

**“Enormous opportunities” and “hot frontiers”: Sub-Saharan Africa in U.S.
grand strategy, 2001-present’**

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In the immediate post-Cold War years, the United States virtually renounced all interest in Sub-Saharan Africa. With the end of the cold war superpower confrontation, Africa – as a site of ideological and political competition between capitalism and communism – largely receded from the official United States’ worldview. After a disastrous experiment in “assertive multilateralism” in Somalia 1993, the Clinton administration distanced itself from an area of the world that was simply not important to the United States in a geopolitical or commercial sense. The 1995 Security Strategy for Sub-Saharan Africa stated plainly that “America’s security interests in Africa are very limited. At present we have no permanent or significant military presence anywhere in Africa: We have no bases; we station no combat forces; and we homeport no ships... [U]ltimately we see very little traditional strategic interest in Africa.”¹

This was a remarkable turnaround from the Cold War years when the process of decolonisation, and the competition for the future allegiance of these countries, led to the extension of the superpower conflict to Sub-Saharan Africa. As Elizabeth Schmidt notes, when colonial systems there began to falter in the 1950s, “imperial and Cold War powers vied to control the decolonisation process” and “strove to shape a new international order that instead catered to their interests.”² In the Horn of Africa (Ethiopia and Somalia), the Congo, and the former Portuguese colonies (Angola and

¹ In this report ‘Africa’ is used as shorthand for Sub-Saharan Africa. The same is true of this article: ‘Africa’ refers to Sub-Saharan Africa. US Strategy for Sub-Saharan Africa, Office of International Security Affairs, Department of Defense, 1 August 1995, <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf&AD=ADA297401> (23.10.17)

² Elizabeth Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention in Africa: From the Cold War to the War on Terror* (Cambridge University Press, New York 2013): 1-2. See also Jonathan T. Reynolds, *Sovereignty and Struggle: Africa and Africans in the Era of the Cold War 1945-1994* (Oxford University Press: New York and Oxford, 2015): 55.

Mozambique), the United States fought proxy wars against the Soviet Union, Cuba, and other socialist countries, to contain indigenous pro-independence communist and socialist groups. In the process, it also intervened in the struggle against apartheid. Since anti-apartheid forces in South Africa, South West Africa (now Namibia) and Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) were strongly left-leaning, included many communists, and were permitted to operate inside independent Angola and Mozambique by the post-colonial leftist governments there, the United States allied itself with the white minority government in Pretoria, which shared Washington's opposition to radical nationalism and communism (and, through its alliance with the United States, was, for some years, shielded from the worst international criticism of its violent racist practices.)³

This intense involvement in African affairs during the Cold War years ended ambivalently for the United States. While Washington consolidated the anti-communist Mobutu regime in the Congo (then Zaire) in the 1960s, this led to a 32-year reign of terror and kleptocracy, and as Mobutu lost his foreign sponsors – the United States and Belgium, the former colonial power – in the early nineties, his regime collapsed.⁴ In 1990, the Ethiopian leader, Haile Mariam Mengistu, formerly backed by the Soviet Union, embraced market reforms, changed the name of the

³ See Piero Gleijeses, *Visions of Freedom: Havana, Washington, Pretoria and the Struggle for Southern Africa, 1976-1991* (University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, 2013); Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959-76* (University of North Carolina: Chapel Hill, 2002); Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention in Africa*: 57-164; Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge and New York, 2007): 131-143, 207-287, 387-395; James M. Scott, *Deciding to Intervene: The Reagan Doctrine and American Foreign Policy* (Duke University Press: Durham and London, 1996): 112-151, 193-212; Reynolds, *Sovereignty and Struggle*: 50-78; Peter Woodward, *The Horn of Africa: Politics and International Relations* (I.B. Tauris: London and New York, 2003): 134-150.

⁴ Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention in Africa*: 208. The U.S. intervened three times during the Cold War to help Mobutu crush internal challenges. See Michael Clough, *Free at Last? U.S. Policy Toward Africa at the End of the Cold War* (Council on Foreign Relations Press: New York, 2002): 79-83.

communist party, and indicated a willingness to work with the United States. He was defeated, however, by armed opposition forces and eventually assisted into exile by Washington.⁵ In Somalia, US Cold War ally Siad Barre, was ousted by a clan rebellion against his government, which led to the collapse of all central authority in Mogadishu, from which the country has yet to fully recover.⁶ Across southern Africa, white minority – and therefore anti-communist – rule was defeated by the successful insurgency of the African National Congress (ANC), Western sanctions (some but not all supported by the United States), and the Cuban military intervention in Namibia, which effectively defeated South African forces there, catalysing the downfall of the apartheid regime in Pretoria.⁷ Thus the United States faced strategic defeat in Ethiopia, Somalia, and southern Africa, though the political cost of supporting minority white government in South Africa had become increasingly untenable and the moral victory of the ANC could not be denied.

At the end of the Cold War, the United States (and the Soviet Union) withdrew from Sub-Saharan Africa. As Jonathan Reynolds observes, “the post-Cold War world, for all of its democratic optimism, was also characterised by a painful streak of disregard as politics in Africa... became irrelevant to affairs in the industrialised world.”⁸ The small-scale humanitarian intervention in Somalia in 1992 – agreed after President George H. W. Bush had already lost the November election – was intended as “a valedictory good deed.”⁹ When the incoming Clinton administration experimented with a policy of “assertive multilateralism” – embodied in the expansion of the

⁵ Westad, *Global Cold War*: 287, 390.

⁶ Ibid: 287; Woodward, *Horn of Africa*: 97-99.

⁷ Gleijeses, *Visions of Freedom*: 508.

⁸ Reynolds, *Sovereignty and Struggle*: 77.

⁹ Michael Mandelbaum, *Mission Failure: America and the World in the Post-Cold War Era* (Oxford University Press: New York, 2016): 87.

Somalian intervention into a nation building exercise – Clinton’s support for it was “a mile wide but an inch deep.”¹⁰ As Leonie Murray and Michael MacKinnon demonstrate, the deaths of eighteen US service members in Mogadishu in October 1993, led the Clinton administration to abandon “assertive multilateralism”. The resulting Presidential Decision Directive added so many conditions to US participation in peacekeeping operations that the policy was effectively discarded.¹¹ When it became clear that genocide was occurring in Rwanda in 1994, Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, affirmed that the administration should avoid using the word ‘genocide’ to describe the events lest the United States be called upon to intervene more forcefully.¹²

This neglect of African affairs, embodied in the 1995 Strategy quoted at the outset, continued for the remainder of Clinton’s term in office. Humanitarian considerations alone were not sufficient to compel US intervention, and since no truly vital interests were identified in Africa, it remained peripheral at best for US policymakers.

In the twenty-first century, however, there has been a significant turnaround in US policy – a return, in fact, to viewing Sub-Saharan Africa through a geopolitical lens. The period of relative neglect that characterised the years between ‘11/9’ and ‘9/11’

¹⁰ Leonie G. Murray, *Clinton, Peacekeeping, and Humanitarian Intervention* (Routledge: London and New York, 2008): 61. See Presidential Review Directive 13, ‘Multilateral Peacekeeping Operations’, 15 February 1993, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/36558> (05.07.18)

¹¹ Presidential Decision Directive 25, ‘US Policy on Reforming Multilateral Peace Operations’, 3 May 1994, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12749>. Murray, *Clinton, Peacekeeping, and Humanitarian Intervention*; Micheal G. MacKinnon, *The Evolution of US Peacekeeping Policy Under Clinton* (Frank Cass: London and Portland, 2000). See also Robert C. DiPrizio, *Armed Humanitarians: U.S. Interventions from Northern Iraq to Kosovo* (Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 2002): 44-60.

¹² Action Memorandum to the Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, 21 May 1994, reproduced in Jared Cohen, *One Hundred Days of Silence: America and the Rwanda Genocide* (Rowman & Littlefield Inc.: Lanham, 2007): 140.

now appears as an anomalous interregnum between two periods in which Sub-Saharan Africa was approached in geopolitical terms.¹³ The region has again become integral to America's global grand strategy. No longer is Africa viewed solely as an undifferentiated site of intractable civil wars and humanitarian tragedy, where the United States risks squandering its power resources on conflicts in which it has no discernible geopolitical or economic interest. In the 21st century – as in the Cold War – the US view of Sub-Saharan Africa is much more firmly grounded in perceptions of material interests, geopolitical and security considerations. The region is now approached in grand strategic terms. While the United States is in *relative* decline in the early twenty-first century, it remains the greatest single aggregation of power in the world.¹⁴ It defines its national interest in expansive global and transnational terms – including, now, in the Sub-Saharan region.

As Hal Brands' observes, a grand strategy is "a purposeful and coherent set of ideas about what a nation seeks to accomplish in the world, and how it should go about doing so."¹⁵ As far as possible, it seeks to match means with ends and methods with objectives. Great powers often have interests in nearly every region of the world.¹⁶ Those regions are viewed in instrumental terms: what does the United States need,

¹³ '11/9' is the shorthand name given to the collapse of communism in November 1989 by Derek Chollet and James Goldgeier in *America Between the Wars: From 11/9 to 9/11- The Misunderstood Years Between the Fall of the Berlin Wall and the Start of the War on Terror* (Public Affairs: New York, 2009). Prior to the Cold War, European colonial powers also viewed Africa in geopolitical terms. See Thomas Packenham, *The Scramble for Africa* (Abacus: London, 1991); Lawrence James, *Empires in the Sun: The Struggle for the Mastery of Africa* (W.W. Norton & Co.: New York, 2017); and M.E. Chamberlain, *The Scramble for Africa* (Routledge: Oxon and New York, 2013).

¹⁴ Adam Quinn, 'The art of declining politely: Obama's prudent presidency and the waning of American power' *International Affairs*, Vol. 87, No. 4, 2011: 808. Richard Haass 'U.S. Foreign Policy in a Nonpolar World', *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2008: 44-56.

¹⁵ Hal Brands, *What Is Good Grand Strategy? Power and Purpose in American Statecraft from Harry S. Truman to George W. Bush* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca and London, 2014): 3.

