

# COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

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## **J. Anthony Holmes**

J. Anthony Holmes is the Cyrus Vance Fellow in diplomatic studies on Africa at the Council on Foreign Relations. From 2005 to 2007, he was the elected president of the 13,700 member American Foreign Service Association (AFSA), which is the professional association and exclusive representative of the United States Foreign Service.

Prior to AFSA, Ambassador Holmes was U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Burkina Faso from 2002 to 2005, where he devoted himself to improving the U.S.-Burkina Faso bilateral relationship, eliminating the considerable misunderstanding that existed previously, reducing the gaps in how the two governments saw the region and its key issues, and in finding mutually beneficial areas of cooperation, including trade, development assistance, education, military relations, development of democracy and human rights, and the fights against HIV/AIDS and trafficking in children. He laid the groundwork for Burkina Faso's accession to the benefits of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and the Millennium Challenge Corporation, as well as expanded cooperation on a wide range of issues.

Ambassador Holmes was director of the Africa Bureau's Economic Policy Office from 1999 to 2002, where he worked on a wide array of economic and global issues, including helping the U.S. Government and Africa come to grips with the devastating HIV/AIDS pandemic; implementing the African Growth and Opportunity Act; tailoring U.S. assistance efforts to take advantage of changing circumstances in both Washington and in Africa; and working on Africa debt policy. He has spent about half of his career on African issues, also serving as the economic/commercial section chief in Harare and in the economic section in Nairobi. Ambassador Holmes has spent the other half of his career as an economic and, occasionally, commercial officer in Egypt and in Syria. He also headed the economic sections in Singapore and in Sweden and served as the deputy director of the State Department's office of sanctions policy.

Ambassador Holmes has a BA in comparative religion and an MA in economic geography from the University of Georgia, as well as an MBA in international management from the Thunderbird School. He and his wife have two sons.

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