

REFINING AMERICAN STRATEGY IN AFRICA

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FOREWORD

Traditionally, the United States has not been a major player in the security environment of Sub-Saharan Africa, relying instead on European nations to provide outside assistance to African states. Today, it is appropriate to rethink this neglect. Africa is undergoing vast political, social, and economic changes. A consistent and well-designed American strategy in the region could help tilt the scales in favor of security and stability.

In this study, Dr. Steven Metz provides a broad overview of the African security environment as a basis for recommendations on the refinement of American strategy in that region. He assesses both the opportunities for positive change which exist today, and the obstacles. While only Africans themselves can determine the future of their region, an American strategy which discourages proxy aggression, encourages private initiatives in the economic and political spheres, and uses the U.S. military, particularly the Army, to engage its African counterparts could pay great dividends.

American defense strategy calls for using the military to help shape the global security environment, preempting and deterring conflict and building regional mechanisms for security. This is a particularly wise approach to Sub-Saharan Africa. The Strategic Studies Institute is pleased to offer this study as part of the ongoing debate over how the U.S. military can best contribute to the mission of shaping the security environment.

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Introduction.

Amani iwe kwenu. This Swahili benediction, which means “may peace be with you,” is an appealing thought but remains only a dream for Sub-Saharan Africa. At the beginning of the 21st century, that region is characterized by increasing violence and instability as governments, facing the pressures of globalization and the information revolution, lose the ability to control pent-up discontent. In states with relatively strong economies and civil societies, this has sparked pressure for increased government accountability and popular participation. In less resilient states, the devolution of state power has led to collapse, fragmentation, and violence. Some, like Somalia, Sierra Leone, and Liberia, tumbled into near-anarchy. Others have spent years trying to wrest control of their hinterlands from rebel warlords. As a result, Africa entered the 21st century the most war-torn region on earth.¹

Facing thunderstorms of violence and diminishing interest by outside powers, Africa’s leaders have attempted to forge some sort of new, post-Cold War strategic framework. This has renewed the search for “African solutions to African problems.” Because of the great value that African culture places on collective action, the most tangible gains have come from building on existing structures. Regional economic organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and, to a lesser extent, the East African Community (EAC) have assumed security functions, in part to compensate for the weaknesses of the continent-wide Organization of African Unity (OAU).

But every step forward brings one backwards. At the same time that the region’s leaders attempt to build a new

strategic framework, they seem to have lost any inhibition on intervention in neighboring states. The old dictum that “the enemy of my enemy is my friend” dominates the security policy of African states. Proxy conflict is the coin of the realm. And security policy—like politics in general—remains personalized. Animosity among the region’s leaders shape the strategic environment as much as national interests. Positive and negative trends in Africa remain locked in a fragile counterpoise. In coming years the continent could go either way, slipping into greater violence or slowly moving toward greater stability. For the United States, this creates a moment of opportunity when wise strategy could bring great benefits.

Admittedly, Africa is not a top priority for the United States. The 1998 National Security Strategy of the United States lists Africa last among the world’s regions.² This is not coincidence. As a 1995 report by the Department of Defense notes, “America’s security interests are very limited.”³ The tendency is thus to relegate Africa to the periphery of American strategy, to accord it our second-best efforts, or to ignore it entirely.⁴ But to do so risks letting substantial opportunities fade away. This would not be wise. After all, the United States does have strategic concerns in Sub-Saharan Africa. Serious transnational threats emanate from the region including state-sponsored terrorism, narcotics trafficking, weapons proliferation, international crime, environmental damage, and pandemic disease.⁵ Nigerian organized crime groups are heavily involved in the global heroin trade, and South Africa, Ghana, and Côte d’Ivoire are becoming important transshipment points for drugs.⁶ And Africa is the scene of recurrent humanitarian disasters, often as a result of armed conflict. To ignore them detracts from the humanity of all who have it in their power to respond, and pushes the sort of world order that Americans seek a little further away. In addition, economic opportunities in Africa are growing. By volume, about 14 percent of U.S. crude oil imports come from Africa (compared to 18 percent from the

Middle East).⁷ While U.S. exports to Sub-Saharan Africa account for less than 1 percent of U.S. exports, they do exceed those to the former Soviet Union and currently account for 100,000 U.S. jobs.⁸ Direct investment is also increasing.⁹

This suggests that the United States should remain engaged in Africa but do so in a way that generates the maximum effectiveness from every effort. Clearly promotion of political and economic reform must be at the center of American policy. But security cannot be overlooked. Democracy and development require security which is in short supply across Africa. To assist African states in building a more secure region, the United States must promote improved civil-military relations, help with the professionalization of African militaries, and assist with the construction of regional structures to prevent or resolve conflict. This is a tall order. The American public and its elected leaders have little understanding of or concern for Africa. Those who craft and implement American policy face a constant struggle to sustain interest and obtain the resources necessary to influence the region. This means that the maximum impact must be derived from every program and effort: American strategy in Africa must be both creative and careful. The Clinton administration has laid the foundation for success. To seize the region's opportunities, this must now be refined. The U.S. military—particularly the Army—can play a vital part.

The Players.

The African security environment may be the most complex on earth, with a sometimes bewildering array of actors, shifting affiliations, and unique characteristics. It is a series of interlinked systems and groupings. Two divisions are particularly relevant. First is the subregional one, with overlapping but discernible western, eastern, central, and southern sections. Of these, the western and southern are the most coherent as political groupings. And, both are centered around major regional powers (Nigeria and South

Africa). Both have important regional economic organizations (ECOWAS and SADC) which have experience with regional peace enforcement or stability operations.¹⁰ The second grouping is linguistic, with Anglophone and Francophone blocs (and, to a lesser extent, some degree of Lusophone solidarity).¹¹

Both states and non-state organizations play a significant role in African security. In the near term, Nigeria and South Africa are the most powerful states due to size and, in the case of South Africa, level of development. For other African nations, political influence tends to reflect the charisma, reputation, and domestic power base of the leader. Exogenous states are also important in the African security environment, particularly the United States, France, and the United Kingdom. While France was one of the most influential external actors in Africa from the 1960s through the 1990s, its enthusiasm is waning. Many analysts—particularly in France itself—argue that Paris' association with the former regimes in Rwanda and Zaire/Democratic Republic of Congo eroded French influence and increased the leverage of the United States.¹² This has led to rather significant changes in French policy. During the summer of 1997, for instance, Paris announced a 40 percent cut-back in its military presence in Africa.¹³ Among Francophone African militaries, the perception of French decline has led to a desire to build closer ties with the United States, particularly, the U.S. military.¹⁴ Portugal has implemented a few security cooperation programs with its former colonies like Angola.¹⁵ And, some African states actively seek ties with non-traditional partners such as Saudi Arabia, North Korea, and Iran.¹⁶

International organizations in general play a larger role in Africa than in most other regions of the world. The OAU has the potential to be very significant but remains ineffective. The OAU was founded in 1963, in part, to protect fragile, new sovereignties. Its charter did not envision intervention in the sort of internal struggles that characterize Africa today. The OAU is hamstrung by a

structure which allocates nearly all power to summits of the member nations' heads of state. Personal and ideological animosities among these heads of state often create problems (and nearly tore the OAU apart in the 1980s).¹⁷ The OAU's first attempt at peacekeeping in Chad in the early 1980s was widely viewed in Africa as an embarrassing failure.¹⁸ The OAU did provide observers following the negotiated settlement of disputes such as Rwanda (1992-93) and Burundi (1993-96) but remains reluctant to undertake peace enforcement, particularly in intrastate conflicts.¹⁹

Absent fundamental structural change, the OAU could succeed at small-scale, permissive peace operations where consensus exists among the competing factions, but is unable to organize peace enforcement operations or stop armed conflict between member states.²⁰ Because of the shortcomings of the OAU, the United Nations (U.N.) has long been involved in Africa. The Congo Crisis of the early 1960s, for instance, was the U.N.'s first attempt at peace enforcement. And, now led by its second African secretary-general in a row, the U.N. works hard to focus world attention on African problems.²¹ Over the mid-term, at least, any major peacekeeping or peace enforcement activities in Africa which involve outside support are likely to be U.N. operations or, at least, conducted with a clear U.N. mandate.

Subregional international organizations have been a feature of Africa's political landscape for decades. Most began as mechanisms for economic cooperation. Recently, the trend has been toward the expansion of economic subregional organizations into the security realm. SADC, for instance, created a formal organ for defense, politics, and security in 1996.²² In September 1998, this was used to justify an intervention into Lesotho by troops from South Africa and Botswana (at the invitation Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili).²³ ECOWAS entered the security arena with the dispatch of multinational peacekeepers to Liberia in 1990. In 1999 it moved even further into the security field by establishing a Mediation and Security Council, a

multinational stand-by force, and several Zonal Observation bureaus.²⁴ Like SADC, ECOWAS is more an unequal coalition of a major regional power—Nigeria in this case—assisted by smaller states than a true gathering of equals. It has been seen by some other African nations as simply cover for the spread of Nigerian influence.²⁵ Today there are signs that the East African Community (EAC) may follow SADC and ECOWAS by moving from a purely economic organization to one which at least encourages security cooperation among its members.

These multinational interventions under the aegis of subregional organizations signaled a major change in the African security environment. In the past, outsiders sometimes intervened to eliminate undesired regimes or protect endangered friends; now Africans do it themselves. But in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Lesotho, African states learned that their region's internal conflicts are extraordinarily complex and often expensive in both blood and money.²⁶ It remains to be seen whether subregional organizations—which do provide a degree of legitimacy for intervention—can be more successful at conflict prevention and resolution rather than simply intervention.

Financial and monetary organizations like the World Bank, African Development Bank, and the International Monetary Fund indirectly affect African security. Austerity programs or decisions to deny assistance can destabilize African states and stoke insecurity, particularly when tension is already high. Foreign or multinational corporations can play similar roles. While charges that Western corporations cause or manipulate African violence for their own ends are almost always overstatements, corporate decisions, like those of international economic organizations, can overturn governments and pave the way for violence. For instance, the drying up of foreign aid, investment, and lending led to the downfall of Mobutu Sese Seko in Zaire by removing the fuel for his extensive patronage system. This is one of the key contradictions of

security in Africa: patronage is often the main basis for stability, but economic growth is contingent on reform which undercuts patronage and corruption. This puts Africa's old-fashioned "strong men" in unwinnable situations. If they resist reform, eventually pressure from below will become unbearable. But if they undertake serious reform, they lose their patronage-based support.