¹⁶ Brands, *What Is Good Grand Strategy?:* 7.

and what does each area offer? The politics of geography – or geopolitics – is central to strategy-making.¹⁷

This article takes as its starting point the assumption – best expounded by Andrew Bacevich, Doug Stokes and Sam Raphael – that in the 21st century, the United States pursues an imperial grand strategy devoted to the management and extension of a world order conducive to neoliberal capitalism. This entails upholding global economic openness, providing global public goods such as energy security, and confronting security challenges – including, in the 21st century, transnational security challenges – that threaten the stability of the global order.¹⁸ In the words of the 2010 National Security Strategy, the United States seeks “A strong, innovative, and growing U.S. economy in an open international economic system that promotes

¹⁷ Lawrence Freedman, *Strategy: A History* (Oxford University Press: New York, 2013): 120-22. The literature on grand strategy is voluminous. For an overview of the historical, social scientific, practical, and military approaches to US grand strategy, see William C. Martell, *Grand Strategy in Theory and in Practice: The Need for an Effective American Foreign Policy* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge and New York, 2015): 7-19. Other important contributions include: Christopher Hemmer, *American Pendulum: Recurring Debates in U.S. Grand Strategy* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca and London, 2015); Barry R. Posen, *Restraint: A New Foundation for U.S. Grand Strategy* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca and London, 2015); Robert J. Lieber, *Retreat and Its Consequences: American Foreign Policy and the Problem of World Order* (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge and New York, 2016); Stephen Brooks and William Wohlforth, *America Abroad: The United States Global Role in the 21st Century* (Oxford University Press, New York, 2016); Christopher Layne, *The Peace of Illusions: American Grand Strategy from 1940-Present* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca and London, 2007); Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives* (Basic Books: New York 1998).

¹⁸ As Doug Stokes and Sam Raphael argue, the extension of the neoliberal global order to resource-rich areas, such as the Gulf of Guinea, is a hallmark of American hegemony. See their, *Global Energy Security and American Hegemony* (Johns Hopkins University Press: Washington, 2010). Similarly Andrew J. Bacevich writes of a contemporary American “empire” characterized by an open economic system in which the United States acts “as the ultimate guarantor of order and enforcer of norms.” See his *American Empire: The Realities and Consequences of U.S. Diplomacy* (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: 2002): 3. Niall Ferguson argues that the United States “underwrites the free international exchange of commodities, labor and capital [and] also creates and upholds the conditions without which markets cannot function – peace and order, the rule of law...” See his *Colossus: The Rise and Fall of the American Empire* (Penguin: New York, 2004): 2. For the first scholarly articulation of a global grand strategy that is ultimately economically driven, see William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (W.W. Norton & Co.: New York, 1972). For an updated history of “the open door” and its influence on US global strategy see Michael Patrick Cullinane and Alex Goodall, *The Open Door Era: United States Foreign Policy in the Twentieth Century* (Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh, 2017).

opportunity and prosperity” and “an international order advanced by U.S. leadership that promotes peace, security, and opportunity through stronger cooperation to meet global challenges.”¹⁹ This strategy, I argue, has both international and transnational dimensions: international because it seeks to uphold and extend a world order from which other countries may derive benefits (for example through the provision of global public goods like energy); and transnational because it seeks to counter inherently transnational security challenges such as terrorism and piracy.²⁰ In this article, I analyse Washington’s attempt to integrate Sub-Saharan Africa into this order in the 21st century. In the Bush and Obama presidencies, US policymakers increasingly viewed Sub-Saharan Africa as a site of valuable commercial, geopolitical, and security interests, over which the United States must exercise some degree of influence if it was to maintain its position as the world’s pre-eminent power for as long as possible. More specifically, I argue that its new geopolitical framework for Africa has been characterised by *three* categories of interest and concern: first, since 2001, the region’s expanding petroleum resources, especially in the Gulf of Guinea, have been viewed as a way of diversifying US oil supplies away from the Middle East, and – more recently as the United States’ own energy imports from West Africa have drastically declined – of bolstering the United States’ global role as the guarantor of energy supplies *for others*. Second, parts of the region have also been perceived by US policymakers since 9/11 as key loci of transnational Islamist terrorism. Thirdly and finally, recent population growth and an emerging middle class have made Sub-Saharan Africa an attractive and important potential market for the

¹⁹ National Security Strategy, May 2010, https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf: 7

²⁰ On the distinction between internationalism and transnationalism see Akira Iriye, ‘Toward Transnationalism’ in Andrew J. Bacevich (ed.) *The Short American Century: A Postmortem* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Mass., London, 2012: 121-141.

United States. In sum, material and security concerns meant that, from the perspective of US strategists, Sub-Saharan Africa could no longer be ignored in the formation of global grand strategy.

Elements of this new approach have not gone unnoticed by scholars. Co-authors Doug Stokes and Sam Raphael, and (writing separately) Michael Klare have produced important accounts of the United States' global energy policy since the turn of the 21st century, incorporating the Gulf of Guinea, and the broader significance of energy for US hegemony.²¹ A separate line of analysis examines terrorism in Africa, especially the Horn, in the pre- and post-9/11 period.²² From a US perspective, recent population and economic growth in Africa has been largely overlooked, although there are numerous accounts of China's economic investment in Africa.²³ Other scholars still treat Sub-Saharan Africa as largely peripheral to US grand strategy in the 21st century.²⁴

²¹ Stokes and Raphael argue that it is just the energy producing regions of Africa – i.e. the Gulf of Guinea states – that Washington seeks to ‘transnationalize’. I argue here that US interest in Africa transcends its resource rich areas. Stokes and Raphael, *Global Energy Security and American Hegemony*. Michael Klare *Blood and Oil: How America's Thirst for Petrol is Killing Us* (London and New York: 2004) and Michael Klare, *Rising Powers, Shrinking Planet: How Scarce Energy is Creating a New World Order* (Oneworld, Oxford: 2008). Ricardo M. Soares de Oliveira, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf of Guinea* (C. Hurst & Co. London 2007).

²² Robert I. Rotberg (ed.) *Battling Terrorism in the Horn of Africa* (World Peace Foundation, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and the Brookings Institution, Washington DC: 2005). Alex De Waal (ed.) *Islamism and Its Enemies in the Horn of Africa* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis: 2004). David J. Francis, *US Strategy in Africa: AFRICOM, terrorism, and security challenges* (Routledge, London and New York: 2010). John David (ed.) *Africa and the War on Terrorism* (Ashgate, Aldershot and Burlington 2007).

²³ Deborah Brautigen, *The Dragon's Gift: The Real Story of China in Africa* (Oxford University Press: Oxford and New York, 2009); Suisheng Zhao (ed.) *China in Africa: Strategic Motives and Economic Interests* (Routledge: London and New York 2015); Dambisa Moyo, *Winner Take All: China's Race for Resources and What It Means for Us* (Penguin Books, London, 2012).

²⁴ See for example, Brooks and Wohlforth, *America Abroad*; Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Strategic Vision: America and the Crisis of Global Power* (Basic Books, New York 2012).

This article will offer a more holistic analysis and argue that a confluence of factors – energy security, transnational terrorism, and continental economic growth – has led to a fundamental shift in the way US policy makers view Sub-Saharan Africa in the 21st century and its place in US global strategy. The same realist sensibility that led US policymakers to discard Africa in any serious strategic sense at the end of the Cold War led, in the Bush and Obama years, to a renewed interest in and concern for the continent in security, geopolitical, and commercial terms that are comparable to the way in which US policymakers view other significant areas of the world. To be sure, Sub-Saharan Africa is far from being the most important region for the United States, but by the end of the Obama years, it was almost uniformly viewed by US policymakers as a region that could not be ignored or dismissed in global strategy formation. As it attempts to integrate Sub-Saharan Africa into the global order, however, the United States has already begun to repeat mistakes made in other key regions of the world. If it continues to view Africa in geopolitical terms, the Trump administration will need to ensure that the US footprint there does not become a source of resentment that undermines US interests and security in the long term.

A final caveat concerns the reductionism that can occur when policy makers divide the world, sometimes too superficially, into different regions. Grand strategy is “a reductionist discipline”, Brands argues, since those undertaking it tend to “impose a sense of order on a stubbornly complex international environment.”²⁵ As Brendan Vickers points out, Africa is a continent of 54 countries, 1 billion people, and over 3000 languages.²⁶ References to ‘Africa’ – which almost always refer to Sub-Saharan

²⁵ Brands, *What Good Is Grand Strategy?*: 10-11.

²⁶ Brendan Vickers, ‘Africa and the rising powers’ *International Affairs*, Vol. 89, No. 3, May 2013: 674.

Africa – that occur in US policymaking can elide the diversity of the region, encourage the formation of policy that is insufficiently attuned to regional and national differences, and even overlook or deny the agency and preferences of local actors.²⁷ (This is equally true for references to ‘Eurasia’, ‘Europe’ or ‘Latin America.’) Sub-Saharan states are not passive actors accepting a fate foisted upon them by the United States. They often act independently on the regional and global stage; they have at times successfully ‘soft balanced’ the United States; they have also actively shaped and encouraged external interventions.²⁸ This article takes a different but not mutually exclusive perspective and focuses instead on US perceptions of contemporary Sub-Saharan Africa and official opinion on how and why Washington should engage with it. Without endorsing the US approach, it remains important to understand how Washington views the world given the unprecedented reach and depth of American power and the international and transnational dimensions of its strategy. This article seeks to elucidate the drivers behind the US approach to Sub-Saharan Africa in the 21st century and evaluate the consequences thus far of Washington’s approach.

THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION AND SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

²⁷ A growing literature on ‘small states’ analyses the agency of less powerful countries. For some of the key interventions see Christine Ingebritsen, Iver B. Neumann, Sieglinde Gstöhl, and Jessica Beyer (eds.) *Small States in International Relations* (University of Washington Press/University of Iceland Press: Seattle and Reykjavik, 2006). On Africa see William Brown, ‘A question of agency: Africa in international politics’ *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 33 (10), 2012: 1889-1908.

²⁸ Jonathan Fisher and David M. Anderson, ‘Authoritarianism and the securitization of development in Africa’ *International Affairs*, Vol. 91, No. 1, January 2015: 131-151. Alex Vines, ‘A decade of African peace and security architecture’ *International Affairs*, Vol. 89, No. 1, January 2013: 89-109. Maria Raquel Freire, Paula Duarte Lopes & Daniela Nascimento, ‘Responsibility to protect’ and the African Union: Assessing the AU’s capacity to respond to regional complex humanitarian and political emergencies’ *African Security Review*, Vol. 25, No. 3, 2016: 223-241; Thomas Kwasi Tiekou, ‘African Union promotion of human security’ *African Security Review*, Vol. 16, No. 2, 2007: 26-37; Beth Elise Whitaker, ‘Soft balancing among weak states? Evidence from Africa’ *International Affairs*, Vol. 86, No. 5, September 2010: 1109-1127.

