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THURSDAY, JUNE 09, 2005

AIDS In Africa: Bush Ain't Helping

by Michael in New York on 6/09/2005 10:00:00 AM

David Brooks has a rather tortured column on AIDS in Africa. He tries to paint Bush's inactions in the best possible light while still arguing that much, much more needs to be done. Even the headline (which he probably didn't write) is wrong: "In Africa, Life After AIDS," it reads, when any responsible observer knows that the worst is still ahead of us. Africa won't have life after AIDS until decades from now and only then if we take action today.

All he concedes is that, "Obviously, there is still a long way ago." Then Brooks makes a comparison that even he admits is perverse: he compares the underfunded hospitals to Silicon Valley in the early '90s.

They're facing the problems start-ups face: how to offer treatment to hundreds when you have only one sink and one phone, how to use the survivors who suddenly have the rest of their lives to lead.

That IS perverse, David. A Silicon Valley start-up is a luxury enjoyed by people with the freedom and wealth to roll the dice on a new company that could make them millionaires. Hospitals in Africa starved for resources are a sign of dire necessity and the moral failing of the world community. People are dying and no one cares.

Brooks also describes money "rolling in" from the US, which is also a lie. Here's the truth: Bush made a big splash by promising to spend an extra \$15 billion fighting AIDS in Africa and his words have proven

- 1. Bush hasn't come close to spending the amount he promised.
- 2. Bush has politicized the funding, placing religious purity ahead of medicine and saving lives.
- 3. Bush has defunded effective international groups like the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Why? Because they don't meet his standards of religious purity.
- 4. Bush has forced Uganda to switch from an effective prevention program that cut HIV infection in the population from 15% to 6%. What new program does he dangle money in front of the government to force them to use? An unproven abstinence only program that every responsible health expert says will result in more illness and

Rolling Stone has a decent article detailing the roadblocks Bush has placed in front of those trying to help Africa. It proves Brooks is willfully lying or woefully ignorant when he tries to credit Bush with helping to fight AIDS on that troubled continent.

It's pretty simple. Bush pretends he wants to fight AIDS but won't buy condoms. That's like saying you want to fight hunger but won't buy any food.















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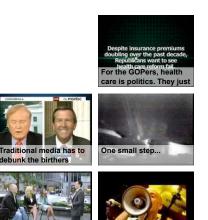
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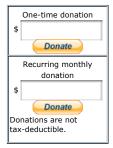
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