Transnational or international humanitarian relief organizations (HROs) and foreign missionary groups also play important roles in Africa, particularly in addressing the suffering associated with conflict. The need to establish links with them has added a new twist to American strategy in Africa.²⁷ In the past, HROs were suspicious of all armed forces and tried to keep the greatest possible distance from them. Today, the various warlord and militia leaders who stoke violence in Africa often target or coerce HROs, forcing the relief organizations to seek protection from military forces. And, finally, the international media helps mobilize world public opinion for involvement in the resolution of African crises and the amelioration of human disasters. Often, the less vital the American interests in a region, the greater the role the media plays in defining humanitarian concerns and shaping strategy. This certainly holds for Africa.

The Security Environment.

In the broadest sense, the African security environment is shaped by the comparative weakness of the states which compose it.²⁸ Sub-Saharan Africa is the region where the nation-state's "roots are shallowest."²⁹ Many African nations face internal separatist or rebel movements. Most of these are essentially competitors with the state for wealth and political power—which tend to be coterminous in Africa—but use regional, ethnic, or religious differences to mobilize support. Some of the more powerful rebel movements like Jonas Savimbi's Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) or John Garang's Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) control and administer

territory and take on the trappings of a state, with budgets derived from smuggling and "taxation" of multinational corporations, "diplomatic" relations with outsiders, and worldwide campaigns to mobilize political and financial support. Most of Africa's geographically large states like Sudan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Angola are more titular states than real ones. Politically, culturally, and economically, the subregions of these large states are more disparate than unified.

Given the weakness of political institutions, personality plays a larger role in African affairs than in any other region of the world. Often, interstate cooperation or antagonisms reflect relations between individual heads of state rather than national interests. Nowhere was that clearer than in 1996-97 war in Zaire/Democratic Republic of the Congo, as many African leaders seized the opportunity to strike at Mobutu in revenge for his support of their enemies in the past. Uganda's Yoweri Museveni, Rwanda's Paul Kagame, and Angola's Jose Dos Santos (among others) provided vital support to the rebels. During the initial stages of the war, South Africa's Nelson Mandela and Kenya's President Daniel Arap Moi attempted to mediate. Because of personal animosities, Moi excluded rebel leader Kabila, which virtually guaranteed failure.

Despite widespread rhetorical support for territorial integrity and the inviolability of the borders inherited at the time of independence, most African borders are permeable, with only sporadic or weak control of the flow of people and goods from country to country. This blurs the distinction between external and internal security problems. Violence often pits an insurgent or secessionist movement against the central government or, increasingly, ethnic militias against governments or other groups. Many of these conflicts generate substantial refugee flows, thus turning internal violence into an international problem. Since refugees can overwhelm or distract opponents and attract international attention, antagonists in a conflict sometimes deliberately create or exacerbate refugee problems. Food

and medical care become weapons. Those who control them have wealth and power; those who do not are weak. U.N. agency support often conveys a degree of legitimacy to insurgent movements so they seek it by both violent and nonviolent means. Both governments and their enemies seek to manipulate the efforts of humanitarian relief organizations.

Attracting external sponsorship is vital in African conflicts. Rebels typically seek arms, money, training, and political support from ethnic kinsmen, expatriate countrymen in developed countries, international relief agencies, ideological allies, or the regimes of neighboring states. States do the same thing, frequently turning to sources outside Africa. Those with access to natural resources like diamonds have the capacity to acquire war material.³⁰ Rebels purchase what they need. States also buy support with resources or concessions, and sometimes use ideology or other means to find patrons. Since the end of the Cold War, most African states have turned to Europe or the United States for assistance, but other states occasionally dabble in African conflicts. Israel maintained a program of military assistance supporting sales to African countries long after the Cold War ended. Iran and China have supported the Sudanese government in its ongoing war against the SPLA, while the rebels have gotten help from Uganda, Kenya, and Israel (via Ethiopia).³¹ Libya funds a number of friendly states and some rebel movements. States unable to find a patron sometimes turn to mercenaries (although with very mixed success).

The comparative weaknesses of African states affect their militaries. Budgets are often inadequate to support existing forces and government bureaucracies, whether military or civilian, are bloated. But downsizing is fraught with the potential for turmoil, coups, and banditry by officers and soldiers who see their livelihood threatened. Enlisted personnel of most African militaries are very poorly paid (if paid at all). Even officers in some African armies must engage in outside business to attain a reason-

able lifestyle. Since governments offer no employment assistance in Africa, many states use the military as an employment program, often taking the uneducated, illiterate, and sickly into the service. Few Africa states have successfully built a national consensus on the nature of the security threat they face, and thus have difficulty with military force sizing and development. Troop strength often reflects historical circumstances rather than present danger.

Although there are exceptions, Africans often regard their militaries as tools of a regime rather than servants of the people. In some countries, one region or ethnic group dominates the military. As a result, the relationship between armed forces and society can be characterized by suspicion or outright fear. This is compounded in some cases by security services that prey on the population and, in others, by the willingness of the regime to use military forces in a coercive internal security role. Since Africa has a long history of military intervention in politics, civilian regimes often distrust their security services, deliberately keeping them weak or divided as insurance against coups. With the recent movement toward democracy, a number of African states have begun to reform their system of civil-military relations, but much work remains to be done.³²

African militaries are seldom able to acquire modern equipment or undergo realistic, large-unit training. According to *The Monitor* of Kampala, "In most African armies, indiscipline, economic problems and laxity in management have relegated training to the back seat. It is not unusual to find entire brigades who have not fired a rifle since their basic training."³³ African militaries are particularly weak at maintenance of complex equipment; strategic mobility; advanced command, control, and intelligence; airpower; and, naval power. This is debilitating in the extraordinarily demanding nature of the African environment. Often the major equipment that African militaries do acquire is inappropriate and

expensive. Recently, for instance, Uganda sought T-55 main battle tanks while Zimbabwe bought six Hind attack helicopters from Russia and was seeking additional MiG fighter jets.³⁴ Sometimes African militaries do not have people qualified to operate and maintain the equipment they do have. Because of these problems, few African states other than South Africa and, perhaps, Nigeria, Ghana, Ethiopia, Angola, and Zimbabwe are capable of power projection or sustained, intense military operations despite a wealth of experience and leadership talent.³⁵

In general, the African security environment is one in which the Western approach to strategy which stresses nation-states, national governments, and national interests must be modified. Non-state factors, actors, and considerations are as important as national interests. Foreign policies and security strategies are often associated with a particular regime, group, or individual rather than the nation as a whole. They are often designed to augment or preserve the power of an individual, his clients, and his ethnic kinsmen rather than promote national interests. And a change of leadership sometimes brings a fundamental change in foreign policy and national security strategy. Personal ties and friendships as well as regional, ethnic, and religious connections help define strategic interests, objectives, and partners.

Because African foreign policy and national security strategy, like African politics in general, is imbued with flexibility and personalization, they tend to be dominated by informal methods and procedures. Shifting coalitions are the norm. Consensus-building among the powerful—a traditional political technique in much of Africa—is an important part of the regional security system. This emphasis on individuals and consensus-building rather than the application of power resources through formal structures means that consultations are a vital element in the African regional security environment. Such consultations can occur in a variety of traditional and nontraditional fora. Any actor seeking to shape the environment must be

adept at recognizing the available fora, organizing consultation, and building consensus.

The Nature of Conflict.

With a few exceptions such as Somalia's 1977 invasion of Ethiopia, Tanzania's invasion of Uganda in 1979, Zaire's invasion of Angola in 1975, the strategy of regional destabilization practiced by South Africa during the apartheid era, and the ongoing and exceptionally bloody war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, African states have seldom used overt military force against their neighbors. Instead they rely on indirect aggression and proxy violence. At various times this phenomenon has been associated with wars of decolonization and national liberation. Examples include support to the South West Africa People's Organization by Angola, support to the Zimbabwe African People's Union by Zambia, and support to the African National Congress by Tanzania and Zambia. At other times, proxy violence has been linked to ideological conflict such as South Africa's support to the Mozambique National Resistance and the Union for the Total Independence of Angola. Today, most indirect aggression or proxy violence is part of religious, ethnic, and personal conflict. This has included aid to successive waves of Congolese rebels by Uganda, Rwanda, Angola, and others; Burkina's apparent early sponsorship of Liberian warlord Charles Taylor; and support to the Sudanese People's Liberation Army by neighboring states.

While traditional, cross-border, state-on-state warfare is rare in Africa, internal conflict arising from a struggle for control of the government is common and thus constitutes a major source of instability and insecurity. In 1999, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Congo, Guinea Bissau, Rwanda, Somalia, Burundi, Uganda, and Angola were all wracked by internal war.³⁶ Other long-standing conflicts were in hiatus but capable of exploding at any time. At the root is the struggle for power and resources, but ideology or ethnicity was often used to

mobilize support and define “us” and “them.” What makes these internal conflicts particularly debilitating is the tendency for them to become internationalized. Refugee flows away from areas of violence can destabilize neighboring states whose ability or willingness to protect and sustain the refugees is often limited. By 1998, Africa was home to approximately 8.1 million refugees (out of a world total of 22 million).³⁷ Even internal refugee flows can cause a breakdown of basic services and great suffering. In Angola, for instance, a million people have fled fighting between the government and UNITA, crowding into already-overburdened cities and threatening the country with a humanitarian disaster.³⁸ When refugee problems are not solved quickly, they can eventually spark wider destabilization. It was largely the children of refugees who had fled Rwanda for Uganda in 1959 and 1961 who formed the insurgency that ultimately took power in Kigali.

Today the most pervasive security problem in Africa is what are called “complex emergencies” growing from the combination of weak states, ethnic tensions and the suppression of minorities, corrupt and dictatorial regimes, support for these regimes by international arms traders, chronic poverty and underdevelopment, and the debt burden.³⁹ Complex emergencies do not entail traditional, force-on-force warfare, but sustained, low intensity (albeit often brutal) violence involving militias, warlord armies, state forces and, sometimes, private security forces. They are sometimes linked to environmental problems like drought or desertification and, in turn, sometimes spawn other environmental problems like epidemic disease. Invariably, complex emergencies generate refugees who become both the victims of and pawns in the conflict.

Economic, Political, and Social Challenges.

The United States seeks an Africa where Americans can do business and cooperate in resolving shared problems, but where the need for direct U.S. military involvement is minimal. Within African states, the United States seeks

competent, accountable governance with regular, peaceful transfers of power and institutionalized methods for public input into open policymaking procedures. Rule of law should be the norm, with respect for human and minority rights. Economically, the United States would like to see sustainable, ecologically sound development which increases Africa's standard of living and makes African states more competitive in the global economy. In security terms, the United States seeks peace and stability, regional cooperation on shared problems, resolution of the conflicts that cause complex emergencies, solutions to Africa's many refugee problems, the building of stable civil-military relations with civilian control of the military, abandonment of proxy aggression, and development of military forces adequate to protect national security but which are not a burden on economic growth. Attaining these things will not be easy: the obstacles are immense.