Africa was certainly not the first priority of the incoming George W. Bush administration in early 2001. When Bush ran for the Presidency, there was no sign that he would substantially alter existing US strategy towards the Sub-Saharan region. In the second Presidential debate, he expressed strong support for Clinton's decision not to intervene more effectively in the 1994 Rwandan genocide.²⁹ An important indication of Africa's changing status came in May 2001, however, with the publication of the report of the National Energy Policy Development Group, led by Vice President Dick Cheney (also known as the Cheney Report).³⁰ A key recommendation of the report was the diversification of foreign oil supplies away from the Middle East in order to minimize the impact of a supply disruption. The study recommended "that the President make energy security a priority of our trade and foreign policy" with a particular focus on West Africa and the Caspian Sea, both growth areas in terms of energy production.³¹ West Africa was destined to be one of our fastest-growing sources of oil and gas for the American market. African oil tends to be of high quality and low in sulphur making it suitable for stringent refined product requirements, and giving it a growing market share for refining centers on the East Coast of the United States.³²

Whereas the previous National Energy Strategy in 1998 did not even mention Africa, the new report called on the President to direct the Secretaries of State, Energy, and Commerce to reinvigorate the US-Africa Trade and Economic Co-operation Forum and the US-Africa Energy Ministerial process; to deepen bilateral and multilateral engagement to promote a more receptive environment for US oil and gas trade,

²⁹ The Second Bush-Gore Presidential Debate, 11 October 2000, Debate Transcript, <http://www.debates.org/index.php?page=october-11-2000-debate-transcript> (29.11.12)

³⁰ *National Energy Policy*, Report of the National Energy Policy Development Group (henceforth NEPDG report), May 2001, <http://www.ne.doe.gov/pdfFiles/nationalEnergyPolicy.pdf> (28.11.12).

³¹ NEPDG report: ch. 8, p.3; p.4, and p.7.

³² Ibid: ch. 8, p.11.

investment and operations in Africa; and to revive the Joint Economic Partnership Committee with Nigeria to improve the climate for US oil and gas trade, investment, and operations.³³ The report led to a shift in the administration's view of Sub-Saharan Africa: it identified vital material interests there that could serve the geopolitical imperative of diversifying America's foreign energy sources. In April 2002, at his inaugural press briefing, the new Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for African Affairs, Michael Westphal acknowledged that "Africa is not always a topic, which is high on the agenda list here in the Pentagon. But I'm here to tell you that it's actually something, which does matter." Westphal continued:

To begin with, 15 percent of the U.S.'s imported oil supply comes from sub-Saharan Africa. This is also a number which has the potential for increasing significantly in the next decade. Poverty, unemployment and lack of capital development exacerbate social and ethnic tensions and create havens for conflict, insecurity and terrorism.³⁴

Visiting Nigeria in July 2002, Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, Walter Kansteiner, announced that "African oil is of national strategic interest to us, and it will increase and become more important as we go forward."³⁵ Although the implementation of the Cheney report recommendations does not appear to have begun

³³ Comprehensive National Energy Strategy, April 1998, <http://prop1.org/thomas/peacefulenergy/cnesM.pdf> (accessed 03.07.17). NEPDG report: ch. 8: 11-12. It seems likely that the recommendations of the NEPDG report were influenced by Cheney's meetings with representatives of major oil companies. The archive of meeting papers is available at National Resources Defense Council, The Cheney Energy Task Force, <http://nrdctools.org/pdfs/energy-task-force/moreinfo.html> It is also true, however, that President Bush had already appointed many former energy lobbyists to his administration. See Michael J. Lynch, Ronald G. Burns, Paul B. Stretesky, 'Global warming and state-corporate crime: the politicization of global warming under the Bush administration' *Crime, Law and Social Change*, Vol. 54, July 2010: 219-21.

³⁴ Department of Defense News Briefing, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for African Affairs (henceforth Westphal briefing), 2 April 2002, <http://archive.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=3387> (17.07.17)

³⁵ Cited in 'With Mideast uncertainty, US turns to Africa for oil' *Christian Science Monitor*, 23 May 2002, <http://www.csmonitor.com/2002/0523/p07s01-woaf.html> (27.03.13).

in earnest until after 9/11, when Africa also took on renewed security importance, these policy initiatives are in line with the recommendations made in May 2001, though currently available evidence suggests that the preoccupation with Afghanistan at the top tier of policymaking left the articulation and implementation of the policy to assistant secretaries.

For the Department of Energy (DoE), the key objective of Bush's national energy plan was to develop "a diverse set of energy resources from a diverse set of energy suppliers." According to John Brodman, an assistant secretary at the DoE, "We have learned from experience that it is the marginal barrels that are the important factor in determining conditions in the oil market... Africa is important to us because it is an important source of the marginal barrels."³⁶ It was also home to "a number of frontier oil provinces that may become hot exploration areas during the coming decade" such as São Tomé and Príncipe, Gambia, Liberia, Togo, Benin and Niger.³⁷ By 2003, West Africa was supplying the United States with approximately 12% of its imported oil, with significant production increases expected over the next decade, Brodman noted. However, an unfavourable business climate marked by corruption, political instability, border disputes, and poverty, was hampering foreign investment, which was essential for the development of West African oil, much of which was located offshore and in deep waters, making access especially costly. The investment climate, Brodman stated, "may keep needed energy resources locked away from development

³⁶ Statement of John R. Brodman, Assistant Secretary for Political and International Affairs, Department of Energy, Hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 'U.S. Energy Security: West Africa and Latin America', 21 October 2003, <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-108shrg91959/html/CHRG-108shrg91959.htm> (06.07.17)

³⁷ Statement of John R. Brodman, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Energy for International Energy Policy, Hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 'The Gulf of Guinea and U.S. Strategic Energy Policy,' 15 July 2004, <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-108shrg97231/html/CHRG-108shrg97231.htm> (06.07.17)

for a long time.” Addressing the challenges of the African investment climate “is one of the new challenges to our energy security aspirations”, Brodman declared.³⁸

The new focus on the African investment climate led to a series of diplomatic initiatives designed to improve the region’s investment environment and help “transnationalise” African oil – in other words, to bring it to the global market.³⁹ At the G8 summit at Sea Island, Georgia, in 2004 Bush brought together G8 leaders and the heads of four African countries to announce wide ranging compacts to support transparency and good governance, with a particular focus on revenue flows in the energy sector. One of these was Nigeria – the “anchor of West Africa” which, alone, was supplying 10% of U.S. crude oil imports every day.⁴⁰ The US Agency for International Development (USAID) was also providing technical assistance to the Nigerian Federal Budget Office, and funding an exchange programme on best practices among oil-affected communities in Angola, Nigeria, and São Tomé. The DoE was supporting World Bank and IMF efforts to help build capacity and provide technical assistance on governance, transparency and budgeting. In Angola, the US embassy and the DoE were supporting the development of a comprehensive domestic energy strategy.⁴¹ When Angolan President, José Eduardo dos Santos, visited the U.S. in May 2004, he pledged new levels of transparency in the energy sector including making public current payments from ChevronTexaco.⁴² In 2003, the US re-opened

³⁸ Brodman 2003 testimony. For similar comments see also his 2004 testimony. See also comments on investment climate and oil exploitation by Paul Simons, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Energy, Sanctions and Commodities, Hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, ‘The Gulf of Guinea and U.S. Strategic Energy Policy’ 15 July 2004, <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-108shrg97231/html/CHRG-108shrg97231.htm> (06.07.17)

³⁹ Stokes and Raphael examine the US role in the transnationalization of oil globally in their *Global Energy Security and American Hegemony*: especially pp. 2-3.

⁴⁰ Summit Documents, ‘Fighting Corruption and Improving Transparency,’ Sea Island, 10 June 2004, <http://www.g8.utoronto.ca/summit/2004seaisland/corruption.html> Simons 2004 testimony. The White House, Sea Island Summit 2004, <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/g8/2004/> (05.07.17)

⁴¹ Simons 2004 testimony.

⁴² ‘Angola Set to Disclose Payments from Big Oil’, *New York Times*, 13 May 2004.

its embassy in Equatorial Guinea, one of the “hot” “frontier oil provinces.” Finally, in cooperation with the UK, Norway and the Netherlands, the United States convened the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights process, bringing together oil and mining companies from the U.S. and Europe, with leading human rights NGOs and corporate social responsibility organizations. According to Paul Simons of the State Department, “improving transparency in the oil and gas sectors of the major African producers... is a win-win situation”: “countries with these attributes make better hosts to the very large investments needed to develop energy resources [and] make more reliable contributions to our own energy security.”⁴³

Until the mid-2000s, US military activity in Sub-Saharan Africa focused on the ‘war on terror’; by 2005, however, military activity in the oil-producing Gulf of Guinea had picked up significantly. In Abuja, Nigeria, in 2004, General Charles Wald – Deputy Commander of US European Command (EUCOM), which was then in charge of US military operations in Africa – said that he had discussed finding “a way that we can cooperate together in monitoring the waters off the Gulf of Guinea” with Nigerian officials including Deputy Defense Minister Roland Oritsejafor.⁴⁴ Assistant US Secretary of State for Africa, Charles Snyder, called for a West African coastal security programme on the grounds that “a lot of this new oil is actually off-shore. There is no one to protect it, unless we build up African coastal fleets.”⁴⁵ By 2006, the US military presence in the Gulf had become “nearly continuous.” The US Navy was deployed to train over 750 security personnel from eight Gulf of Guinea countries in

⁴³ Simons 2004 testimony.

⁴⁴ ‘U.S. general proposes help in ‘monitoring’ unstable West Africa oil gulf’ *Associated Press*, 12 July 2004.

⁴⁵ Address by Acting Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Charles Snyder at the American Enterprise Institute, *Africa News*, 18 April 2004.

boat maintenance and command and control organization.⁴⁶ In 2007 the African coastal security programme envisioned by Wald and Snyder was finally established in the form of the US Navy's Africa Partnership Station (APS), which remains the "flagship" programme of US Naval Forces Africa.⁴⁷ Based in the Gulf of Guinea, the APS was an annual six-month sea-based deployment designed to enhance the capacity of littoral states to govern the Gulf region in the face of transnational crime, such as piracy, that might disrupt the flow of commerce.⁴⁸

It was not just in terms of energy that the Sub-Saharan region assumed a new importance. The 9/11 attacks also catalysed a new threat-based security approach to the area. Now Africa was viewed as part of the "arc of instability" stretching from the Western hemisphere, through Africa and the Middle East and extending through Asia. According to the 2004 National Military Strategy

There are areas in this arc that serve as breeding grounds for threats to our interests. Within these areas rogue states provide sanctuary to terrorists, protecting them from surveillance and attack. Other adversaries take advantage of ungoverned space and under-governed territories from which they prepare plans, train forces and launch attacks. These ungoverned areas often coincide with locations of illicit activities; such coincidence creates opportunities for hostile coalitions of criminal elements and ideological extremists.⁴⁹

After 9/11 the Sub-Sahara's weak and failing states, its porous borders, and

⁴⁶ Statement of General Bantz J. Craddock, before the House Armed Services Committee, 15 March 2007, <http://www.dod.mil/dodge/olc/docs/TestCraddock070315.pdf> : 22 (07.11.16)

⁴⁷ 'Africa Partnership Station', undated, <http://www.africom.mil/what-we-do/security-cooperation/africa-partnership-station> (06.07.17)

⁴⁸ 'Global Fleet Station Pilot One Step Closer with Arrival of Swift', 9 April 2007, http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story_id=28777 (15.05.13). Kathi A. Sohn, 'The Global Fleet Station: A Powerful Tool for Preventing Conflict' *Naval War College Review*, Winter 2009, Vol. 62, No. 1: 45-58. *Naval Operations Concept 2006*, http://www.quantico.usmc.mil/seabasing/docs/Naval_Operations_Concept_2006.pdf: 30-31(15.05.13)

⁴⁹ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *The National Military Strategy of the United States of America 2004*, <http://history.defense.gov/Portals/70/Documents/nms/nms2004.pdf?ver=2014-06-25-123447-627>: 5.

