

EDITION: U.S.

[CA Canada](#) [US United States](#) [UK United Kingdom](#)

- [Middle East Protests](#)
- [Lebanon](#)
- [France](#)
- [Syria](#)

[More](#)

[Log in](#)

December 6, 2011



[Like](#)

35K

[This is the print preview: Back to normal view »](#)



[William Easterly](#)

Professor of Economics, New York University

Posted: May 25, 2009 04:01 PM

[BIO](#) [Become a Fan](#)

[Get Email Alerts](#) [Bloggers' Index](#)

[Sachs Ironies: Why Critics are Better for Foreign Aid than Apologists](#)

Read More: [Africa](#), [Aid To Africa](#), [Dambisa Moyo](#), [Foreign Aid](#), [Jeffrey Sachs](#), [Malaria](#), [World News](#)

Official foreign aid agencies delivering aid to Africa are used to operating with nobody holding them accountable for aid dollars actually reaching poor people. Now that establishment is running scared with the emergence of independent African voices critical of aid, such as that of Dambisa Moyo. Jeffrey Sachs, the world's leading apologist and fund-raiser for the aid establishment, has

responded here with a ferocious personal attack on Moyo and myself, "[Aid Ironies](#)."

Allow me to defend myself (I'll let the formidable Moyo handle herself). It's not so much my pathetic need to correct slanders, as if anybody cared. Sachs' desperation shows when he peddles what I will show he knew were falsehoods. Besides, the sight of two middle-aged white men mud-wrestling on African aid may entertain the audience.

Sachs accuses me of such a hard heart as to deny "\$10 in aid to an African child for an anti-malaria bed net." Sachs offers: "Here are some of the most effective kinds of aid efforts: support for peasant farmers to help them grow more food, childhood vaccines... roads, .. safe drinking water...."

Sachs likes a lot more another writer whom he quoted in his book [Common Wealth](#):

"Put the focus back where it belongs: get the poorest people in the world such obvious goods as the vaccines,... the improved seeds, the fertilizer, the roads, the boreholes, the water pipes...." Wait, that was me!

Sachs was earlier quoting from my book, [The White Man's Burden](#), which far from wanting to deny an African child bed nets, denounces the tragedy of aid impunity, in which "The West spent \$2.3 trillion and still had not managed to get four-dollar bed nets to poor families."

Sachs complained that "most Americans know little about the many crucially successful aid efforts, because Moyo, Easterly, and others lump all kinds of programs -- the good and the bad -- into one big undifferentiated mass." Sachs again prefers another writer whom he quoted in [Common Wealth](#): "Foreign aid likely contributed to some notable successes on a global scale, such as dramatic improvement in health and education indicators in poor countries."

You guessed it -- that was me again, illustrating how aid COULD work if only aid agencies were accountable for their actions.

Sachs denounces my callousness when I myself benefited from a government scholarship for grad school: "Easterly mentioned his receipt of NSF support in the same book in which he denounces aid," and now I am "trying to pull up the ladder for those still left behind." Either this is an intentional falsehood or Sachs inexplicably failed to read the next paragraph in the book: "Could you give many more scholarships to poor students? ...Could you give the poor "aid vouchers" that they could spend on aid agency services of their choice?"

Sachs suffers from the same acute shortage of truthiness as did the Bush/Cheney administration, all of whom have contributed to the current climate of fear and intimidation in foreign aid. Any aid critic is immediately denounced as a heartless baby-killer, which protects the establishment from the accountability so badly needed to see aid reach the poor.

My colleagues and I at [Aid Watch](#) have documented in recent months such [examples of aid impunity](#) as:

--USAID was caught red-handed by its own Inspector General mismanaging one multi-million project in Afghanistan so badly that millions disappeared without a trace, and among the few tangible outputs was a bridge, reported as "completed," that was so life-threatening that nobody could use it.

--The [World Bank's own evaluation unit](#) criticized them for having only 2 percent of its communicable diseases projects focus on TB, despite the huge mortality from this disease and the availability of effective treatments. For good measure, the World Bank also cut nutritional projects in half, despite the huge benefits from cheap and effective nutritional supplements for children so malnourished that they will suffer permanent brain damage.

--the World Health Organization [faked malaria statistics](#) to make false claims of victories against malaria in the *New York Times*. The WHO later withdrew and then contradicted the numbers, but never issued a public retraction. How to know when and where to fight malaria if the numbers are faked?

None of these organizations suffered any consequences for their misbehavior. Only poor people suffer the consequences, and they are powerless.

As an alternative to the impunity of the establishment that Sachs defends, the emergence of a new wave of independent aid critics in Africa is most welcome. This new wave includes many more besides the remarkable Dambisa Moyo -- such as the Ugandan journalist Andrew Mwenda and two extraordinary colleagues of mine at NYU: the Ghanaian economist Yaw Nyarko and the Beninese political scientist Leonard Wantchekon. Instead of Sachs' attempt to shout down critics with slanders and falsehoods, let's have a climate of open debate in which we learn from past mistakes, the guilty suffer, the good are rewarded, and we can hope that aid does start to reach the poor.

[PHOTO GALLERIES](#)



[Putin Party Setback](#)



[Elections In Egypt](#)



[Syria Crackdown](#)



[Russian Elections](#)

FOLLOW US

-
-
-
-
-
-
-

Connect with your friends
Check out stories you might like,
and see what your friends are sharing!