Economically, most African states are emburdened by their past. As the European powers developed their African colonies, they did not seek to create self-sustaining economies with internal markets. Instead, they deliberately designed economies that would produce primary products for export but remain dependent on the colonial power for manufactured goods. With the exception of South Africa, no African state has been able to fully transcend its pervasive economic dependence on outsiders. To a large extent, African nations remain producers of primary products, whether agricultural ones or minerals like copper and petroleum. Since the mid-1970s, commodity prices have fluctuated wildly within the global economy with prices controlled by markets or organizations outside the producing nations. As a result, African states have only minimal control over their national income. This complicates economic planning. Few African states have well-developed internal markets so national infrastructures remain oriented toward export markets. The extensive intra-African trade of the pre-colonial period virtually ended, thus stifling any sort of regional

integration or division of labor. And, emphasis on extractive industries and primary products has done little to encourage the kind of educational establishments suited to the needs of developing countries.⁴⁰

Poor economic decisions by African leaders have exacerbated the problems they inherited. In contrast to the “Asian” economic model that stressed financial and budgetary discipline, encouragement of the private sector, slow building for long-term growth, and integration into the global economy first through labor-intensive manufacturing and then capital- and technology-intensive industry, most African states pursued alternative development strategies. Often, these were state-centric and—because of sensitivity to dependence—designed for self-sufficiency rather than integration into the global economy. This turned into a dead end and left Africa far behind other developing areas like Latin America or the Asia-Pacific once it became clear that only integration into the world economy could fuel sustained growth.

At the same time government bureaucracies were used more for patronage than for efficient administration. They thus tended to be exceptionally bloated, causing persistent and debilitating budgetary deficits. Industrial projects were fueled by external borrowing and controlled by the state, thus stifling the growth of the entrepreneurial class and generating inefficient industry, often large-scale “show” projects that did not match the needs or the capabilities of the local workers and managers. Borrowing was so extensive that debt servicing takes 25 percent of Sub-Saharan Africa’s export earnings.⁴¹ Nigeria spends between 35 and 40 percent of its national budget to service its debt.⁴² Of the 36 low income nations that the World Bank rates as “severely indebted,” 29 are in Africa; 23 of these have a debt burden greater than their gross national product.⁴³ Much of the capital that flows into Africa ends up in the overseas bank accounts of the region’s leaders. The capital held overseas by Africans is equivalent to 39 percent of gross domestic product, compared to 6 percent for Asia.⁴⁴ At the

same time, the weakness of the educational system and the persistent “brain drain”—the tendency of Africans educated in North America or Europe to stay there rather than return home—hindered economic growth and forced many foreign corporations to rely on their own managers and technicians rather than local ones.

Cultural factors also complicated economic development. African culture emphasizes obligation to family and kin. An African who acquires power, prestige, or wealth feels a moral obligation to use it to benefit family members, clients, or co-ethnics. To take one example, Félix Houphouët-Boigny, the long-time president of Côte d’Ivoire, lavished public money on projects in his home town of Yamoussoukro, a small and obscure place. These included a \$300 million Roman Catholic basilica bigger than St. Peter’s in Rome. Henri Konan Bédié, who followed Houphouët-Boigny as the Ivorian president, stopped work in Yamoussoukro and instead poured money into his home town of Daoukro, an equally small and obscure place.⁴⁵ The December 1999 coup which removed Bédié from office will undoubtedly end this spate of projects. This is symptomatic of a common pattern throughout Africa.

While the obligation to help clients and relatives provides social and economic support structure to its participants, it can lead to conflict and instability since everyone recognizes the immense stakes of political competition. Democracy works best when the stakes of the contest are at their least. When not only political power but wealth hinges on elections or political competitions, the tendency is for no-holds barred methods and for the losers to refuse to willingly accept defeat. At a minimum, the political spoils system leads to debilitating nepotism, corruption, and mismanagement which hinders development.⁴⁶ As David Passage notes, “Far more foreign exchange flows out of Africa each year into European, Asian, and American banks than is given to Africa by all foreign-assistance programs from all foreign sources combined! Africa is being robbed blind by its leaders . . .”⁴⁷ This is, perhaps, painfully

blunt, but the problem is real. To take one example, President Obasanjo of Nigeria estimates that between \$4 and \$5 billion was looted by the government of his predecessor.⁴⁸

Corruption, of course, is not limited to Africa. Suharto's Indonesia, Marcos' Philippines, Mexico under Salinas, and others have matched or surpassed anything seen in Africa. It was rampant in the United States during Prohibition and remains a problem, particularly among big city law enforcement agencies. But corruption is a major obstacle to African development.⁴⁹ Former Tanzanian Prime Minister Joseph S. Warioba and former Minister of Justice Frederick Werema, in a paper at an anti-corruption conference in Washington, DC, stated, "In many African countries corruption is very pervasive."⁵⁰ Even in states like Uganda, often considered a model for economic and political reform, corruption has become a serious burden, siphoning off as much money as the World Bank spends in the country each year.⁵¹ As Stuart Eizenstat, Under Secretary of State for Economics, Business, and Agriculture noted, corruption "is a wild card that increases uncertainty by making it difficult, if not impossible, to predict whether the return will justify the risk."⁵² At a time when Africa desperately needs capital to fuel development, foreign investment is dissuaded not only by Africa's lack of infrastructure, and educated workforce, and functioning legal systems, but also by the depths of corruption and nepotism. Put simply, Africa has not made itself an attractive economic partner when compared to other developing areas like Latin America or the Asia Pacific.

The combination of weak infrastructure, corruption, and a labor force that lags behind that in most other parts of the world in terms of education and health leaves Africa dependent on foreign aid. Africa has received the bulk of assistance disbursed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund over the past decades, and at least as much in governmental bilateral aid.⁵³ Dependence on foreign aid remains a tremendous liability. Aid, which

accounted for 10-20 percent of the Gross National Product (GNP) of many African nations by the 1980s, has been declining in part because donors, like lenders, have become frustrated by the paucity of tangible results from earlier transfers.⁵⁴ As David Rieff notes, "By most criteria, Africa has received more aid than any other region of the world. And yet, for the very tangible good it has done, aid has clearly had a far more minimal effect on Africa's development than either donor countries or recipients ever imagined."⁵⁵

Through a combination of colonialism's legacy, poor economic decisions, and the structure of the world economy, Africa has undergone a long-term degradation of its economic situation. Most countries are behind where they were in the 1960s. The 1980s in particular were a decade of regression. The few states that did experience economic growth saw it swallowed up by population increases. In the early 1990s, though, a number of African countries undertook serious reforms designed to stabilize their economies, liberalize exchange rates, encourage productivity in the private sector, and open the way for increased trade and investment. The results were significant, leading to what the U.S. State Department—in a very optimistic spin—called "a major economic transformation."⁵⁶ Yet even the U.N. admits that the recovery is fragile and any gains are easily eroded by bad harvests and downturns in the global market for primary products.⁵⁷ The World Bank estimates that it will take long-term annual growth of 8-9 percent to make significant progress in reducing poverty in Africa.⁵⁸ But growth has already begun to slow in Sub-Saharan Africa, from 4.2 percent in 1996 to 3.5 percent in 1997 and is expected to fall again in 1998 to 2.1–2.4 percent before rebounding to 3.5 percent in 1999–2000 under relatively favorable assumptions.⁵⁹ Today, as Marina Ottaway notes, "African countries remain marginal to all global trends."⁶⁰

The long-term prospects for economic development in Africa are not bright. Deforestation, overgrazing, and

harmful irrigation practices have turned vast areas of Africa into a wasteland.⁶¹ Population growth continues to outstrip expansion of Africa's educational and health care systems, thus limiting the quality of the workforce there when compared to other parts of the world. In today's globalizing economy, cheap labor is no longer enough. It is high quality labor that helps attract capital and thus fuels growth. Equally important, Africa's nearly obsessive fear of dependency and the tendency of the region's leaders to see political power as an opportunity to reward followers limit the extent to which it can undertake the steps that allow a nation to integrate into the global economy: developing transparent governance and finance, limiting state control of the economy, and building a noncorrupt, effective judicial system. As a result, Africa is falling further behind both the advanced parts of the world and the advancing parts.

African states also bear an unfortunate political legacy from the colonial period. Since borders were drawn according to European politics rather than African realities, most of Africa's new states included a mix of ethnic groups—some of which were often traditional enemies—while other ethnic groups were split between colonial empires and, later, between independent African states. Politics became a zero sum game where an electoral victory or seizure of power by a member of one ethnic group was seen as the opportunity to reward that group at the expense of others through the distribution of jobs and contracts to clients and family members.

European metropolises often centralized administrative, political, and economic power while suppressing political pluralism in their African possessions.⁶² At the time of independence, no African state had a firm foundation for pluralistic democracy. There were few good models of rule by law, an independent judiciary, a free press, or a vibrant civil society built on local government and civic or political organizations. Not surprisingly, most African states have, since independence, suffered what is called "personal rule" often by dictator who either seized power through force or

was elected and subsequently suppressed political opposition.⁶³ Most attempted to build at least a facade of democracy immediately after independence, but nearly every one saw open government crumble. These ranged from outright and undisguised dictatorships such as those of Idi Amin in Uganda, a dynasty of generals in Nigeria, or Mobutu Sese Seko in Zaire to those with thin veneers of democracy such as Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe or Daniel Arap Moi's Kenya. Only Botswana and Mauritius have sustained multiparty systems with regular and honest elections.

In the 1990s, Africa appeared to undergo a democratic awakening. Between 1990 and 1995, 38 of the then 47 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa had held competitive, multiparty national elections.⁶⁴ Where there were 5 African countries that could be described as democratic in 1989, there were 20 in 1998—progress that U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Susan E. Rice calls “slow but pulsing.”⁶⁵ But, as Richard Joseph notes, much of what looked like political reform in Africa was actually perception manipulation by leaders who recognize that continued international respectability and access to aid and credit are contingent on the appearance of democracy.⁶⁶ To do this, some held national conferences or elections with no plans for institutionalizing the transfer of power. Others found subtle ways of preserving personal power like Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe or Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, both whom dusted off the old notion of “single party democracy” used to justify personal rule in the 1960s. In fact, most African leaders “remain extremely suspicious of popular participation and even more so of party politics.”⁶⁷ So long as political power leads to control of national wealth and is seen as a means of building and sustaining a patronage network, real democracy will remain elusive.