“ungoverned spaces” were viewed through the lens of transnational terrorism.⁵⁰

Colonel Victor Nelson, who would directly manage the first counterterrorism programme in Africa, summed up US concerns: “We have said for a long time that if you squeeze terrorists in Afghanistan, Pakistan Iraq and other places, they will find new places to operate and one of those is the Sahel-Maghreb.”⁵¹ Weak states in Africa were now seen as potential breeding grounds for terrorism. According to General James L. Jones, Commander of EUCOM, it was the “large uncontrolled, ungoverned areas” of the continent, which might offer sanctuary to terrorists that concerned the Bush administration most.⁵² Thus the US objective after 9/11 was to prevent terrorist groups from taking root by securing borders and building the security and governance capacity of weak and failing states.⁵³

To this end, the Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) was established in 2002 with its headquarters in Djibouti, where it remains at the time of writing, as Washington’s only Main Operating Base in Africa.⁵⁴ The Task Force

⁵⁰ Statement of General James L. Jones, USMC, Commander of the United States European Command, Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 28 September 2005, <http://foreign.senate.gov/testimony/2005/JonesTestimony050928.pdf> (30.11.09): 9. See also comments made during an interview in, ‘Transforming EUCOM’, *Stars and Stripes*, 15 June 2003.

⁵¹ Jim Fisher-Thompson, ‘US-African Partnership Helps Counter Terrorists in Sahel Region’, 24 March 2004, reproduced by the State Department’s Bureau of International Information Programs at <http://preprod.iipdigital.getusinfo.com/st/english/article/2004/03/20040323170343r1ejrehsif0.1366693.html#axzz2DjFCM2zK> 30 November 2012 (01.08.14)

⁵² Jones cited in Eric Schmitt, ‘Pentagon Seeking New Access Pacts for Africa Bases’, *New York Times*, 5 July 2003.

⁵³ For an overview see Robert G. Berschinski, *AFRICOM’s Dilemma: The ‘Global War on Terrorism’, ‘Capacity Building’, Humanitarianism, and the Future of U.S. Security Policy in Africa*, November 2007, <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=827> (27.10.16) For analysis of the concept of ‘failed states’ see Charles T. Call, ‘The Fallacy of the Failed State’ *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 29 (8), 2008: 1491-1507; Sonja Grimm, “‘Fragile States’”: introducing a political concept’, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 35 (2), 2014: 197-209.

⁵⁴ Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Djibouti on Access to and Use of Facilities in the Republic of Djibouti, 19 February 2003, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/191488.pdf> (05.07.17). CJTF-HOA Factsheet, <http://www.hoa.africom.mil/pdfFiles/Fact%20Sheet.pdf> (11.12.12) ‘Main Operating Bases’ (MOBs) are the largest type of US overseas military base. See Department of Defense, *Strengthening U.S. Global Defense Posture*, September 2004, Report to Congress, http://www.dmzhawaii.org/wp-content/uploads/2008/12/global_posture.pdf: 10 (13.07.17)

included Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Eritrea, the Seychelles, and the host nation, Djibouti, as well as an expansive 'area of comprised of Yemen, Tanzania, Mauritius, Madagascar, interest' Mozambique, Burundi, Rwanda, the Comoros, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Uganda.⁵⁵ According to its Commander, Major General John F. Sattler, "the porous borders with Somalia" were a key concern, but the mission as a whole was "very broad, in that we [are] to track transnational terrorism across the Horn of Africa, going from Yemen across the Gulf of Aden, and then, you know, the entire Horn."⁵⁶ By 2011, between 2,000 and 2,500 short term rotational US military personnel were stationed with the Task Force at any one time.⁵⁷

In 2002, the State Department launched the Pan Sahel Initiative (PSI), a train-and-equip programme "to assist Mali, Niger, Chad, and Mauritania in detecting and responding to suspicious movement of people and goods across and within their borders through training, equipment and co-operation."⁵⁸ Its counterpart, the East Africa Counterterrorism Initiative (EACTI), was launched in 2003, dedicated to improving counterterrorist capabilities of Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Eritrea, and Ethiopia.⁵⁹ Fuelled by the perception of success, the Pan Sahel Initiative was expanded into the larger Trans-Sahara Counter Terrorism Initiative (TSCTI) in early

⁵⁵ See the web site of the CJTF-HOA at <http://www.hoa.africom.mil/#> (11.12.12) Copy in author's possession.

⁵⁶ News Briefing, Major General John F. Sattler, Commander, Combined Joint Task Force—Horn of Africa, 10 January 2003, <http://archive.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=1246> (08.08.16)

⁵⁷ Congressional Research Service, *Africa Command: U.S. Strategic Interests and the Role of the U.S. Military in Africa* by Lauren Ploch, 22 July 2011, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RL34003.pdf>: 21.

⁵⁸ 'Pan Sahel Initiative', press release, Office of Counterterrorism, Washington DC, November 7, 2002, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/s/ct/rls/other/14987.htm> (05.02.13).

⁵⁹ Karl Wycoff, Associate Coordinator for Press, Policy, Programs and Plans, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, Department of State, Prepared Statement before the House Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on Africa, http://commdocs.house.gov/committees/intrel/hfa92870.000/hfa92870_0.HTM: 22 (11.02.13)

2005.⁶⁰ This included nine countries in total: the original PSI four and an additional five: Nigeria, Senegal, Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria. The TSCTI was a broader, more holistic approach to security that was designed “to address socio-economic conditions and weak state control over outlying regions of the Sahel that are facilitating the entry of Islamic extremists from outside and the recruitment of disaffected youth.”⁶¹ These programmes demonstrated the securitization and militarization of the US approach to Africa compared to the relatively non-interventionist stance and humanitarian framework of the Clinton years.

In the Horn of Africa, however, the preventive security approach taken by the United States did not preclude the emergence of militant Islamist groups. So concerned was the Bush administration about the actual presence of alleged militants in East Africa, that Washington resorted to hard power, fighting a proxy war, via Ethiopia, against the Islamic Courts in Somalia from 2006-07 – a kind of US intervention not seen in Africa since the Cold War.⁶² For the pro-American Ethiopian leader, Meles Zenawi, the main concern was the Islamic Courts’ alliance with two anti-Ethiopian armed groups – the Oromo Liberation Front, and the Ogaden National Liberation Front.⁶³

⁶⁰ State Department, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2005*, Chapter 5 <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/65468.pdf>: 46 (14.02.13). ‘New Counterterrorism Initiative to Focus on Saharan Africa’ by Donna Miles, *American Forces Press Service*, 16 May 2005, <http://www.defense.gov/News/NewsArticle.aspx?ID=31643> (14.02.13)

⁶¹ Cited in DoS, Note to the Deputy Secretary, ‘Recommended Phone Call to OMB re TSCTI,’ 12 January 2005, Secret, obtained under FOIA. Program Overview, Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership, www.africom.mil/Doc/7432 (31.05.16. Copy in author’s possession.) On the holistic approach see Gorm Rye Olsen, ‘Whole-of-Government Approaches to Fragile States in Africa’ *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 34 (10), 2013: 1828-1842.

⁶² On the history of the Islamic Courts see Cedric Barnes and Harun Hassan, ‘The Rise and Fall of Mogadishu’s Islamic Courts’ Chatham House Briefing Paper, April 2007, <http://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/public/Research/Africa/bpsomalia0407.pdf> (12.03.13) On the roots of the 2006-07 proxy war, see Jeffrey A. Lefebvre, ‘Choosing Sides in the Horn of Africa: Wikileaks, the Ethiopia Imperative, and American Responses to Post-9/11 Regional Conflicts’ *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, Vol. 23 No.4, 2012: 704-727.

⁶³ Cable, American Embassy, Addis Ababa, ‘Meles/Frazier Review Approach to Somalia’, 29 June 2006, <http://www.wikileaks.org/cable/2006/06/06ADDISABABA1783.html> (18.03.13)

However, the State Department was more worried about the alleged presence of Al Qaeda-linked militants in Somalia.⁶⁴ The result was a green light from Washington for the Ethiopian invasion of Somalia in late 2006 and the provision of US support. Although there is currently only an incomplete picture of the US assistance to Ethiopia, it is clear from State Department cables that the Meles government welcomed the “terrific” military and intelligence support from Washington, including drones and Special Operations Forces assistance.⁶⁵ At the end of January 2007, Ambassador Donald Yamamoto reported from the US embassy in Addis Ababa that “Cooperation remains strong, and our intelligence-sharing relationship is robust.”⁶⁶ The proxy war was a further indication of the new security calculus that governed Washington’s approach to Africa in the 21st century. Its support for Meles, and opposition to the Islamic Courts would continue into the Obama years.

Nevertheless, the US approach to Sub-Saharan Africa during Bush’s Presidency was not entirely devoid of humanitarian content. The President’s Emergency Plan For Aids Relief (PEPFAR), announced in January 2003, pledged \$15 billion over five years towards anti-retroviral drugs and educational efforts to combat the spread of AIDS. Aimed at fourteen countries in Africa and the Caribbean, PEPFAR was the

⁶⁴ Cable, US Embassy Nairobi, ‘Assistant Secretary Frazer’s Meeting with Somali Parliament Speaker Sharif Hassan Sheikh Aden’ 23 June 2006, <http://www.wikileaks.org/cable/2006/06/06NAIROBI2758.html>. Fact Sheet, African Affairs, ‘Somalia: Eliminating the Terrorist Threat’, 25 January 2007, <http://2001-2009.state.gov/p/af/rls/fs/2007/79383.htm> (all 18.03.13)

⁶⁵ Cable, US Embassy Addis Ababa, ‘Somalia: Prime Minister Meles Urges Diplomacy Take Center Stage’ 25 January 2007, <http://www.wikileaks.org/cable/2007/01/07ADDISABABA233.html>. Cable, US Embassy Addis Ababa, ‘Somalia: PM Meles Affirms Need for Ethiopian Troops to Withdraw’, 5 January 2007, <http://www.wikileaks.org/cable/2007/01/07ADDISABABA40.html> (all 22.03.13). Jeremy Scahill, *Dirty Wars: The World Is a Battlefield* (Serpant’s Tail, London, 2013): 204-05 and 219-223. Pauline Jelinek, ‘US Special Forces in Somalia’, 10 January 2007, Associated Press, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/01/10/AR2007011000438.html> (25.03.13).

