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## In and Out of Africa, at a Brisk Pace

By RICHARD W. STEVENSON

**A**BUJA, Nigeria, July 12 — President Bush swept through Africa, a continent of wonders and history and heartbreak and promise, with the same brisk, businesslike efficiency he brings to all his activities.

When he visited the Slave House on Gorée Island in Senegal, said to have been the holding pen and departure place for as many as a million slaves being shipped across the Atlantic Ocean, he was in and out in 15 minutes.

"Very emotional, very touching," Mr. Bush said as he headed off the island.

He spent a full 60 minutes at a game park in Botswana, a country where he stayed a total of 6 hours.

Senegal, too, was dispatched within a quarter of a day. Uganda was penciled in for 3 hours, 15 minutes, less time than it took him to fly there from South Africa.

Mr. Bush has never been an enthusiastic traveler, and he is not one to lollygag, whatever he is doing. This is a man, after all, who has been known to play 18 holes of golf in less than two hours and to fidget impatiently when foreign leaders give long-winded answers at joint news conferences with him.

In this case, though, his schedule was not particularly frenetic. On Wednesday in South Africa, Mr. Bush met with President Thabo Mbeki in the morning, held a brief news conference, had lunch with Mr. Mbeki, visited a Ford Motor Company factory and had dinner with the American ambassador.

Concerns about security clearly limited Mr. Bush's ability to get out and move around. But it was still striking that out of the four nights that the president was in Africa, he spent three of them in a luxury hotel in Pretoria, South Africa, one of the least colorful of the major cities on the continent.

Like many tourists, Mr. Bush could not resist making comparisons to home. As he was driven through the Mokolodi Nature Reserve in Botswana on Thursday, he was heard to say that it looked a lot like Crawford, Tex., the site of his beloved ranch, to which he will return next weekend.

### **Riding the Clinton Highway**

As he jumped from country to country over the last five days, Mr. Bush often found himself following in the footsteps of his predecessor, Bill Clinton, who visited Africa

in 1998 and again in 2000.

When he rode from the airport into Abuja, Nigeria's capital, Mr. Bush found himself on Bill Clinton Highway. Like Mr. Clinton, he gave a speech on Gorée Island. His quick drive through the game park in Botswana, on the back of a pickup truck, inevitably drew comparisons to Mr. Clinton's two-day safari in the same country in 1998.

Mr. Clinton often drew big, enthusiastic crowds, and he won over many of Africa's leaders. Mr. Bush drew fewer, smaller crowds and found himself papering over differences with many of the governments he dropped in on. In South Africa there was a sizable demonstration against Mr. Bush outside the United States Embassy, notable because it had the tacit backing of Mr. Mbeki's governing party, the African National Congress, which was critical of Mr. Bush over the war in Iraq.

Administration officials bristled at the Clinton comparisons. They said Mr. Bush had been well received and had brought with him far more activist and generous proposals to deal with Africa's woes than had his predecessor.

"We're not here for style, we're here for substance," said Secretary of State Colin L. Powell. "And I think the substance of this trip will compare to any previous trip by any former president."

### **Unscripted Passion**

This is a White House that plans every trip down to the last detail and plots out every camera angle to make sure that Mr. Bush is

always shown in the most presidential and flattering pose possible. So the horror of the White House advance team can only be imagined when Mr. Bush, Laura Bush and one of their twin daughters, Barbara, cameras trained on them as always, pulled up on a dusty drive in the game park in Botswana and encountered a male elephant determinedly but ultimately unsuccessfully trying to mate with a female.

The newspaper reporter who was taken along on the minisafari in the small pool that accompanies Mr. Bush wherever he goes, Samson Mulugeta of Newsday, described the scene to other reporters like this, using the abbreviations for President of the United States and First Lady of the United States: "As the pool convulsed into giggles, Potus turned back and smiled sheepishly. Barbara threw her head back in embarrassment and covered her face with her hands. Then Potus threw his cap over his face to shield himself from the impending coitus (which never materialized). Flotus's expression was not visible from our angle."

Undeterred by this encounter with nature, Mr. Bush took up an invitation from the elephant trainer on the scene to get closer to some of the other animals. As he patted the elephants, Mr. Bush said, "Good boy."

Mrs. Bush called out, "O.K. darling, that's enough."

### **Bush's 2-Question Limit**

Mr. Bush almost never holds formal news conferences. Instead, he frequently takes a few questions from reporters, especially after meetings with foreign leaders. He has

a strict rule: he calls on two American reporters and his counterpart calls on two reporters from the other country's press corps.

Mr. Bush is a stickler about the practice, even if it means chiding another leader on his own turf. When President Festus G. Mogae of Botswana tried to start one of these sessions on Thursday by saying, "Does anyone want to ask . . ." Mr. Bush cut him off good-naturedly and said, "That's not the way we do it."

Whatever the humor in the situation, Mr. Bush's two-question rule variously annoys and infuriates White House reporters, who have started to rebel. On Wednesday, when Mr. Bush and Mr. Mbeki held their "media availability" on the lush lawn of the presidential complex in Pretoria, many of the reporters on the trip chose not to attend, figuring they would not get a chance to ask a question anyway. South African and American reporters had been seated on opposite sides of the aisle, like friends of the bride and friends of the groom, and the result was a lot of empty chairs on the American side.

If Mr. Bush noticed, he gave no sign of it. And on Friday, when he appeared with President Yoweri K. Museveni of Uganda, he violated his own rule and took only one question.