There are social obstacles to the attainment of stability and prosperity in Africa as well. One of the most devastating is the AIDS epidemic. The numbers are simply numbing. According to Dr. Peter Piot, Executive Director of the Joint

U.N. Program on HIV/AIDS, 20 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa are infected with HIV or have AIDS.⁶⁸ This means 1 of every 13 people between the ages of 15 and 49 will die of the disease. By 1998, AIDS had surpassed malaria as the main cause of death in Africa.⁶⁹ Nigeria, Uganda, Malawi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Botswana, Zimbabwe, and South Africa are particularly hard hit. For instance, in Zimbabwe where the adult infection rate is estimated at 26 percent, there were 130,000 AIDS deaths in 1997 and nearly half a million AIDS orphans.⁷⁰ In Botswana, the infection rate is 25 percent, the 1997 death toll was 15,000 (in a country of 1,448,454) and there are 28,000 AIDS orphans.⁷¹ Life expectancy in Botswana is expected to drop from 61 years in 1990-95 to 47 years in 1995-2000 because of AIDS.⁷² And in South Africa—the continent's most developed country and its potential economic locomotive—the AIDS infection rate among adults is expected to climb from a debilitating 11 percent to a disastrous 18 percent by the year 2005.⁷³ Other estimates contend that by 2010 it could be 25 percent given the strong cultural barriers to the sorts of activities that prevent AIDS.⁷⁴ Some 1500 more South Africans are infected with AIDS every day.⁷⁵ The Health Minister of Nigeria estimated that 5.8 million Nigerians were HIV positive or had AIDS, and it was spreading at a rate of one person per minute.⁷⁶

The AIDS epidemic has been particularly damaging to development. Farms are idle and agricultural jobs remain unfilled because disease has devoured the work force.⁷⁷ The impact on professionals is equally dire. In Zimbabwe, whole businesses and university departments have closed as a result of AIDS deaths.⁷⁸ About a quarter of the police force in South Africa is HIV positive or has AIDS.⁷⁹ Ugandan President Museveni admitted frustration with spending money to train military officers, only to have most of them die of AIDS in a short period of time.⁸⁰ Estimates of HIV infection among regional armies include 50 percent in Congo and Angola, 66 percent in Uganda, 75 percent in

Malawi, and 80 percent in Zimbabwe.⁸¹ In some African countries, three-quarters of the military hospital beds are occupied by AIDS patients. This complicates the relationship between African militaries and the United States since it is difficult to find HIV-negative candidates to attend American schools and training.⁸² At best, Africa will take decades to recover from this since it must overcome cultural and perceptual factors that hinder the behavior modification that can stem the spread of AIDS, and then set about rebuilding its human infrastructure. Currently, there are few signs that corrective actions are being taken.

Population growth also continues to pose an impediment to economic growth in Africa. The World Bank's *World Development Report* for 1998/99 shows Africa with a 2.8 percent annual growth rate (using 1994 statistics)—nearly double the rate in the second-fastest growing continent of Asia. AIDS makes this worse by killing people in their most productive years, leaving whole villages composed solely of the very old or the very young. In many rural areas, population growth has led or is leading to environmental problems such as deforestation and desertification.⁸³ And, it is not only the aggregate amount of population, but the distribution that creates problems. Africa is experiencing an extensive migration to its cities where growing slum belts are a potential hotbed of violence, crime, and disease. While Africa is currently the least urbanized continent, its cities are expected to undergo "explosive growth in the future," thus overwhelming the ability of the governments to provide basic services.⁸⁴

Military Challenges.

African militaries are and will remain crucial political actors. "The question is not," according to William Gutteridge, "whether armies will participate in politics but to what extent and by what means."⁸⁵ But Africa needs continued reform of its civil-military relations. Developing healthier civil-military relations, though, is an extraordinarily complex process. Simply discouraging coups by

the military is not enough. In many cases, military intervention in politics is motivated by the belief on the part of officers that removal of a civilian regime is necessary to save the nation. Until African states have competent, ethical, accountable civilian rulers (and civil servants who can exercise control over the military), the armed forces will be tempted to intervene.⁸⁶ With the exception of the states like Zimbabwe and Angola, where the contemporary military can trace its roots to a liberation force, most African armed forces are the direct descendents of colonial security establishments. They were originally designed to suppress internal threats and sometimes are still seen as a tool for government control or for the military's own self-enrichment than as the protector of the citizenry. Even when such perceptions are not justified, many African militaries have an "image problem" deriving from the past. South Africa, which has by far the most elaborate and extensive program for reforming civil-military relations, may provide a model (or at least a source of ideas) for other African states.⁸⁷

In many cases, African armed forces are rife with internal divisions based on ethnicity, regionalism, religion, or clientelism. Despite the fact that many African officers have received education in American or European military schools and taken part in multinational peacekeeping operations, the professionalism of the armed services varies across the continent. In some, professionalism dominates. In others, the tendency is toward persistent political meddling, self-enrichment, and basing promotion and assignment on ethnicity or patronage. Noncommissioned officers and enlisted personnel tend to be very poorly trained and educated. And, nearly every African military is hindered by the absence of formal processes for linking national security objectives to military budgets and operational readiness. To take one example, in recent years the Zimbabwean military released large numbers of troops for long-term home leave because it could not afford to feed

them at the same time that it purchased new staff cars for all field and flag grade officers.⁸⁸

The security environment in which African militaries operate also poses serious and persistent challenges to stability. The continent is awash in arms and traversed by arms merchants, many of whom came from military or intelligence services in the former Soviet bloc or South Africa.⁸⁹ Some of the weapons available in Africa are the residue of the Cold War era when outside states plied their clients with military hardware. Others are more recent purchases from the world market. The demise of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War made military equipment available at discount rates.⁹⁰ When Ugandan President Museveni began looking for tanks in 1999, he found that T-55s were available for the equivalent of \$30,000—substantially less than the Toyota Land Cruisers and Land Rovers which are so popular in Africa.⁹¹ Similarly, the end of the Cold War led Western and Asian arms makers to seek new markets, including Africa.

Although it is impossible to accurately gauge the number of small arms in circulation in Africa, the number is enormous. For example, Mozambique may have imported as many as 6 million small arms during its civil war, while in South Africa there are 4.1 million licensed firearms in civilian hands and somewhere between 400,000 and eight million illegal ones.⁹² Africa also has the heaviest concentration of landmines in the world, with over 30 million.⁹³ The situation is so serious that the U.N. Security Council passed a resolution expressing “grave concern at the destabilizing effect of illicit arms flows, in particular of small arms, to and in Africa and at their excessive accumulation and circulation, which threaten national, regional and international security and have serious consequences for development and for the humanitarian situation in the continent.”⁹⁴

To further complicate matters, Africa has long attracted international mercenaries. Since independence, European

soldiers of fortune like “Mad Mike” Hoare and Bob Denard plied their trade on the continent.⁹⁵ Today, mercenarism is a still a factor. During the collapse of the Mobutu regime in Zaire, the dying dictator hired French, Belgians, South Africans, Bosnians, Serbs, Russians, and Ukrainians in a failed attempt to stave off Laurent Kabila’s rebel force.⁹⁶ A Belgian named Christian Tavenier—an old hand among the white mercenaries who worked in Africa—commanded some of the foreign forces.⁹⁷ The formation of a corporation called Executive Outcomes in 1989 added a new twist—home grown African mercenaries. Executive Outcomes was composed of combat veterans from the ex-South African Defence Force (SADF). It not only offered military advice and consulting, but also combat forces which saw action in Angola and Sierra Leone.⁹⁸ While Executive Outcomes officially closed shop at the end of 1998 (largely in response to South Africa’s passage of the Military and Foreign Assistance Act which prohibited South African citizens or corporations from providing mercenary services), a successor or successors may emerge.⁹⁹ In fact, there were reports in early 1999 that South African mercenaries simply relocated to Eastern Europe and continued to supply the Angolan rebels (who could pay with the proceeds of diamond sales).¹⁰⁰ This is simply the starkest example of a wider trend toward the privatization of security in Africa.¹⁰¹

The African security system has seen the persistence of armed separatist movements and violent ethnic conflict, now made even more dangerous by an increase in armed intervention by other African states. The idea that “the enemy of my enemy is my friend” has a long history in Africa as regimes often offer support and sanctuary to armed groups fighting an unfriendly neighbor. Initially, this was an aspect of the ideological and racial wars in the continent. South Africa, for instance, backed the Mozambique National Resistance (RENAMO), “Super-ZAPU” in Zimbabwe, and UNITA in Angola because other African states supported movements fighting against white minority rule like the African National Congress and Pan

African Congress in South Africa, the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) in Rhodesia, and the Southwest Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) in Namibia. Today, proxy aggression has escalated to the point that it is one of Africa's most pressing security problems.

As the African security environment has evolved, some African states have broken with the tradition of eschewing direct intervention in their neighbors. ECOMOG—a military observer group from the Economic Community of West African States—intervened in Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Guinea-Bissau, while a SADC force fought in Lesotho.¹⁰² The driving idea is that regional integration has reached the point that internal violence invariably spills over and endangers neighboring states. The most dangerous intervention of all has occurred in the drifting hulk of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). In many ways, that country—if “country” is now not too strong a word—is a distillation of all of the pathologies that hinder development, stability, and progress in Africa.¹⁰³ It was particularly ill-prepared for independence by its Belgian colonial masters and is an artificial political entity, more an amalgam of weakly related regions than a nation. Under Mobutu, it reached unsurpassed levels of corruption, keeping a land rich in natural resources among the poorest on earth. A new word was invented to describe the Zairian system of government: “kleptocracy”—a system where corruption and theft form the core of political leadership and administration. Zaire became the paragon of personal rule and repression, as well as the sort of dual economy where an extractive sector enriched a tiny elite while most people fended for themselves in the informal sector. In the security realm, Zaire could not defend itself, thus attracting intervention by outsiders interested in its wealth and actually inviting intervention to save the regime.¹⁰⁴

More recently, DRC has seen extensive direct intervention by other African states which, depending on one's political perspective, sought to solidify their own national security or carve out a profitable sphere of

influence. There were reports, for instance, that Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe—facing an imminent economic disaster at home—demanded preferential treatment for Zimbabwean corporations over South African ones by the DRC as a condition for military intervention in support of the Kabila government.¹⁰⁵ Rumors also spread that Uganda was seeking deals in gold and diamonds as payment for its support of the Congolese rebels.¹⁰⁶ The end result has been what Georgetown University Professor Herbert Howe calls “states as mercenaries.”¹⁰⁷

By the autumn of 1998, a number of African states were involved in the DRC conflict in one way or the other.¹⁰⁸ The result has been Africa’s first “great war.”¹⁰⁹ But it may not be the last. History may show that DRC was the first of many conflicts arising from the emergence of a new, post-Cold War geostrategic configuration in Africa, this time pitting primarily the Central African nations of Uganda and Rwanda, who support the Congolese rebels now attempting to overthrow Kabila, against Zimbabwe, Namibia, and Angola, who back the regime.¹¹⁰ To further complicate matters, an array of often-brutal rebel groups—including genocidal Rwandan Hutus—are also involved.¹¹¹ As South African Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad noted, the conflict in DRC has the potential to “explode into major conventional war involving many of the continent’s armies.”¹¹² In August 1999, such a possibility seemed horrifyingly close as Uganda and Rwanda—two former allies bound by common interests and personal ties between Museveni and Kagame—found their militaries in combat against one another.¹¹³ This escalated to the point that Museveni issued a public warning that he was prepared for full-scale war with Rwanda.¹¹⁴ And the “Congo effect” is having an adverse political and economic impact within the intervening states.¹¹⁵ Zimbabwe, for instance, appears to be having a very difficult time sustaining its military effort.¹¹⁶ Uganda’s defense spending for fiscal year 1999 was 30.6 percent above budget, in part because of the

intervention in DRC.¹¹⁷ The pattern of state failure followed by outside intervention is likely to cause wild fluctuations in African defense budgets unless some effective method for regional conflict resolution and peacekeeping emerges.