⁶⁶ Cable, US Embassy Addis Ababa, ‘Ethiopia: USG Assistance Needed to Meet Burden of War’, 24 January 2007, https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/07ADDISABABA207_a.html (05.08.16)

largest global health initiative by any nation to combat a single disease. When the programme was announced, an estimated 50,000 people in sub-Saharan Africa were receiving treatment for HIV/AIDS. By 2008, this had increased dramatically to more than two million.⁶⁷ Yet PEPFAR was not conceived as part of a holistic new geo-strategic approach to Africa, but developed along a quite separate policy track in response to demands from the politically important evangelical Christian community in the United States, which sought avenues for the expression of a ‘compassion-based’ foreign policy, inspired and justified by a biblical obligation to help the suffering. Bush’s own public justifications were based on religious obligation rather than strategic or Africa-specific objectives. Announcing PEPFAR to Congress in 2003, he described it as “a work of mercy” and called for the country to “lead the world in sparing innocent people from a plague of nature.” U.S. national strategy documents also presented the issue in humanitarian not security terms.⁶⁸ The programme was not just directed at Africa, but at eleven countries in the Caribbean too because the criteria for inclusion was not specifically geographical but based on the “size and demographics of the population with HIV/AIDS... the needs of that population and the existing infrastructure or funding levels.”⁶⁹ In other words, the programme often most associated with Africa during the Bush years was *not* an

⁶⁷ President Bush’s Global Health Initiatives are Saving Lives Around the World, undated, <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/factsheets/globalhealth.html> (14.10.16)

⁶⁸ John W. Dietrich, ‘The Politics of PEPFAR: The President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief’ *Ethics and International Affairs*, Fall 2007, Vol. 23, No. 3: 282. Holly Burkhalter, ‘Trick or Treat?’ *Foreign Affairs*, 27 October 2004, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/central-america-caribbean/2004-10-27/trick-or-treat> (17/10/16). Lee Marsden, *For God’s Sake: The Christian Right and U.S. Foreign Policy* (Zed Books: London and New York, 2008): 131-33, 247-49. The religious motivation is also confirmed in Condoleezza Rice’s memoir, *No Higher Honor: A Memoir of My Years in Washington* (Simon & Schuster: New York, 2011): 228. George W. Bush, State of the Union address 2003, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/onpolitics/transcripts/bushtext_012803.html See also George W. Bush, *Decision Points* (Virgin Books: London 2010): 340.

⁶⁹ United States Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Act of 2003, H.R.1298, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/30368.pdf>: 10 (18.07.17).

outgrowth of the new geopolitical vision of the continent and its integration into the neoliberal order, but derived purely from domestic political considerations.

The new geopolitical focus on Africa culminated in the establishment of the Pentagon's first ever Unified Combatant Command structure for the continent in 2007, Africa Command (AFRICOM), which assumed control from EUCOM of all existing US military activity in Africa, and facilitated more coherent military planning on a continental scale. Reflecting the new official view of Africa as a site of both geopolitical interest and security concerns, AFRICOM was designed to defend the full spectrum of US interests on the continent from energy security to protecting and stabilising 'ungoverned space'. The Command was not welcomed by African nations, however. The US failure to consult African countries in advance of the Command's establishment in 2007 resulted in distrust and suspicion of AFRICOM. No country would agree to host its headquarters, which in 2017 was still located in Stuttgart, Germany.⁷⁰

Some scholars have assumed that the militarization of the US presence in Africa, symbolised by the establishment of AFRICOM, is directed in part at China.⁷¹

Since the early 2000s, the Chinese government has attempted to secure oil, gas, and

⁷⁰ Theresa Whelan, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Africa, *Why AFRICOM? An American Perspective*, Institute for Security Studies (South Africa), 17 August 2007, <http://www.issafrica.org/uploads/SITREPAFRICOM170807.PDF>: 3-4, 7 (14.08.14). James J.F. Forest and Rebecca Crispin, 'AFRICOM: Troubled Infancy, Promising Future', *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol. 30, No. 1, 2009: 5-27; Oluwaseun Tella, 'AFRICOM? Hard or soft power initiative?' *African Security Review*, 25 (4), October 2016: 393-406.

⁷¹ For instance see Xu Yi-chong, 'China and the United States in Africa: Coming conflict or commercial coexistence?' *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 62, No. 1, March 2008: 16-37; David H. Shinn, 'Africa: the United States and China Court the Continent' *Journal of International Affairs*, Spring/Summer 2009, Vol. 62, No. 2: 37-53.

other natural resources from across Africa.⁷² In fact, China's use of oil had increased at an exponential rate: between 1995 and 2005, its oil consumption doubled to 6.8million bpd. In 2003, it surpassed Japan to become the world's second largest oil consumer where it has remained since.⁷³ By 2006, China was Africa's third most important trading partner and nine of its top ten trading partners were oil-producing states.⁷⁴ However, as Dambisa Moyo explains, Beijing's efforts were not dedicated to "transnationalising" those resources – bringing them to the international market, as the US sought to do – but towards securing exclusive supply agreements.⁷⁵ This has been interpreted, quite logically, by some scholars as evidence of a clash between the US and China over Africa's oil.⁷⁶ Based on the currently available evidence, however, this assumption may be slightly overstated. Official US strategy and planning documents rarely, if ever, state explicitly that US efforts are directed against Beijing.⁷⁷ Instead, the expressed objective is to integrate *all* rising powers into the existing global system, creating a positive-sum dynamic, thereby deterring potential challenges to the system. As the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review stated, "The United States will work to ensure that *all major and emerging powers* are integrated as constructive actors and stakeholders into the international system."⁷⁸ Describing

⁷² For an overview of Beijing's global energy strategy, see David Zweig and Bi Jianhai, 'China's Global Hunt for Energy' *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2005: 25-38.

⁷³ Ian Taylor, 'China's oil diplomacy in Africa', *International Affairs*, Vol. 82, No.5, September 2006: 943. U.S. Energy Information Administration, Top World Oil Consumers 2011, <http://www.eia.gov/countries/index.cfm?topL=con> (10/05/13)

⁷⁴ International Monetary Fund, *Direction of Trade Statistics* (Washington DC: IMF, 2005) cited in Taylor 'China's oil diplomacy': 937-8.

⁷⁵ Moyo, *Winner Take All*: 75-94. See also Taylor, 'China's oil diplomacy in Africa': 942, 944-5. Klare, *Rising Powers, Shrinking Planet*: 168-9. On "transnationalization" of oil see Stokes and Raphael, *Global Energy Security and American Hegemony*: especially pp. 2-3 and 145-76.

⁷⁶ See note 70.

⁷⁷ I have not been able to find a single US document stating that China is a US competitor in Africa.

⁷⁸ Department of Defense, Quadrennial Defense Review 2006, <http://archive.defense.gov/pubs/pdfs/QDR20060203.pdf>: 30 (emphasis added). See also National Security Strategy, May 2010, https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf: 11; Quadrennial Defense Review, February 2010, http://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/features/defenseReviews/QDR/QDR_as_of_29JAN10_1600.pdf: 7;

US policy objectives in Africa, Assistant Secretary of Defense, Theresa Whelan, claimed that Washington was committed to ensuring “free market access” to African oil for all countries. Energy from the Gulf of Guinea was not just important to the United States, Whelan claimed; it was “strategically important to the world. If African oil were to fall off the oil market, it wouldn’t simply be the United States that would see its oil prices go through the roof.”⁷⁹ While *prima facie* evidence may exist for a US-China clash over African oil, there is no clear documentary evidence as yet that US policymakers believe that China, despite its behavior, cannot be integrated into the US-led international system and satisfy its energy demands through the open market, though it is possible such evidence may emerge in the future. The US attitude may also be explained by the fact that China’s strategy in Africa remains largely economic and political rather than military. An increase in the number of Chinese trade officials posted to embassies in Africa was not matched by an increase in military ties, and there is only one Chinese military base in Africa.⁸⁰ In other words, China’s ambitions there appear, at present at least, to be more limited than Washington’s.

CONTINUITY UNDER OBAMA

Security

Department of Defense, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense*, January 2012, http://archive.defense.gov/news/Defense_Strategic_Guidance.pdf: 2

⁷⁹ Transcript: Pentagon Africa Policy Chief Whelan Describes U.S. Objectives for Africa Command, 18 February 2008, <http://www.africom.mil/media-room/transcript/6123/transcript-pentagon-africa-policy-chief-whelan-des> (25.10.16)

⁸⁰ Jonathan Holslag, ‘China’s New Security Strategy for Africa’ *Parameters*, Summer 2009: 28-29. ‘China’s Djibouti military base: logistics facility or platform for geopolitical ambitions overseas?’ *South China Morning Post*, 1 October 2017, <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2113300/chinas-djibouti-military-base-logistics-facility-or> (27.06.18)

With Barack Obama's paternal Kenyan heritage, expectations for his Presidency were high in his ancestral homeland, where 'Obamania' preceded his 2008 election victory.⁸¹ However, Obama's heritage appeared to have little impact on the substance of his Africa policy, which hewed closely to the trajectory established by Bush. In 2012, the Obama administration released a Strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa. This document could hardly have differed more from the previous version released back in the Clinton years, quoted at the outset, that had virtually disavowed any commercial or strategic interest in Africa. The 2012 strategy stated that Africa was "more important than ever to the security and prosperity... [of] the United States."⁸² The continent was home to a number of transnational security challenges such as al Qaeda and other terrorist groups, which required the continuation of US efforts to "strengthen the capacity of civilian bodies to provide security for their citizens and counter violent extremism through more effective governance, development, and law enforcement efforts" as well as building the security capacity of African militaries.⁸³ Under Obama, existing Bush-era counterterrorism programmes in Africa were extended. According to Daniel Benjamin of the Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, the State Department remained concerned about the "porous borders" and "limited resources" of African states.⁸⁴ The Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative continued with the same rationale as in the Bush years: building the capacity of local security forces to counter terrorism and control

⁸¹ Matt Carotenuto and Katherine Luongo, 'Where the Kenyan Heritage of Barack Obama is an Asset' *Politico*, 21 July 2015, <https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/07/where-obamas-heritage-is-an-advantage-120422> (05.07.18)

⁸² *U.S. Strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa*, June 2012, <https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/209377.pdf> : foreword (03.07.18).

