)

It is true that much of the aid was tied to a political and moral agenda that not everyone shared - but this does not gainsay what was done. Obama will have a lot to live up to if he is to help Africa as much as his predecessor.

Secondly, when he was defeated in an election, George Bush accepted the verdict of the people with grace. The sight ofÂ the Obamas and Bushes saying goodbye at the steps of a helicopter at the end of the inauguration ceremony was truly moving. In many parts of the world sitting presidents just don't lose elections even if they have reached their term limit. If, by some miscalculation, these presidents do lose an election, they still refuse to step down, plunging their country into chaos. President Bush didn't do this and the way in which he stepped down from office should be a lesson to dictators and despots around the world.

I suspect that I may get some comments expressing negative views of President Bush, but that's ok. Today I feel like being generous.