Opportunities.

Even given the immense challenges faced by African leaders, there has been a sort of “one step forward, a half step backwards” progress. But several “wild cards” could radically change current trends. One of the most dangerous would be an explosion of serious internal violence in Nigeria, Ethiopia, or South Africa. All have serious internal schisms and have experienced sporadic violence. In mid-1999, South Africa undertook a surprisingly peaceful election and transfer of power from Nelson Mandela to Thabo Mbeki. In 1999, Nigeria took another stab at democracy with the election of Olusegun Obasanjo as president. Secretary of State Albright designated Nigeria’s democratic transition one of four in the world which the United States has a vital interest in supporting (along with Colombia, Ukraine, and Indonesia). So far, the transition has been stable. President Obasanjo has faced political opposition and sporadic outbreaks of ethnic violence, but has pursued vital steps like deregulation of the economy and an anti-corruption campaign.¹¹⁸ According to Howard Jeter, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, “Nigeria now has the best chance in decades to turn a new democratic chapter in its history.”¹¹⁹

The political transitions in South Africa and Nigeria are very hopeful signs. Still, the December 1999 overthrow of an elected government in Côte d’Ivoire—long considered one of Africa’s most stable states—is a reminder that upheaval is never far away.¹²⁰ The potential for reversal and violence remains in Africa’s giants, particularly in Nigeria but also in South Africa. If major conflict did break out in any of Africa’s large states, the result could be disastrous, including major refugee flows, the spread of instability and violence to weaker neighbors, and a strong possibility of

some sort of international intervention, conceivably involving the United States. Similarly, there is also the possibility that other African states will be overwhelmed by the difficulties and tensions associated with economic and political reform. This could lead to regression toward even more personal rule and parasitic economic policies, and to many failed states, each generating its own internal power struggles and humanitarian disasters.

Other possibilities also merit consideration. Africa might see the power of multinational criminal cartels increase to the point that they control or threaten the state as in Colombia or Mexico. Certainly African governments would be susceptible to such an onslaught. Africa is also ripe for the emergence of some sort of charismatic new leader or new ideology that could dramatically re-draw the divisions and groupings in the continent. There is also the possibility that the current conflict in DRC may lead to a system of hostile subregional blocs.

On the other hand, Africa may continue along the road of political and economic reform. African leaders recognize that with their leverage over aid donors diminished by the end of the Cold War, only states undertaking reform can count on outside help. The currents of change in Africa are also driven by a true public awakening associated with the global communications revolution. Some Africans—at least in the cities—now know that reformers in places like the Philippines and Indonesia were able to spark change, and thus they are less willing to tolerate repression. As analyst John Makumbe writes:

The resurgence of civic protest in virtually all sub-Saharan African countries since the late 1980s has resulted, *inter alia*, in the transformation of the continent's governance and political systems, with civic groups in most of these countries demanding that their government be democratic, transparent and accountable to the people.¹²¹

The combination of a desire for change and frustration with the old models based on socialism, personal rule, and

parasitism may open the way for what South African Deputy President Thabo Mbeki calls the "African renaissance."¹²²

From an American perspective, there is one more opportunity that warrants consideration: U.S. influence in Africa is at an apogee. Because of America's ascendant political, economic, cultural, and military position, many Africans believe the road to stability and prosperity runs through Washington. The time is past when disdain for the United States was acceptable and expected among African leaders and intellectuals. At the same time, the large (and growing) number of African émigrés in the United States and the increasing influence of African-Americans enlarges the constituency for an active American role on the continent. While there is always the risk that Africans may become frustrated by the gap between what the United States *could* do and what it *will* do given the demands of world leadership, the potential for even greater American influence is real and tangible.

Any short-term gains to the United States that accrue from some sort of massive effort in Africa will be limited. Africa is a long-term project. Even the best-designed U.S. strategy will not reap benefits for decades. But the costs if Africa disintegrates in terms of the demand for humanitarian interventions or transnational threats that could arise would be substantial. Given this, an American national security strategy that attempts to gain maximum benefit from a limited expenditure of political, military, and economic resources makes sense.

American Strategy.

In a region as large as Sub-Saharan Africa, American strategy must identify and cultivate partners. Due to the limited and inconsistent nature of American involvement in Africa and suspicion of U.S. intentions on the part of African leaders, Washington has few long-standing relationships. U.S. security assistance has been important for some

countries, but not vital. With a handful like Botswana, the relationship has been fairly stable. With others, it has undergone great peaks and valleys as policies shift in Washington and regimes change in Africa. Zaire, Sudan, Somalia, and Nigeria, for instance, once received a fair amount of American aid and now receive little other than humanitarian support.

Today, Africans remain leery of old fashioned patron-client relationships with external powers but are interested in strategic partnerships. Identifying the best partners is thus vital to the refinement of American strategy. One way of doing this is to focus on the largest and most influential African states. Using this method, relations with South Africa and Nigeria are clearly the most important. South Africa is easy. It not only has the most advanced economy in Africa and one of the most professional and powerful militaries, but is also very attractive as a political partner being a genuine democracy with effective political institutions, working structures for human and civil rights, and one of the world's most respected leaders.¹²³ In fact, the South Africa-U.S. relationship is cordial and improving, particularly in the security sphere. During the Clinton Administration, Vice President Al Gore has represented the United States at what is called the U.S.-South African Binational Commission, which provides a regular framework for discussions between the two countries to manage cooperation and the expansion of relations. The February 1999 meeting of the Binational Commission was the sixth in the series.¹²⁴ At the same time, U.S. Secretary of Defense William Cohen and South African Defence Minister Joe Modise approved draft diplomatic papers to establish a legal framework for U.S. military activities in South Africa, beginning with support to the April 1999 *Blue Crane* multinational peacekeeping exercise.¹²⁵

While the relationship between the United States and South Africa is a vitally important one, it does have inherent limitations. Leaders of the Africa National Congress—

South Africa's ruling party—remember that they received no support from the United States during their years of struggle against apartheid. Bitterness and even hostility linger.¹²⁶ South Africa remains leery of being seen as Washington's surrogate or junior partner. This has led Pretoria to refuse any sort of participation in the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI). But South Africa is equally unwilling to step out on its own and assume a regional leadership role. The persistent gap between South Africa's capacity and its confidence often frustrates American policymakers. There are, though, sound political and psychological reasons for Pretoria's hesitancy. South Africa has great economic, political, and military potential, but is haunted by its history of racial repression and regional destabilization. Its current political leaders are still imbued with their decades-long tradition of dependence on the support and goodwill of others. They simply are not accustomed to the responsibilities and burdens of power. As a result, they go to great lengths to avoid antagonizing or intimidating other states. From the American perspective, the net result is an abdication of the potential for leadership. It is impossible to tell if or when this will change.

Nigeria poses even greater problems for American policymakers. By virtue of its size and military prowess, it has the potential to be an important partner. Through ECOMOG—the military intervention force of the Economic Community of West African States—Nigeria has played a central role in peacekeeping efforts in Sierra Leone and Liberia.¹²⁷ But the fact that Nigeria has been ruled by military governments for most of its history has prevented the maturation of this relationship. In addition, Nigeria's recent rulers have allowed their citizens to play a prominent role in the international drug trade. According to the U.S. State Department *Narcotics Control Strategy Report*:

Nigeria is the hub of African narcotics trafficking, and Nigerian poly-crime organizations continue to expand their role in narcotics trafficking worldwide. Nigerian trafficking organizations control the drug markets of Sub-Saharan Africa,

and operate drug distribution networks from strategic locations throughout the world. Nigerians transport a large portion of the heroin abused in the United States; they smuggle South American cocaine to Europe and Africa, especially South Africa, and they export marijuana—the only narcotic cultivated in Nigeria—to Europe and other countries in West Africa. The Government of Nigeria counter-narcotics programs have failed to materialize or have been ineffective. Efforts by the Nigerian Drug Law Enforcement Agency have been hindered by widespread corruption in law enforcement and other agencies and by the lack of clear policy guidance and substantive government support. Counter-narcotics legislation has been enacted, but has produced no prosecutions or convictions of major drug traffickers.¹²⁸

Even during the corrupt and repressive Babangida and Abacha regimes, the United States continued some degree of cooperation with Nigeria, particularly on multinational peacekeeping and in counternarcotics. If Nigeria's recent democratic reforms prove durable and the country diminishes the role of Nigerian narcotics traffickers—both of which are long shots given its history of failed democratic transitions and corruption—that country might become one of the United States' most important African partners. In Assistant Secretary of State Rice's words, "As South Africa did at the end of this century, Nigeria has the chance to do at the turn of the next century to better the lives of hundreds of millions of Africans at home and abroad."¹²⁹

Besides building and improving ties with Africa's regional powers, American strategy has also cultivated relations with a range of smaller states, particularly those which combine an interest in peacekeeping with some degree of economic and political reform. These include Botswana, Ghana, Senegal, Uganda, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, and Zimbabwe. A number of other states might join this group if they undertake changes in regional and internal policy.