⁸³ *Strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa*: 4-5.

⁸⁴ Daniel Benjamin, Coordinator, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, Testimony to the House Foreign Affairs Committee, 25 April 2012, <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/rm/2012/188816.htm> (22.05.14)

territory.⁸⁵ AFRICOM continued to oversee the work of the Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa in Djibouti.⁸⁶ Moreover, the Obama administration supplemented these existing programmes with new activities cut from the same cloth. The State Department’s \$100m Partnership for Regional East African Counterterrorism (PRACT) was another “multifaceted, multiyear strateg[y] to combat violent extremism and defeat terrorist organizations” through “build[ing] the capacity and cooperation of military, law enforcement, and civilian actors” in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Tanzania, and Uganda.”⁸⁷ In 2014, at Obama’s request, Congress created a new \$5 billion Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund also dedicated to counter-terrorism capacity building.⁸⁸ 2017 Partnership Fund monies were earmarked for use in East Africa, the Sahel-Maghreb, and in the ‘Lake Chad Basin’ to counter Boko Haram in Nigeria.⁸⁹ A third new – though subtly different – capacity building programme was announced by Obama in August 2014: the Security Governance Initiative (SGI), between the United States and six African partners – Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Tunisia – was dedicated to building the capacity of institutions that focused on addressing transnational challenges including

⁸⁵ Benjamin testimony April 2012. Congressional Budget Justification, Foreign Operations 2011: 145.

⁸⁶ See ‘In Annual Posture Statement, Ward Updates Congress on U.S. Africa Command’ 17 March 2009, <http://www.africom.mil/Newsroom/Transcript/6544/written-testimony-in-annual-posture-statement-ward> and 2012 Posture Statement, General Carter Ham Before House Armed Services Committee, 1 March 2012, <http://www.africom.mil/newsroom/article/8832/2012-posture-statement-statement-of-general-carter#> (both 23.05.14)

⁸⁷ Congressional Budget Justification, Foreign Operations, 2012: 195. Benjamin testimony April 2012. See also ‘Programs and Initiatives’, <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/programs/index.htm#PRACT> and Government Accountability Office, Report to the Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, *Combating Terrorism: State Department Can Improve Management of East Africa Program*, June 2014, <http://www.gao.gov/assets/670/664126.pdf>: summary (‘What GAO Found’) (page unnumbered) (03.08.16).

⁸⁸ Fact Sheet: Partnering to Counter Terrorism in Africa, 6 August 2014, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/08/06/fact-sheet-partnering-counter-terrorism-africa> Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund, Department of Defense Budget Fiscal Year (FY) 2017, February 2016, Office of the Undersecretary of Defense (Comptroller), http://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/fy2017/FY2017_CTPF_J-Book.pdf: 1-2. (08.03.16)

⁸⁹ Fact Sheet: Partnering to Counter Terrorism in Africa: 4. Counterterrorism partnership Funds, DoD Budget 2017: 2-7.

terrorism and piracy.⁹⁰ As such the Obama team accepted the Bush administration's analysis of Africa as a potential and actual locus of terrorism, as well as its emphasis on capacity-building in the security sector as an antidote to this.

Under Obama, anti-piracy activities were also stepped up in both the Gulf of Guinea and the Horn of Africa. In fact the militarization of the US approach to the Gulf – driven by concern for the security of the region's natural resources – intensified most as US oil imports from the region were falling dramatically. In 2010, 17.25% of all US imported oil came from the Gulf of Guinea; in 2014 it was just 2.98%.⁹¹ This dramatic downward trajectory was the opposite of what the State Department, the Department of Energy, and the US Intelligence Community had been predicting in the early 21st century.⁹² It was the result of a major unforeseen increase in US domestic oil and gas production from shale rock formations, which displaced oil imported from the Gulf of Guinea.⁹³ Yet, significantly, the fact that the United States itself was less reliant on West African oil did not lessen its commitment to securing that area and ensuring that its oil reached the global market – exemplifying and affirming the

⁹⁰ My italics. An Update on the Security Governance Initiative, 2 March 2016, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2016/03/02/update-security-governance-initiative> (03.08.16). Fact Sheet: Security Governance Initiative, 6 August 2014, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/08/06/fact-sheet-security-governance-initiative> (03.08.16) Security Governance Initiative, 2015 Review, 2 March 2016, <http://www.state.gov/p/af/rls/2016/253906.htm> (03.08.16).

⁹¹ Calculated from: US Crude Imports by Country of Origin 2010-2015, US Energy Information Administration, https://www.eia.gov/dnav/pet/pet_move_impcus_a2_nus_epc0_im0_mbb1_a.htm. United States Crude Oil Production, US Energy Information Administration, https://www.eia.gov/dnav/pet/PET_CRD_CRPDN_ADC_MBB1_A.htm (both 26.10.16). Thanks to my brother, Anthony Ryan, for doing the maths.

⁹² See Broden 2003 testimony and Simons 2004 testimony as well as National Intelligence Council, *Global Trends 2015*, December 2000, https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/DOC_0000516933.pdf: 43 (07.07.17)

⁹³ This includes production of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) which can be used instead of oil to power freight trucks and rail. See Adam Sieminski, U.S. Energy Information Administration, *Outlook for U.S. shale oil and gas*, 8 March 2014, https://www.eia.gov/pressroom/presentations/sieminski_03082014.pdf: 2, 7 (13.07.17). Nancy E. Brune, 'The Impact of the U.S. Shale Boom in Africa' *Columbia Journal of International Affairs*, January 2016, <https://jia.sipa.columbia.edu/impact-u-s-shale-boom-africa> (07.07.17)

importance of providing global public goods, in this case energy, *for others* in US grand strategy in the 21st century. At the Gulf of Guinea Maritime Security Dialogue seminar held in September 2014, Secretary of the Navy, Ray Mabus, spoke of the economic importance of securing the seas: “the global economy depends on safe access to and through the world’s oceans” Mabus said; “From manufactured goods, oil, cocoa beans, iron ore... shipping is vital to your economies” [*sic.*].⁹⁴ The Commander of US Naval Forces in Africa, Admiral Mark Ferguson, stated that the Gulf of Guinea “is important not only for Africa, but for the global economy... West African nations that border the gulf possess a wealth of natural resources and human capital which, if managed prudently, could make the region a powerful force for African growth and development, and a significant influence in global affairs.”⁹⁵

More specifically, in response to a spike in oil piracy in 2011, the United States intensified its military commitment to the Gulf of Guinea by initiating an annual multinational training exercise, Operation Obangame Express, designed to train partners in this vital region in maritime security. In 2016, Obangame Express included thirty-two countries from the Gulf littoral states and European nations including the UK, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, and the Netherlands.⁹⁶ In addition to training exercises, the United States also organized real interdictions on

⁹⁴ Cited in ‘SECNAV Hosts Gulf of Guinea Maritime Security Dialogue’ 19 September 2014, http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story_id=83421 (03.08.16).

⁹⁵ Cited in ‘Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea’ 18 September 2014, <http://navylive.dodlive.mil/2014/09/18/maritime-security-in-the-gulf-of-guinea/>

⁹⁶ *Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea*, March 2013, A Report of the Conference Held at Chatham House, https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/public/Research/Africa/0312confreport_maritimesecurity.pdf ‘Robert G. Bradley Begins Operation Obangame Express’, 21 March 2011, <http://www.africom.mil/NewsByCategory/article/8104/robert-g-bradley-begins-exercise-obangame-express> ‘Exercise Obangame/Sahara Express 2016 Commences’ <http://www.africom.mil/NewsByCategory/article/28060/exercise-obangame-saharan-express-2016-commences> (all 10.06.16)

the high seas under the auspices of the African Maritime Law Enforcement Partnership, an operational phase of the US Africa Partnership Station, the Navy's offshore Gulf of Guinea base.⁹⁷ The Partnership, led by the Navy and AFRICOM, was designed to allow "African partner nations to build maritime security capacity and improve management of their maritime environment through real world combined law enforcement operations."⁹⁸ Since the establishment of the Africa Partnership Station in 2006, the US Navy has trained thousands of military personnel in skills such as seamanship, search and rescue operations, law enforcement, medical readiness, and boat maintenance.⁹⁹ Thus far, however, local capacity remains insufficient and underdeveloped. By 2015, the Gulf of Guinea had become the most dangerous region in the world for seafarers with a rise in violence across the year and an increase in kidnap-for-ransom in the fourth quarter of 2015.¹⁰⁰ As unsuccessful as these US-led efforts were, however, Washington's attempt to secure the region and bring its oil to the international market had intensified despite the fact that US imports from the Gulf of Guinea had dropped dramatically, demonstrating the importance to US global strategy of ensuring the provision of adequate energy supplies on the global market.¹⁰¹

Much more successful than the US-led security efforts in the Gulf of Guinea has been the major multilateral and institutional anti-piracy effort in the Horn of Africa. In

⁹⁷ 'Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea.' 'African Maritime Law Enforcement Partnership Underway' 4 February 2016, <http://www.africom.mil/NewsByCategory/article/27940/african-maritime-law-enforcement-partnership-underway>

⁹⁸ In February 2016, for instance, a combined operation took place between the Ghanaian Navy, the US Navy, and the US Coast Guard to patrol Ghana's exclusive economic zone and detect any illegal maritime activity. See 'African Maritime Law Enforcement Partnership Underway.'

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ *The State of Maritime Piracy 2015: Piracy and Robbery Against Ships in the Gulf of Guinea 2015*, Oceans Beyond Piracy, <http://oceansbeyondpiracy.org/reports/sop2015/west-africa> (16.10.16)

¹⁰¹ On grand strategy, capitalism, and commodities, see note 2.

December 2008, the US tabled a United Nations resolution calling for international action to combat piracy off the coast of Somalia. This resulted in the establishment of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS) supported by nearly eighty countries, and international organizations including the African Union, the Arab League, the European Union, the International Maritime Organization, and various departments and agencies of the United Nations. The Contact Group's work focuses on capacity building, led by the UK; strengthening judicial mechanisms for deterring piracy, led by Portugal; counter-piracy operations led by the United Arab Emirates; and disrupting piracy networks ashore, led by Italy.¹⁰² The Obama administration also supported the so-called New York Declaration: a commitment to best management practices to avoid, deter, or delay acts of piracy, signed alongside Cyprus, Japan, Singapore, the UK, the Bahamas, Liberia, Panama, and the Marshall Islands.¹⁰³ These efforts, alongside additional counter-piracy activities by the EU and Nato, led to a dramatic reduction in the number of piracy incidents.¹⁰⁴ The economic cost of piracy off the Somali coast fell from \$7B in 2010 to \$1.3B in 2015.¹⁰⁵ This major international coalition against piracy, supported by the Obama administration, has been the most successful element of the United States' security strategy in Africa in the 21st century.

