## ‘People of African descent in general are given little respect by the west; we should respect our brothers and sisters in Africa and the African Diaspora because as Africans, no matter what country we come from, we are one.

1. Read both **“Obama in Ghana: The speech he might have made”** and the speech Obama actually made in Ghana. In your opinion which s the better speech in terms of honesty and accuracy of information provided and why? Why could Obama not give the speech as suggested in “**Obama in Ghana: The speech he might have made”**

Barack Obama was elected the first black president of America in November 2008. He is the most powerful politician in the world, whenever he speaks the whole world listens. In July 2009 he visited Ghana and spoke to members of parliament. In this essay I will compare the speech he actually made (Speech A) to the speech he might have made in Ghana (Speech B) and comment on which speech I think is better and why Obama opted out on giving the “The speech he might have made”.

In Speech A Obama’s key points are that Africans need to take responsibility for their country and stop blaming the western world for everything that has gone wrong in Africa. He also highlights the importance of Africa in our world with quotes such as “I see Africa as a fundamental part of our interconnected world” which makes all Africans plus the people in Accra feel wanted. The other point Obama makes is about good governance and corruption and its affect on the development of African countries. Obama shows this by saying “Development depends upon good governance. That is the ingredient which has been missing in far too many places, for far too long. That is the change that can unlock Africa’s potential” and goes onto say “No country is going to create wealth if its leaders exploit the economy to enrich themselves, or police can be bought off by drug traffickers. That is not democracy that is tyranny, and now is the time for it to end”. Although he is very critical, in my opinion he hits the nail on the head. I agree with him that if corruption continues African countries can’t develop and as he says “now is the time for it to end”, so that African countries can reach their full potential. In summary in speech A he picks out the things going wrong in Africa and puts the responsibility on Africans to make things right.

In speech B one of the key points are the apology to African people about the exploiting of Africa by previous American Presidents ad how they “Undermined the legitimate democratic aspirations of African people, either by sponsoring opposition, destabilizing governments, assisting coups d’état, and …. assassinating your elected leaders” This is a vital point in the speech as politicians aren’t well known for admitting and apologising such wrong doings. Obama apologizes on behalf of the previous Presidents even though he is not in the wrong. He also says “Your prosperity has expanded Americas” a statement that is rarely uttered by western powers. He also promises to encourage G8 countries to cancel all African debts and says that it is unacceptable for western countries to be making money out of Africa’s “impoverishment. The rest of speech B is similar to speech A.

So the main differences between the 2 speeches is that in speech B the president does not shy away from admitting the western countries’ part in Africa’s problems; and in speech A he throws the ball in the Africans court as he declares “Africa’s future is up to Africans” and says that pointing the fingers at the west is not the way forward. Speech B didn’t have this kind of push in the way that Africa needs to step up to the plate. Speech B also didn’t have as much detail into the matter of good governance and how Africa won’t develop if a thing like “leaders exploiting the economy to enrich themselves” is going on.

The two speeches were also similar as some points appeared in both speeches for instance the comparison of Obama’s father & grandfather’s generation and experiences to how African countries are developing now. Both speeches had the same quotes “My father grew up herding goats in a tiny village, the struggles of his own father’s generation were giving birth to new nations, beginning right here in Ghana”. Another quote which appeared in both was “I see Africa as a fundamental part of our interconnected world” which shows the importance of expressing the importance of Africa in our world. The youth were also included in both speeches with the quote “Only this time it will be the young people – brimming with talent and energy and hope – who can claim the future that so many in my father’s generation never found”.

I find it difficult to choose one speech over the other because there are things I like in both. If it were up to me I would combine the two speeches and take points from each speech, to come up with a speech that on one hand acknowledges the western countries negative influence on Africa and on the other hand, puts the responsibility on Africans to sort out their continent now. As a young boy of African descent I think that Obama is right in saying that that it is up to Africa and the African’s in Africa to determine Africa’s future development. I come from Zimbabwe and I do agree with him that the west is not responsible for the fall of the country’s economy. The greed and corruption of Zimbabwean leaders is responsible for this. Although I do not live in Zimbabwe I do see and hear about the fighting and the hatred between the two main tribal groups that has contributed to the situation in Zimbabwe. As a young man originating from Africa this affects me as I feel that I can make a change whether it is big or small. But if this carries on young people’s “talent and energy and hope” will be lost within the conflict and corruption.

The key things that I would take from speech B is the apology for past indecencies America committed against Africa as this shows humility from someone as big and important as Barack Obama. His promise to encourage G8 countries to cancel’s Africa’s debt is also important. I know that most African countries struggle to pay back this debt and that people get paid so little money compared to western countries. For example I am a member of a cultural group and we sometimes perform in different events and get paid some allowances. I was shocked recently that this money that we get can be the same as or even more than what a head teacher in Zimbabwe, for example, gets in a month. This is just not right that a 15 year old can get an allowance that is more than a head teacher’s salary in Africa.

I think that Obama could not give the suggested speech because admitting guilt and responsibility for the West’s part in African problems would mean that the West should put more financial support to help Africa to stabilise. Also this would mean that the west cannot continue to force African countries to repay the debts. Admitting that Africa’s resources have expanded the western world’s prosperity could mean that Africa can start to want the resources back.

The other problem I see is that Obama is a black man of African heritage so while he understands Africa’s problems, as a president of the USA he does not want to be seen to be sympathising with Africa too much. As he says in Speech B not all American citizens voted for him and not all world leaders are in support of him, so if he wants to keep the support he has now he has to be careful of what he says and hat he does.