Great Britain and France are valuable partners in Africa as well. Both retain a significant role in military training in their former colonies. In Zimbabwe, for instance, the British

Military Advisory and Training Team (BMATT) coordinates a region-wide program aimed at military cooperation and coordination, particularly on international peacekeeping. There is another BMATT in Ghana. France has similar programs, particularly in West Africa. The main effort is the *Renforcement des capacités africaines de maintien de la paix* (RECAMP) program.¹³⁰ This provides training, education, and equipment for peacekeeping. Although its success has been mixed, RECAMP attempts to operate through subregional organizations such as ECOWAS and SADC, and prepositions a fairly substantial amount of equipment for use by African peacekeeping forces.¹³¹ The first large-scale RECAMP training program, Operation *Guidimakha*, took place in Senegal in February 1998. This involved 3,600 troops from 11 African and Western countries. The Scandinavian countries are major aid donors and are becoming increasingly involved in peacekeeping. For instance, a U.N. Military Observer Course housed at the Zimbabwean Staff College and funded by Denmark draws students from all over Africa.¹³² Japan is a growing provider of aid in Africa. In the summer of 1999, for instance, Tokyo announced significant aid projects in Senegal, Tanzania, South Africa, Zambia, and Côte d'Ivoire.¹³³

Africans, remembering the weakness and dependency associated with colonial status, are intensely protective of their autonomy. This is why African leaders often appear ambivalent about relationships that Americans see as mutually beneficial. For the United States, this means that working with African states in multinational fora is often more effective than bilateral efforts. Actions like humanitarian interventions require legitimization by the U.N., the Organization of African Unity or, at least, one of Africa's major subregional organizations. Many African states even prefer that aid and assistance programs like ACRI take place through multilateral channels rather than bilateral ones.

President Clinton's strategy in Africa has focused on three key areas: enhancing security, promoting prosperity,

and promoting democracy.¹³⁴ The administration has identified three types of security threats which American strategy must counter. The first are transnational problems including state-sponsored terrorism, narcotics trafficking, international crime, environmental decay, and disease. Although weapons of mass destruction are not a problem in Sub-Saharan Africa today, the Clinton strategy supports South Africa's nuclear disarmament, the extension of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, and the establishment of the African Nuclear Weapons Free Zone. The second threat to security in Africa comes from "rogue states," particularly Libya and Sudan. Both support international terrorism and Libya has actively sought weapons of mass destruction and conventional military capabilities that threaten its neighbors. The third threat is the most pervasive of all: violence growing from internal political instability in places like Angola, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Congo-Brazzaville. A fourth threat has been added by the seemingly irrational Ethiopia-Eritrea war where two poverty-stricken countries are fighting over a small piece of barren land.¹³⁵

The Clinton Administration's approach to these threats has been to establish partnerships to strengthen African security mechanisms. The most important program has been ACRI.¹³⁶ This is a scaled-down version of a more ambitious program called the African Crisis Response Force, proposed in late 1996, which sought to create an African military organization that could respond to complex emergencies with only limited outside help. For a variety of reasons, this met with a less than overwhelming reception when announced by Secretary of State Warren Christopher. Despite the rebuff, the Clinton Administration continued to pursue the idea of an organic peacekeeping capability in Africa, eventually settling on ACRI through which U.S. Army Special Forces provided training and limited nonlethal equipment to African militaries.¹³⁷ The emphasis is on commonality of communications, basic soldiering skills, and specific military activities required in

peacekeeping with the ultimate objective of helping African military units meet U.N. standards in peacekeeping and humanitarian relief practices. By 1999, units from Senegal, Ghana, Uganda, Malawi, Mali, and Benin had received ACRI training.¹³⁸ ACRI-trained units had participated in peacekeeping in Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, and the Central African Republic.¹³⁹ Perhaps more importantly, some of Africa's major powers were leaning toward participation. President Moi of Kenya had committed his nation to engagement in the ACRI process.¹⁴⁰ And American officials had begun to encourage Nigerian involvement.¹⁴¹

During its initial phase, ACRI was often criticized for its "one size fits all" approach. The training dealt solely with basic soldier skills and peacekeeping activities. While this was appropriate for some African militaries, others such as Kenya, South Africa, and Ghana were advanced to the point that they did not need such rudimentary training. By 1999, ACRI had begun to mature and expand.¹⁴² Efforts were underway to tighten the connections between ACRI and the exercise programs run by the unified commands, and to augment coordination with the training offered by European states, particularly the United Kingdom, France, and Belgium. In addition, ACRI is developing programs to offer training in higher command and control rather than simply battalion-level training and improving cooperation with Africa's major sub-regional organizations, SADC, ECOWAS, and the East African Community.

In 1998, the Clinton Administration announced the formation of the African Center for Security Studies (ACSS). ACSS will be a senior level program to educate both military and civilian leaders on topics such as civil-military relations, national security decisionmaking, and defense planning and management. According to the White House, "The goal is for ACSS to be a source of academic, yet practical instruction in promoting the skills necessary to make effective national security decisions in democratic governments, and engage African leaders in a substantive dialogue about defense policy planning in democracies."¹⁴³

The first ACSS course was held in Dakar, Senegal in November 1999.¹⁴⁴ The second will be in Botswana in June 2000. After several years of rotating seminars, decisions will be made about building a permanent school.

The second precept of the Clinton strategy in Africa is promoting prosperity. The basic idea is that a prosperous and growing Africa would be a better partner for the United States on both economic and security issues. And, the administration believed, economic growth requires integration into the global economy and market-oriented economic reforms.¹⁴⁵ The core program is the President's Partnership for Economic Growth and Opportunity in Africa which combines technical assistance to help liberalize trade and investment, an anti-corruption initiative, extinguishing bilateral concessional debt, and organizing a U.S.-Africa Economic Cooperation Forum.¹⁴⁶ It also calls for the Overseas Private Investment Corporation to dedicate three quarters of a billion dollars to encourage private sector investment in Africa.¹⁴⁷ The Clinton Administration has lobbied Congress for passage of the African Growth and Opportunity Act.¹⁴⁸ This legislation would grant special trade benefits to Sub-Saharan African countries which met economic reform requirements. It passed the House of Representatives in 1998 but was blocked in the Senate by representatives of textile producing states. It was re-introduced in 1999 with Assistant Secretary of State Rice calling it "the single most important piece of legislation we have considered on Africa in more than a decade."¹⁴⁹ The third precept of the Clinton strategy is promoting democracy. The rationale is that,

In Africa as elsewhere, democracies have proved more peaceful, stable and reliable partners with which we can work and are more likely to pursue sound economic policies.¹⁵⁰

The administration encourages democracy and rule of law, particularly in key countries like Nigeria, Kenya, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. It also helps with the running of elections in countries like Ghana, Mozambique,

and Tanzania, and has a number of other programs to consolidate and sustain democracy. But while the Clinton strategy places a high premium on democracy and human rights, it also, in the words of Assistant Secretary of State Rice, stays "actively engaged even in flawed, imperfect democracies."¹⁵¹ The key question is how hard to push the truly recalcitrant governments. In general, the Clinton Administration has eschewed sanctions in all but the most egregious cases such as Sudan and Nigeria. Most of the time, it is willing to overlook the absence of political reform in nations that cooperate on other issues, such as Zimbabwe.

The U.S. military plays an important role in implementing the Clinton strategy in Africa. In fact, military-to-military contacts have increased dramatically during the past 2 years.¹⁵² Most of the continent is in the U.S. European Command's (EUCOM) area of responsibility. The U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) is responsible for Egypt, Sudan, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, Ethiopia, Djibouti, and the Seychelles. The U.S. Pacific Command is responsible for Mauritius, Comoros, and Madagascar. Cape Verde and Sao Tome fall within the area of responsibility of the U.S. Atlantic Command (but EUCOM has assumed security assistance responsibility). Since EUCOM deals with 35 African countries, it is by far the most important. U.S. military involvement focuses on training, security assistance, humanitarian and peace-keeping operations, and noncombatant evacuations.¹⁵³

The U.S. military fosters professional and democratically-oriented militaries, and supports regional approaches to peacekeeping and humanitarian crises. This is done through bilateral security assistance programs, ACRI, regional exercises, support to the OAU Crisis Management Center, and to subregional organizations like SADC and ECOWAS. When humanitarian crises do occur, the United States seeks to stabilize the situation while helping other states and agencies take over the mission. To prepare to provide a prompt response to humanitarian

crises, EUCOM and CENTCOM components conduct joint task force (JTF) exercises with African humanitarian relief scenarios. The U.S. military also maintains relationships with international organizations that might participate in an African disaster.

Regional engagement activities in Africa include:

- Combined exercises such as Military Medical Exercises in Africa (MEDFLAG) and the FLINTLOCK regional program which is a Joint Chiefs of Staff-sponsored exercise designed to promote regional cooperation.¹⁵⁴

- Combined training including Joint Combined Exchange Training (JCET) exercises in which U.S. Special Forces train with host nation forces.

- The African Crisis Response Initiative.

- Combined education including the African Center for Security Studies.

- Military contacts including flag officer visits, maritime engagement programs such as port calls, civil affairs democracy seminars, civil-military relations mobile training teams, chaplain programs, assistance to the OAU Crises Management Exercise, steps to enhance interoperability with potential coalition partners, including the United Kingdom and France.

- Security assistance programs including foreign military financing (FMF); foreign military sales (FMS); foreign military sales—training (FMS-T); direct commercial sales (DCS); International Military Education and Training (IMET), which sends officers and noncommissioned officers from 31 African countries to American military schools; expanded IMET, which provides training for other sorts of security officials; and the excess defense articles (EDA) program.

- Humanitarian assistance programs including Humanitarian Assistance Program—Excess Property (HAP-EP); Humanitarian Civil Assistance Program (HCA)

in which U.S. military units on overseas training and operational deployments conduct humanitarian projects such as well drilling and school construction; Humanitarian Assistance Program (HA), which provides funding for humanitarian projects; and demining activities.

There are other combined exercises as well. In May 1999, for instance, an exercise aimed at enhancing Kenya's ability to patrol its coastline and detect drug traffickers involved the U.S. Coast Guard as well as the Kenyan Navy, military police, Wildlife Service, and Revenue Authority.¹⁵⁵ All of these exercises and programs are prioritized according to the capability of the partner state to help meet American objectives.

Strategic Adjustments.

Current American national security strategy in Africa is not seriously flawed. Given the limited strategic resources that the United States can (or should) expend there, the narrowness of public concern for the continent, and the vacillations in concern among American political leaders, the strategy that emerged after the Cold War adequately protected American national interests in Sub-Saharan Africa. It could, however, be refined. This is vital if the United States is to capitalize on its current position to help build a more stable and prosperous Africa.