Economic Opportunity in Africa

¹⁰² Press Release, Security Council, SC/9541, 16 December 2008, <http://www.un.org/press/en/2008/sc9541.doc.htm>. Department of State, International Response: Contact Group, <http://www.state.gov/t/pm/ppa/piracy/contactgroup/> (both 18.10.16)

¹⁰³ The United States Signs 'New York Declaration', Washington DC, 9 September 2009, <http://www.state.gov/t/pa/prs/ps/2009/sept/128767.htm> (16.10.16)

¹⁰⁴ Lauren Ploch et. al., *Piracy Off the Horn of Africa*, Congressional Research Service, 28 September 2009, <https://www.history.navy.mil/research/library/online-reading-room/title-list-alphabetically/p/piracy-off-horn-africa-crs.html>: 19-20

¹⁰⁵ Oceans Beyond Piracy, *The State of Maritime Piracy 2015*, Executive Summary, Notable Trends in 2015 by Region, <http://oceansbeyondpiracy.org/reports/sop2015/summary> (18.10.16).

As well as maintaining the Bush administration's emphasis on Africa as a site of security challenges and natural resources, sub-Saharan Africa was identified by the Obama administration as a major site of new economic opportunity.¹⁰⁶ In April 2012, the Assistant U.S. Trade Representative, Florizelle Liser, testified to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs about the importance of an area of the world where "returns on investment... rarely dip below 10%, representing one of the highest rates of return in the world." This location offered "a wide range of... opportunities for U.S. businesses" because it contained "many of the fastest growing economies in the world with rapidly growing middle class consumers" who were "increasingly demanding high quality U.S. products."¹⁰⁷ One manifestation of this was the Increasing American Jobs Through Greater Exports to Africa Act of 2012. As the co-author of the House bill, Rep. Bobby Rush (D-ILL), stated in Congressional hearings that, "Seven out of ten of the fastest growing economies are today in Africa. Africa has an expanding middle class hungry for American products and its services. It is also in need of investment in its rapidly expanding infrastructure."¹⁰⁸ In his supporting testimony, Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, Johnnie Carson, offered his "firm belief that Africa represents the next global economic frontier" because its growth projections were higher than predictions for Latin America, Central Asia, and Europe. The State Department's initiatives to support US investment in Africa included a recent trade mission to Mozambique, Tanzania, Nigeria, and Ghana with ten US energy companies, and the hosting of the US-Africa Business Conference in Ohio in

¹⁰⁶ *Strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa*: 3-4.

¹⁰⁷ Statement of the Honorable Florizelle Liser, Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for Africa, Office of the United States Trade Representative, 17 April 2012, <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-112hhrg73814/html/CHRG-112hhrg73814.htm> (19.05.16)

¹⁰⁸ The Increasing American Jobs Through Exports to Africa Act, Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health and Human Rights, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, 17 April 2012, <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-112hhrg73814/html/CHRG-112hhrg73814.htm> (22.05.14).

June 2012.¹⁰⁹ (Although Carson did not mention the sizeable Chinese commercial presence in Africa, it did concern members of Congress. Bobby Rush warned that “we are standing flat-footed as China, India, and Brazil and others are being fleet-footed.” Other Congressional hearings were also convened to discuss China’s role in Africa.¹¹⁰)

Commercial opportunities in Africa were also at the heart of the 2014 US-Africa Leaders Summit. The first event of its kind, the three-day summit brought almost fifty African leaders to Washington, and was intended as “a very clear signal that we are elevating our engagement with Africa” because – according to Deputy National Security Advisor, Ben Rhodes – “we see enormous opportunities in Africa.”¹¹¹ The summit saw the launch of the Doing Business in Africa Campaign (DBIA). With a 5.4% growth rate predicted for 2014, Africa was outpacing global growth, while US goods and services exports to Africa had increased 40% since 2009, supporting 250,000 US jobs.¹¹² At the US-Africa summit, an array of new commitments was made by departments and agencies across the US government dedicated to deepening US commercial engagement in Africa. The President announced \$7 billion in new financing to promote US exports and investments. US companies announced new deals in clean energy, aviation, banking, and construction worth more than \$14

¹⁰⁹ Increasing American Jobs... Hearing April 2012.

¹¹⁰ Rush’s opening statement contained in Ibid. See also ‘Assessing China’s Role and Influence in Africa’, House of Representatives, Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Human Rights, 29 March 2012, <http://archives.republicans.foreignaffairs.house.gov/112/73538.pdf> (22.05.14)

¹¹¹ Conference Call by Deputy National Security Advisor for Strategic Communications, Ben Rhodes; Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Linda Thomas-Greenfield; and Senior Director for Development and Democracy at the National Security Council, Gayle Smith on the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit, July 31, 2014, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/08/01/record-conference-call-us-africa-leaders-summit> (04.08.16)

¹¹² The White House, Fact Sheet: the Doing Business In Africa Campaign, 5 August 2014, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/08/05/fact-sheet-doing-business-africa-campaign> (04.08.16)

billion. An additional \$12 billion was committed as part of Obama’s public-private Power Africa initiative designed to bring 60 million new electricity connections to sub-Saharan Africa.¹¹³ Further new commitments to investments in and exports to Africa were made by the Departments of Agriculture, State, Commerce, Transportation, Energy, and the US Agency for International Development.¹¹⁴ There was also bipartisan agreement on the new approach to Africa. According to Rhodes, “Congress has played an enormous role on a bipartisan basis in supporting Africa policy. It is important to note that in an environment in Washington where there’s not a lot of bipartisan agreement, Africa has been a true exception.”¹¹⁵

CONSEQUENCES: 2009 - 2017

In the Sub-Saharan region, as in the Middle East, the counterterrorism activities pursued by the United States for more than a decade have so far failed to stabilise the region or prevent the emergence of new Islamist terrorist groups. When Ethiopian combat troops withdrew from Somalia after driving the Islamic Courts out of Mogadishu in 2009, they were replaced by US-backed peacekeepers from Uganda, Burundi, and Ethiopia under the auspices of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).¹¹⁶ The presence of the Ethiopians – Somalia’s long-standing adversary, which had just waged war on the country – severely undermined the credibility of the peacekeepers, which were widely viewed as occupation forces. The government supported by the peacekeepers earned the derogatory epithet *daba dhilifi*

¹¹³ Fact Sheet: the Doing Business In Africa Campaign, 5 August 2014, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/08/05/fact-sheet-doing-business-africa-campaign> and ‘Power Africa’ US Agency for International Development, <https://www.usaid.gov/powerafrica> (both 04.08.16)

¹¹⁴ The new economic initiatives were too numerous to list here. For full details see Fact Sheet: the Doing Business in Africa Campaign.

¹¹⁵ Conference Call on the US-Africa Leaders Summit.

¹¹⁶ United Nations Security Council Resolution 1772, 20 August 2007, [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1772\(2007\)](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1772(2007)) (07.07.17)

(‘government set up for a foreign purpose’ or ‘satellite government’) because of its Ethiopian and US backing.¹¹⁷ The leading resistance movement was an increasingly extremist Islamist-nationalist group called Al Shabaab, formerly a faction of the Islamic Courts, which grew in Somalia largely as a result of its opposition to the peacekeeping force. As Jeffrey Lefebvre observes, the Ethiopian occupation “allowed Islamic extremists like Al Shabaab to present their struggle as a war of national liberation and inadvertently fed ‘the monster’ – Islamic extremism – that the United States had set out to destroy.”¹¹⁸ In 2008 Al Shabaab evolved from a local Islamist nationalist group into an Al Qaeda franchise that began using suicide bombings, took over parts of central and southern Somalia, and portrayed its war against the transitional government as one front in the global jihadist struggle.¹¹⁹ In July 2010 it conducted its first attack outside the country in Kampala, Uganda. Though Obama was determined to avoid overt US involvement in Somalia he continued its covert activities, in particular the drone warfare campaign, as well as US support for Ethiopia and AMISOM. A 2010 Senate report on Al Qaeda in Somalia and Yemen confirmed that the United States had used air strikes to target suspected members of Al Qaeda in Somalia.¹²⁰ Drone warfare in Somalia intensified through Obama’s second term as the administration demonstrated that it was every bit as willing as its

¹¹⁷ Mary Harper, *Getting Somalia Wrong? Faith, War and Hope in a Shattered State* (Zed Books: London and New York 2012): 177

¹¹⁸ Harper, *Getting Somalia Wrong?*: 86-96, 177. Lefebvre, ‘Choosing Sides in the Horn of Africa’: 722. Markus Virgil Hoehne, ‘Counter-terrorism in Somalia: How external interference helped to produce militant Islamism’, December 2009, http://webarchive.ssrc.org/Somalia_Hoehne_v10.pdf. Rob Wise, ‘Al Shabaab’, Al Qaeda and Associated Movements Futures Project, Case Study No. 2, July 2011, Center for Strategic and International Studies, http://csis.org/files/publication/110715_Wise_AlShabaab_AQAM%20Futures%20Case%20Study_WEB.pdf (both 18.07.17)

¹¹⁹ Wise, ‘Al Shabaab’: 5-9. Hoehne, ‘Counter-terrorism in Somalia’: 22-23.

¹²⁰ ‘US Policy in Somalia: No Direct Support for Somali Government Military Operations’ Washington DC, 12 March 2010, <http://www.africom.mil/media-room/transcript/7260/transcript-us-policy-in-somalia--no-direct-support> (07.07.17). U.S. Stabilization funds for Somalia amounted to \$515.6m from 2009-13. See GAO, *Combating Terrorism: 16. Al Qaeda in Yemen and Somalia: A Ticking Time Bomb*, A Report to the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, 21 January 2010, <http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Yemen.pdf>: 16 (23.05.14).

predecessor to use coercive military power in Africa to further US security objectives.¹²¹ In his final months in office, Obama further intensified the use of Special Operations Forces in Somalia and relaxed the rules on drone strikes to include bombing raids to protect African troops fighting against Al Shabaab – i.e. attacks when American lives were not at risk.¹²²

This approach failed to contain Al Shabaab, however. In early 2012, the group officially merged with Al Qaeda, and in September 2013 it carried out another international attack, this time in a shopping mall in Nairobi killing 67. Al Shabaab now controlled much of southern Somalia and waged an insurgency against the new government in Mogadishu.¹²³ Despite the intensification of US drone strikes and SOF activity, the number of attacks by Al Shabaab increased dramatically from 26 in 2008, to 233 in 2012, and a high of 866 in 2014. In Obama’s final year in office this fell but only to 558.¹²⁴ Both Al Qaeda and Al Shabaab were complex entities with multiple factions and franchises, but US actions seemed to have fanned the flames of conflict. As the report by the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations concluded, “Al Qaeda is now a more sophisticated and dangerous organization in Africa... [It]s foothold in

¹²¹ For details of all strikes in Somalia in the Bush and Obama years see ‘Somalia: Reported US Covert Actions 2001-2016’ The Bureau of Investigative Journalism, January 2017, <https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/drone-war/data/somalia-reported-us-covert-actions-2001-2017> (07.07.17).