[Most Popular on HuffPost](#)

H2FsEMj

%2F%2FuX45ypXshl5GJ87a3w6jwdo7pKvJOzznQcsE96o%2F6FfrAdfqJdOLeAqFF0sWgtL%2B6It84Dvs3c%2BVPy5Yo7psOgb
bSSoS54Sl8JcrZ8EtJpd51G2htlG2ijOVOl91OO7MXQ2o0dg5mo4o5Pme%2F69sQyb9fhm65c%2BAA2x5lkUR8uh0iwgoNCP0iom

1 of 2



[Fox News: The Muppets Are Communist, Captain Planet Evil](#)

[Like](#)

30K



[Herman Cain Admits He Quoted Pokemon](#)

[Like](#)

10K



[High School Principal Under Fire For Scandalous Facebook Picture](#)
[Recommend](#)

1K



[Giuliana To Undergo Double Mastectomy](#)

[Recommend](#)

343



[PHOTOS: Katy Perry Debuts Shorter, Lighter Hair](#)

[Like](#)

96



[WATCH: Bullied Gay Teen's Poignant Video Series](#)

[Recommend](#)

1K



[9 Year-Old Suspended For Sexual Harassment For Calling Teacher 'Cute'](#)

[Like](#)

8K



[WATCH: Bachmann Left Speechless After Encounter With Young Activist](#)

[Recommend](#)

5K



[Kardashians, 'Teen Mom' Star Farrah Abraham Start Twitter Feud](#)

[Like](#)

209

Don't Miss HuffPost Bloggers

1 of 5



Sebastian Thrun

[Best of TEDTalks 2011: Self-Driving Cars Roll Their Way In](#)



Eric X. Li

[Globalization 2.0: A Century for Sale, Any Taker?](#)

[Video: Skydiver Films His Own Paralyzing Fall](#)

[Luck, Griffin, Richardson Lead Heisman Finalists](#)

[Why Kids Sexting May Not Be as Big a Problem as We Thought](#)

[Time - World](#)



[France, Germany see budget discipline as key in crisis](#)



[In India, a secret garden that rocks](#)



[Thousands protest Russian election](#)

[More World News at latimes.com](#)

TOP VIDEO PICKS

1 of 7

[Review Into Police Role and Reforms](#)



[Scott's Antarctic Papers on Show](#)



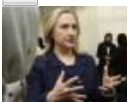
[Ireland Awaits Austerity Measures](#)



MOST DISCUSSED RIGHT NOW

[2RgnQXLokEIFimSGDV8i8a43pip0bdKP iJKomeBLqmM3QvAVQ0trgKQA9zRBn5c9](#)

1 of 2



[Hillary Clinton: Russian Election Was Rigged](#)



[Twin Attacks Kill Dozens, Injure More Than 100 In Afghanistan](#)

HOT ON FACEBOOK

[2RgnQXLokEIFimSGDV8i8TKPvBq8xPkmgYINREC4w8w%3D](#)

[iJKomeBLqmM3QvAVQ0trgPTAYkCdRanfpr%2BnvSQA9QM%3D](#)

[jpeKJKgSs0bJPiRX0pV4Fss35VaaM%2Fhsd5ArrOaf1yA%3D KnqhVXVejuA%2BaeszevOImA%3D%3D](#)

1 of 3



[Ten Days That Changed The World](#)

[Like](#)

647



[Which Presidential Candidate Can't Name 3 Books?](#)

[Like](#)

637



HOT ON TWITTER

2RgnQXLokEIFimSGDV8i8f8ym0hHXTuf iJKomeBLqmM3QvAVQ0trgDrc%2BaNUFZ3B

1 of 2



[weirdnews](#)

OWS Protester Ditches Tent For Job On Wall Street <http://t.co/c5BmtW6z>

[Retweet](#)



[howrudeareyou](#)

So now Fox business is waging a war on childhood... No the Muppets are not communist and you are not a journalist <http://t.co>

[/pfNfjr7k](#)

[Retweet](#)

[HUFFPOST'S BIG NEWS PAGES](#)



[Year In Review 2011: Canada's News Winners Of The Year](#)

[Stephen Harper](#)



[Tammy Baldwin Delivers Passionate Defense Of Progressivism](#)

[Video](#)



[Kristen Wiig On Women In Comedy, 'Bridesmaids' And Crack](#)

[Kristen Wiig](#)



[Puerto Rico's Hate Crime Law May Soon Exclude LGBT Protections: Report](#)

[Civil Rights](#)



[Brooke Mueller Arrest: Colo. Judge Allows Sheen's Ex-wife To Return Home](#)

[Charlie Sheen](#)



[Larry King: 'I Wanna Be Frozen' When I Die](#)

[Larry King](#)



[FDA Considers Adding New Warning Labels To Newer Birth Control Pills](#)
[Healthy Living Health News](#)



[Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah Chief, Gives Rare Public Speech, Says Group Is 'Here To Stay'](#)
[Lebanon](#)



[Chris Myers, New Jersey Mayor, Resigns After Alleged Encounter With Male Escort](#)
[Sex](#)

[more big news pages](#) »

- [FRONT PAGE](#)
- [POLITICS](#)
- [BUSINESS](#)
- [WORLD](#)
- [LIVING](#)
- [STYLE](#)
- [AUTOS](#)
- [ENTERTAINMENT](#)
- [CULTURE](#)
- [TECH](#)
- [SPORTS](#)
- [LOCAL](#)
- [MORE](#)

[WORLD](#)

- [Advertise](#) |
- [Log In](#) |
- [Make HuffPost your Home Page](#) |
- [RSS](#) |
- [Careers](#) |
- [FAQ](#)

- [User Agreement](#) |
- [Privacy](#) |
- [Comment Policy](#) |
- [About Us](#) |
- [About Our Ads](#) |
- [Contact Us](#)

- Copyright © 2011 TheHuffingtonPost.com, Inc. |
- "The Huffington Post" is a registered trademark of TheHuffingtonPost.com, Inc. All rights reserved.