Grand Strategy. Ultimately, Africa's economic future depends on two things. First is the continuation of reform to make Africa attractive to global capital. This entails controlling or eradicating corruption and nepotism, building effective legal systems, implementing transparent government budgeting procedures, and integrating local banking systems with global ones. These are not easy steps and will continue to encounter resistance. Because Africa's colonial past is so recent, sensitivity to autonomy and sovereignty remain intense. But in today's globalizing economy, some degree of autonomy and sovereignty *must* be surrendered if a state is to prosper.¹⁵⁶ A state can choose

poverty-stricken autonomy or integration with at least the potential for prosperity. Africans must come to grips with this. The second determinant of Africa's future is success at cultivating the continent's own entrepreneurs. This includes both business entrepreneurs who must make and lead an economic revolution, and political entrepreneurs who must help build a vibrant civil society that can counterbalance the power of the government and provide a training ground for future leaders. States which prosper will be those which support their entrepreneurs by education, providing access to venture capital, opening markets by ending state monopolies and cronyism, and building legal systems to mitigate the risk inherent in entrepreneurship.

The United States should actively support the growth of African entrepreneurs, both economic ones and political ones. This is not something best done through government-to-government mechanisms. The Clinton policy reflects this. Rather than follow the old, failed procedures of foreign assistance, the administration has sought to integrate Africa into the world community through trade preferences and debt relief. This is a useful start, but there should be a "micro" level to this strategy to support the "macro" level. The United States should help build Africa's economic private sector both by encouraging trade and investment, and by finding ways for the American private sector to provide business and entrepreneurial education, training, and advice throughout Africa.

Since integration into the global economy is a prerequisite for economic success, Washington should, in conjunction with friends in Europe and Asia, develop a comprehensive program to help Africa become more "wired."¹⁵⁷ This would entail a wide range of educational programs as well as supporting private sector efforts to build information infrastructures. Efforts are underway in this arena. In October 1999 the Global Information Infrastructure Commission—Africa, which is a forum for African private sector leaders to advance their region's

information infrastructure, held its first meeting in Addis Ababa.¹⁵⁸ Hopefully, this will be a first step in a long-term process. At a broader level, the Center for International Private Enterprise, an affiliate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce that promotes private enterprise and market institutions, should become involved in Africa. So far this organization has focused on Latin America, Eastern Europe, and the former Soviet Union, but has the potential to support American strategy in Africa as well.¹⁵⁹ A coherent American strategy for Africa would help link and support these private-sector initiatives.

This same general rule holds with the building of civil society. American strategy should find a way to encourage the immensely rich civil sector in the United States to provide assistance and advice to African counterparts. American community and local political organizers are best-equipped to assist Africans with these sorts of functions. Work done by organizations like the International Republican Institute and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs is vital and should form an integral element of American policy.¹⁶⁰ The same holds for outreach efforts by American trade unions and civic organizations of all types. Organizations like the Center for Civil Society International also do very important work encouraging collaboration between voluntary organizations in the United States and their counterparts in the former Soviet Union.¹⁶¹ Something similar is needed in Africa.

In general, U.S. strategy on the continent must find creative ways to link private and nongovernmental initiatives with official actions. Such an approach would be difficult to bring to fruition. Strategy usually entails government-to-government relationships. American policymakers still think terms of what the U.S. Government can provide African governments. Certainly government actions must be central. Africa will never attain stability and security, for instance, without major debt relief. The U.S. Government can and must take the lead on this. But, at

the same time, Africa cannot build prosperous stable democracies without vibrant private sectors of the economy and active civil societies. These things need jump starts. A creative, truly “out of the box” American grand strategy that encourages them could prove significant, perhaps even decisive.

Defense Strategy. In the defense realm, the United States should move toward deeper ties with a more narrow range of partners. African states that meet stringent conditions, particularly *real* political and economic reform (not “one man, one vote, one time”) including the regular transfer of political power, effective rule by law, and serious progress on stifling corruption, should have access to a wider array of security assistance. Certain activities should remain open to all African states, including participation in the African Center for Security Studies and cooperation on humanitarian relief. For other things, the bar should be raised higher. Those who meet the conditions also should have trade preferences, debt relief, economic assistance, and ready access to IMET and other types of military engagement activities. The United States might even consider some sort of limited security guarantees for partners who meet the conditions and desire them.

The United States should also use every means available to encourage Africans to abandon proxy aggression. States that practice it should face international sanctions. The United States should lead efforts in the U.N. to have proxy aggression treated the same as overt cross-border aggression. The United States should also encourage its Africa partners to explore the idea of formal mutual security and nonaggression pacts. These things have been absent from the region largely because African states have clung to the notion that the OAU already institutionalizes sovereign equality and nonaggression. This is simply fiction. Africans would greatly benefit from greater formalization of the principles which undergird the OAU. While this would not immediately purge proxy aggression from the continent, it could help deter it.

Unfortunately, the Clinton Administration appears to be moving toward actual involvement in proxy aggression rather than discouragement of it. In November 1999, administration officials, led by Assistant Secretary of State Susan Rice, developed a plan to provide food assistance to the Sudan People's Liberation Army. While this new policy was explained on humanitarian grounds, it is widely seen as an attempt to pressure and isolate the government in Khartoum similar to the "Reagan Doctrine" while provided aid to anti-communist guerrillas in Latin America and Africa.¹⁶²

Instead of supporting insurgents, the United States should discourage them. This should include helping its African partners to develop better doctrine and training for counterinsurgency. The prime security threat faced by African militaries is some form of internal insurgency, often with external sponsorship. The United States, along with many militaries in Europe, Asia, and Latin America, learned that an insurgency cannot be countered solely with military means. Counterinsurgency requires a holistic strategy with political and economic components designed to augment the legitimacy of the government and transform the military into the protector of the nation's citizens.¹⁶³ African militaries are far behind the rest of the world in understanding this. A refined American security strategy for Africa should stress counterinsurgency strategy and make use of advisers from other states who have been successful at it.

At the same time, the U.S. military should reorganize the way it allocates responsibility for Africa. Currently, Africa is a poor stepchild in several of the unified commands which are responsible for American military activities. Since EUCOM focuses—logically enough—on Europe and the Central Command on the Persian Gulf, attention to Africa is erratic. The commanders of EUCOM and CENTCOM have little time to devote to the region and only pay it serious attention during crises. By concentrating responsibility for U.S. military activities in Africa into one

unified command, creating a subunified command, and giving a single flag officer full responsibility for the region, attention might be less fleeting.

The United States must also explore the creative use of contractors in African security. Because of Africa's historical experience with mercenaries, its leaders are extremely sensitive to the privatization of security functions. Yet Africa is a region where contractors can help compensate for the weaknesses of state security services, particularly in high-skill areas like intelligence analysis, logistics, engineering, and medical services. There will be any number of instances where American money would be most effectively spent by hiring contractors to substitute either for African militaries or for the American military. As one example, the Alexandria, Virginia-based firm of Military Professional Resources Incorporated (MPRI), which is composed primarily of retired U.S. military officers, is developing and implementing the curriculum of the African Center for Security Studies. MPRI, under contract to the U.S. Department of State and United States Agency For International Development, has also formed a team to build a detailed action plan for the transformation of the Nigerian military and Ministry of Defence.¹⁶⁴ In the American response to the conflict in Rwanda in 1994, contractors like Brown and Root Corporation played a major role in providing relief services, and thus lessening the burden on the American military. The key is to be very careful. MPRI and Brown and Root are above reproach.¹⁶⁵ If the United States does rely more on contractors in Africa, it must assure these high standards remain in place.

Refinement of American strategy also demands a more astute understanding of Africa. Conflict there is seldom about ideas or ideology, and only about ethnicity or identity in an indirect way. Nearly every African conflict is a struggle for resources. As repugnant as the idea is, the most effective way to quell African conflicts may be to buy out the leaders of warring sides. While this could probably not be done literally, it might be possible to offer faction leaders

things like training and loans which would allow them to satisfy their desire for material reward in a nonviolent fashion. The treatment of Joshua Nkomo in Zimbabwe might serve as a model for this. Following the end of the war there, Nkomo was encouraged to withdraw from politics through a series of actions that allowed him to become extremely wealthy—by some accounts, the richest person in the country.¹⁶⁶ Of course, the ultimate resolution of a conflict also requires addressing the needs that motivated the rank and file—any conflict resolution package must include focused development assistance from some source. But leaders who do not have their personal desires (or personal greed) sated will often return to the field at some point in time.

Shaping. For the U.S. military, the key to shaping activities in Africa is professional military education. Nothing can bring larger rewards for a smaller investment. The money that the United States spends on African professional military education helps African states improve civil military relations and build more effective security forces, but also establishes working relationships between Americans and Africans that are invaluable during coalition operations. The prime complaint that most Africans have about American professional military education is its limited availability. There are simply too few slots at the American staff and war colleges for Africans.¹⁶⁷ Admittedly, there are good reasons for this: the United States has many friends and allies around the world and only so many seats in its military schools, but if the efforts in Africa were focused on a handful of true partners and provided regularly, the impact of professional military education would be augmented. In addition, the United States should follow the example of Great Britain and France, and supply an instructor to some of the Africa war and staff colleges. South Africa, Ghana, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Côte d'Ivoire (pending the return of civilian government), and Kenya would all be good candidates.

ACRI and ACSS are useful means of shaping the African security environment, but both need refinement and expansion. ACRI needs continued salesmanship. This should be “bottom up” as well as “top down.” While Ambassador Marshall McCallie, who headed the ACRI Interagency Working Group from 1997-1999, and the U.S. defense attaches in Africa have done yeoman work in explaining ACRI, the effort must continue. Both the Department of Defense and the Department of State should sponsor ACRI (or, better yet, regional peacekeeping) seminars or conferences throughout Africa. Phrased differently, ACRI needs a broad based “engagement plan” with both international and domestic components. ACRI should also expand training to include support to civilian officials during natural disasters and pandemic disease as well as peacekeeping.

The next step should be a program to augment the ability of Africans to plan, command, and control both humanitarian relief and peacekeeping operations. No African country currently has the capability to deploy a headquarters for a multi-brigade operation in any but the most peaceful environments.¹⁶⁸ Developing such capability could begin with a regular series of wargames, staff exercises, and simulations involving a range of African participants (both military and civilian) as well as Americans and Europeans. American facilities such as the Army’s Battle Command Training Program, simulation programs run by private corporations, and the Army’s Center for Strategic Leadership at Carlisle Barracks could provide the appropriate venue for this. Regular staff talks and conferences involving Africans, Europeans, and Americans could pave the way. African countries generally lack the funds to support such conferences, so their external partners should be willing to pick up the tab.