¹²² Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2016*, Chapter 2: Africa, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2015/257514.htm> (24.10.17); ‘In Somalia, U.S. Escalates a Shadow War’, *New York Times*, 16 October 2016; ‘Obama Expands War With Al Qaeda to Include Shabab in Somalia’ *New York Times*, 27 November 2016.

¹²³ Linda Thomas-Greenfield, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of African Affairs, Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Subcommittee on African Affairs, 8 October 2013, <http://www.state.gov/p/af/rls/rm/2013/215220.htm> Human Rights Watch, World Report 2014, Somalia, <http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2014/country-chapters/somalia> (23.05.14)

¹²⁴ Global Terrorism Database, National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, University of Maryland, Al-Shabaab, https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?page=1&casualties_type=&casualties_max=&perpetrator=20036&expanded=no&charttype=line&chart=overtime&ob=GTDID&od=desc#results-table (22.12.17)

Somalia has probably been facilitated by the involvement of Western powers and their allies.” In fact it was likely that US air strikes in Somalia “have only increased popular support for Al Shabaab” – striking criticism from a committee led by Senators from the President’s own party.¹²⁵

Nor have the capacity building security assistance programmes pursued by Obama and his predecessor enjoyed much success thus far. As noted above, the Gulf of Guinea became the most dangerous region in the world for seafarers despite US maritime security assistance. Mainland capacity building activities failed to prevent the emergence of an Al Qaeda franchise in North and West Africa – Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) – and failed to contain its activities in Mali, where it took control of the northern half of the country in 2012.¹²⁶ Since its merger with Al Qaeda in 2006, AQIM has conducted frequent bomb attacks in Algeria and occasionally beyond.¹²⁷ By 2012, there were signs that it was sharing explosives and funds with Nigeria’s Boko Haram.¹²⁸ In 2003, Mali had been described as the “centerpiece and linchpin” of the Pan Sahel Initiative by the State Department.¹²⁹ Yet after almost ten years of capacity building, the country was unable to prevent the emergence of AQIM

¹²⁵ Senate report, *Al Qaeda in Yemen and Somalia*: 14, 16. The Chairperson of the committee was Senator John Kerry, Democrat of Massachusetts.

¹²⁶ Zachary Laub and Jonathan Masters, ‘Backgrounder: Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb’ *Council on Foreign Relations*, 8 January 2014, <http://www.cfr.org/terrorist-organizations-and-networks/al-qaeda-islamic-maghreb-aqim/p12717#p1> (27.05.14).

¹²⁷ Country Reports on Terrorism, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, Department of State, Chapter 2 – Country Reports: Middle East and North Africa Overview, 30 April 2007, <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2006/82733.htm> ‘AQIM’ National Counterterrorism Center. See also Chapter 2 (Middle East and North Africa Overview) of the State Department’s Country Reports on Terrorism in 2008: <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2008/122433.htm>, 2009: <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2009/140886.htm>, 2010: <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2010/170257.htm>, and 2011: <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2011/195544.htm> (all 27.05.14)

¹²⁸ ‘Africa’s Islamist militants “co-ordinate efforts”’ BBC News, 26 June 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-18592789> (27.05.14)

¹²⁹ Declassified Cable, From Embassy Bamako to SecState WashDC, ‘CODEL Dreier Scen setter,’ 16 July 2003. Obtained through Freedom of Information Act; in author’s possession.

or contain its influence. One US Army Major, who spent nearly a year in the field with Malian forces, described the “highly visible disintegration of the Malian military in the face of al Qaeda affiliates and the *coup d’etat* by Malian junior military officers that led to the overthrow of the democratically elected president.”¹³⁰ Although a French-led intervention stabilized the country by mid-2013, terrorism endured. In 2009, AQIM was responsible for 33 acts of violence in the Sahel (though 24 of these were in Algeria). In 2016, it conducted 29 violent acts but now the majority (20) were in Mali. The group’s geographic reach expanded too. In 2016 it also conducted attacks in Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Algeria, Niger, and Mauritania.¹³¹ In March 2015, General David Rodriguez, AFRICOM Commander, warned of “an increasingly cohesive network of al-Qa’ida affiliates and adherents” in Sub-Saharan Africa that “continues to exploit Africa’s under-governed regions and porous borders to train and conduct attacks.”¹³²

CONCLUSION

Time will facilitate further judgements on the development and impact of these relatively recent events in the history of American foreign relations; yet some tentative conclusions can be drawn. By the end of the Obama era, Sub-Saharan Africa was viewed on a bipartisan basis as a location in which the full complement of security, material, and commercial interests should be weighed and pursued by US

¹³⁰ Simon J. Powelson, *Enduring Engagement Yes, Episodic Engagement No: Lessons for SOF from Mali*, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, December 2013, <https://calhoun.nps.edu/handle/10945/38996>: 1

¹³¹ From 2012-16, AQIM also conducted attacks in Tunisia, Nigeria, and Libya. See Global Terrorism Database – Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/Results.aspx?page=2&search=AQIM&expanded=no&charttype=line&chart=overtime&ob=GTDid&od=desc#results-table> (22.11.17)

¹³² Statement of General David M. Rodriguez, Commander, United States Africa Command, Before the Senate Armed Services Committee, 26 March 2015, http://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Rodriguez_03-26-15.pdf; 3, 6 (17.07.17)

officials, as they were during the Cold War years – though, to be sure, different policy prescriptions marked these two periods. From this vantage point, US engagement with Sub-Saharan Africa on the basis of hard interests appears to be the recent historical norm, interrupted only by a one-decade interregnum from the early-1990s to the early 2000s. The renewed US interest in Africa since the turn of the millennium was not due to a radical change in worldview or mind-set; it was essentially realist considerations that led the Bill Clinton administration to de-emphasise Sub-Saharan Africa in US global strategy. Since 2001, however, policymakers from both parties have increasingly identified important US interests there – oil, counterterrorism, and more recently commercial opportunities – leading to a reappraisal of how the region fits into a 21st century US grand strategy that is inherently international and transnational in scope. While Africa is not fundamental to US hegemony in the way that the Middle East is, during the Bush and Obama years it was increasingly considered in geopolitical and commercial terms in the way that other regions of the world, such as Latin America and Southeast Asia, have been continuously since the Cold War.

The implementation of many of the US initiatives described here – such as security assistance and capacity building programmes – was only possible with the consent of the African governments involved, which no doubt had their own reasons for working with the United States, although AFRICOM was the obvious exception.¹³³ For the U.S, these alliances were essential because U.S. global strategy in the 21st century is

¹³³ What motivated these governments to co-operate with the United States is a subject that requires further research. Preliminary discussions include: Nikolas Emmanuel, ‘African peacekeepers in Africa’ *African Security Review*, Vol. 24, No.1, January 2015: 23-38; and Brian J. Hesse, ‘Why Deploy to Somalia? Understanding Six Countries Reasons for Sending Soldiers to One of the World’s Most Failed States’ *Journal of the Middle East and Africa*, Vol. 6, No. 3-4, 2015: 329-352.

inherently international and transnational: it seeks to uphold and extend a world order from which other countries may derive benefits, and also to counter security challenges such as terrorism and piracy, which transcend state borders. The latter two necessitated multilateral and bilateral responses because targets may be located in multiple jurisdictions. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the result was a constellation of bilateral and multilateral alliances with the United States at the centre.¹³⁴ While these partnerships were consensual, their activities were nevertheless shaped predominantly by US conceptions of what ails Africa. The narrative of the ‘war on terror’ and the related assumptions about weak states as potential incubators of terrorism, were conceived in Washington and transposed onto the Sahel, the Maghreb, and the Horn of Africa with minimal input from local actors, despite their willingness to co-operate.

The fact that there was some degree of consent to the US approach should not divert us from the problems associated with it. As the United States integrates Sub-Saharan Africa into its global strategy, it has already begun to repeat mistakes made in other regions of the world, especially with regard to military intervention. Support for Ethiopia against the Islamic Courts contributed to the evolution of Al Shabaab into a deadly transnational terrorist network and Al Qaeda franchise. The US-led capacity building approach that has been at the heart of counterterrorism efforts in Sub-Saharan Africa failed in Mali, while Boko Haram has expanded the scope and reach of its activities in Nigeria – a participant in the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative since 2005.¹³⁵ Nor has the US-led anti-piracy effort designed to secure the

¹³⁴ On the Bush administration’s strategic rejection of unilateralism more broadly, see Maria Ryan, ‘Bush the transnationalist: a reappraisal of the unilateralist impulse in US foreign policy, 2001–2009’, *International Affairs*, 54 (5): 561-582.

¹³⁵ Country Reports on Terrorism 2015, Chapter 2, Africa Overview, ‘Nigeria’, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2015/257514.htm> (22.12.17).

Gulf of Guinea enjoyed much, if any, success. That military intervention is not always welcomed by those on the receiving end and does not always achieve its objectives is hardly a new lesson for policy-makers but nevertheless it has been demonstrated again as the US renews its engagement with Sub-Saharan Africa in the 21st century.

Thus far, most of these US-led initiatives have eschewed established multilateral institutions, though as noted above the U.S. has not acted alone. Moreover, since the Islamic Courts did not in fact invade Ethiopia in 2006, US support for Addis Ababa's invasion of Somalia was moot under international law. US-led efforts that have bypassed multilateral organisations and, in at least one case, ignored international law have been relatively unsuccessful. In contrast, the only security programme so far to achieve substantive and measurable success in this period of renewed US engagement with Africa has been the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia – the major multilateral anti-piracy programme run by recognised international institutions rather than by the United States. Thus far, only a major international coalition has been willing and able to supply the resources required to cope with the scale of a transnational security problem like piracy. However, it seems unlikely that this approach will be expanded. Given that the ultimate purpose of U.S. grand strategy in the early 21st century has been national primacy, and since the approach to Sub-Saharan Africa has been bipartisan, a radical change in Washington's approach seems unlikely.