Even now American strategists should plan for the future development of ACSS. One fruitful line might be to think of ACSS as the first college in an African “democratic university.” In other words, the United States (and its

European allies) should consider ACSS-like schools for law enforcement, economics, and political organization in addition to defense planning and management. All of these could be affiliated colleges of some sort of overarching university. The U.S. Department of Defense and the Congress must sustain support for ACSS and consider expanding it so that African states can build the expertise they need in the defense arena. To push the process even further, the United States should run regular seminars for African defense scholars and civilian defense officials. Publication of a journal dealing with African security affairs would be helpful. And, the United States should consider including African civilians as students in its war colleges. At a more fundamental level, the United States must make a long-term commitment to ACSS. So far the Clinton Administration has not given it a strong institutional sponsor to manage it and, more importantly, serve as its advocate in the budgetary process.

The United States should actively support African-led and designed programs to improve regional cooperation in peacekeeping even if we have little control over them. A key form of support could be funding for transporting the "players" from African countries to exercise sites. The next step would be to begin augmenting the ability of African militaries to provide their own logistics, mobility, and intelligence support. They could develop the capacity to plan, lead, and control even more complex peacekeeping operations within 5 years if given appropriate assistance. It will be at least 10 years before most African militaries could deploy and sustain peacekeeping forces for extended periods of time far beyond their national borders without assistance.

The United States should actively pursue the greater involvement of Army National Guard units in shaping the African security environment. Army Special Forces were precisely the right units to provide the first phase of ACRI training, but it is time for a shift. Involving Army National Guard units would be particularly beneficial because they

are experienced at supporting civilian authorities during disasters and crises—specifically the skills African militaries need. The National Guard State Sponsorship Program through which the Army National Guard of a specific state develops a partnership with the military of a state from the former Soviet Union should be extrapolated to Africa. This would not only help expand the constituency for Africa within the United States, but would also help African nations better understand the advantages of a military that includes a strong reserve component. In fact, American strategy in Africa should actively encourage nations there to consider moving toward a military with a small professional cadre and a larger reserve component, both as a means of stretching defense budgets and improving civil-military relations.

Responding. Americans often have a difficult time understanding African conflicts, in part because our Clausewitzian mindset leads us to believe that all organized violence is directed at political goals. That is only partially true for many of Africa's brutal, low-level wars where violence is used as much for group bonding and psychic fulfillment as for the attainment of political objectives. In places like Sierra Leone and Rwanda, passion totally subsumes "reason." Even for the warlords who make and lead such wars, the goals are less purely political than economic. Political power and military strength bring wealth which can be used both for personal consumption and to fuel a patronage network. The American approach to Africa's wars is to encourage a negotiated settlement and political power sharing. This seldom works if the greed of the warlords is not sated. Buying off rebel leaders—however repugnant—might be more effective and efficient.

One thing about Africa is certain: the United States will be asked to participate in intervention of one sort or the other. When this happens, Washington should participate in operations that: (1) are authorized by a resolution of the U.N. or OAU; and, (2) seek to restore a democratically elected government, create sanctuaries for humanitarian

relief in a conflict where no cease-fire exists, or enforce a cease-fire and negotiations in a traditional "Chapter VI" style peacekeeping operation. In nearly all cases, American military support to such interventions should take the form of planning, intelligence, training, logistics, and mobility rather than the use of U.S. combat forces.

Given the likelihood of African interventions, the EUCOM should establish a permanent joint task force (JTF) to provide support (preferably under a subunified command). This JTF should have standing liaisons with the CENTCOM, European states interested in Africa, international organizations and nongovernmental organizations active in Africa, and as many African states as can provide them. It should have two missions. The first would be to augment regional understanding and cooperation before crises occur by making maximum use of educational, training, and research resources of the U.S. military. To do this, the JTF should: (1) hold wargames, conferences, and exercises tailored to the needs of African militaries and focusing on command and control of humanitarian relief and peacekeeping operations; (2) assist with African peacekeeping exercises like the "bird" series held by SADC (*Blue Hungwe*, *Blue Crane*); (3) hold an annual "reunion" of African graduates of American military schools in order to renew and strengthen professional working relationships; and (4) publish a journal (in both English and French) that focuses specifically on military professionalism, civil military relations, and multinational operations in Africa. The second mission of the JTF would be control of American military involvement in actual interventions.¹⁶⁹

Conclusions.

In the coming decade, Africa is likely to move one step forward and one step backwards, often at the same time. Some nations will take strides in their quest for stability, prosperity, and democracy by taking the steps necessary to integrate into the globalizing economy. Others will regress.

There will always be a tendency in the United States to write the continent off, in part because its problems are complex and difficult for Americans to understand. This would be a mistake—a small investment of strategic resources in Africa has the potential to pay big dividends.

But so long as American strategy focuses purely on government-to-government initiatives and so long as it treats all African states except the most egregious abusers of human rights as equally deserving partnership, its impact will be diluted, distorted, and muted. A strategy of conditional engagement would more effectively use the limited strategic resources that the United States can expend in Africa, but would generate criticism from both Africa and from elements of the American Africanist community. African states have long resisted attempts to “divide” them. For instance, when the Clinton Administration planned a March 1999 conference on African economic development and technological cooperation, it initially invited only select countries, particularly those committed to economic liberalization and free trade. But African leaders objected, arguing that it is “inappropriate” for the administration to “pick favorites.”¹⁷⁰

In reality, it is perfectly appropriate. So long as the United States bends to African pressure to treat all states there equally, U.S. policy will provide only limited incentive for those truly committed to reform. The United States has a perfect right to establish the conditions for assistance by whatever criteria it deems appropriate. The United States has no moral obligation to provide assistance or partnership, and no nation has a “right” to it. By increasing the rewards for real economic and political reform, a strategy of constrained engagement would better encourage it. Those African states truly committed to reform must develop the courage to weather the criticism that their foresight provokes from their regressive brethren. U.S. policy should assist this through conditional engagement. If this provokes criticism, so be it.

In the military realm, Africa will remain an arena where relatively low-cost military-to-military contacts, if done wisely, in a spirit of partnership, and consistently, can have major payoffs. Africa is not a warfighting theater; military professional education will remain the prime resource of American security policy. The United States should use it to maximum benefit, adopting programs that reward African military partners who continue on the path to reform and severing ties with those who do not. At the same time, the United States should press for the rationalization of African militaries, including adoption of a reserve based force. And, U.S. strategy should assure that African civilian leaders have the education and tools to exercise effective oversight.

During the last year of his presidency, President Clinton elevated African issues on his list of national priorities.¹⁷¹ In December 1999, the American representative to the U.N., Richard C. Holbrooke, announced a series of new initiatives designed to help resolve ongoing African crises.¹⁷² In January 2000, Vice President Al Gore presided over a session of the U.N. Security Council which was to deal with the spread of AIDS in Africa—the first time that body ever focused on a health issue.¹⁷³ At about the same time, Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright was participating in discussions on the formation of a U.N. peacekeeping force to help implement a settlement in Congo.¹⁷⁴

These are useful steps, but the refinement of American strategy in Africa continues to face pressing problems. It remains very difficult to convince Congress to support activities in Africa. For instance, at the same time that Secretary Albright was participating in the talks designed to end the conflict in Congo—which is sometimes called “Africa’s first world war”—Senator John Warner (R-VA), chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, stated that the United States should focus on conflict resolution in the Balkans and reject further commitments in Africa.¹⁷⁵ This illustrates the fragility of congressional interest in Africa.¹⁷⁶ In the House of Representatives, African-American members usually provide a foundation of support.

But in the Senate, Africa is a tough sell. When there are champions for Africa like Senator Dick Clark (D-IA) in the 1970s or Senator Paul Simon (D-IL) in the 1980s, interest and support are somewhat higher. In the absence of such a champion, Africa receives very little attention and the architects of America's Africa strategy must worry about sustaining even successful programs like ACRI.

But even the best designed American strategy for Africa backed by constant effort will not work miracles. Only African leaders can determine whether the continent moves toward prosperity and stability or disintegrates into further misery. But with a small investment of strategic resources, the United States might be able to tip the scales, at least in key countries. A strategy of persistent, conditional engagement would help. Africa has a great need for creative approaches to its problems, and a refined American strategy can help provide them. *Amani iwe kwenu.*

ENDNOTES

In 1998 the Foreign Broadcast Information Service replaced the paper version of its reports with Internet reports. This study includes citations to both the old and new versions.

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2. *A National Security Strategy for a New Century*, Washington, DC: The White House, October 1998, pp. 54-57. (Henceforth *National Security Strategy 1998*.) For the sake of brevity, the word "Africa" will be used throughout this manuscript to mean "Sub-Saharan Africa."

3. *United States Security Strategy for Sub-Saharan Africa*, Washington, DC: Department of Defense, Office of International Security Affairs, August 1995, p. 3.

4. For a comprehensive study of this tendency, see Peter J. Schraeder, *United States Foreign Policy Toward Africa: Incrementalism, Crisis and Change*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994. Also useful is Michael Clough, *Free At Last? U.S. Policy Toward*

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6. Susan E. Rice, "United States Interests in Africa: Post-Cold War, Post-Apartheid," the 1999 Bram Fischer Memorial Lecture, Rhodes House, Oxford, England, May 13, 1999, reprinted at http://www.state.gov/www/policy_remarks/1999/990513_rice_oxford.html

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10. For background on the two organizations, see "Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)," Fact Sheet Released by the U.S. Department of State Bureau of African Affairs, March 4, 1998; and "The Southern Africa Development Community," Fact Sheet Released by the U.S. Department of State Bureau of African Affairs, December 4, 1997. For analysis, see Funmi Olofinakin, "Rethinking Regional Security in Africa: An Analysis of ECOWAS and SADC," *Strategic Review for Southern Africa*, Vol. 20, No. 2, November 1998, pp. 44-75; and Michelle Pitts, "Sub-Regional Solutions for African Conflict: The ECOMOG Experiment," *The Journal of Conflict Studies*, Vol. 19, No. 1, Spring 1999, pp. 49-68.

11. While linguistic divisions were significant before and immediately after decolonization (which stretched from the late 1950s to the 1990s, peaking in the 1960s), they are less so now.

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14. This assessment is based on the author's discussion with African military officers and defense officials during visits to Mali, Burkina Faso, and Senegal in 1998.

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157. On the obstacles to including Africa in the information revolution, see Lewis Machipisa, "Africa Lags Behind In the Information Race," *Daily Mail and Guardian* (Johannesburg), October 28, 1999 (electronic download).

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the private sector in the development of a diverse, affordable and accessible information infrastructure; (2) Promote involvement of developing countries in the building and utilization of truly global and open information infrastructure; and, (3) Facilitate activities and identify policy options which foster effective applications of telecommunications, broadcasting and information technologies and services. See <http://www.giic.org/mission.html>.

159. See the CIPE web page at <http://www.friends-partners.org/oldfriends/ccsi/csusa/business/prventpr.html>

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166. Discussions between the author and U.S. diplomatic personnel in Zimbabwe and Washington, DC.

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