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The Development of the United States Africa Command and its Role in America's Africa Policy under George W. Bush and Barack Obama

J. PETER PHAM

The announcement in early 2007 of the decision to create the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) generated considerable controversy, not only in Africa, but also within the United States. Seven years into its existence, it is possible to tentatively reexamine the premises underlying the establishment of AFRICOM as well as its activities to date, measuring them against both the promises held out by the command's proponents and the fears raised concerning it by critics. The conclusion is that, protestations to the contrary by certain U.S. officials notwithstanding, American interests were indeed the primary motivation for the command's launch. Nonetheless, it has turned out that in pursuit of those strategic objectives—both during the remainder of the George W. Bush administration and, subsequently, in the first six years of Barack Obama's presidency—AFRICOM's activities have been largely an extension of ongoing U.S. security cooperation with the African states involved, and perhaps improved delivery of these efforts' services, rather than the vanguard of some new militarized foreign policy. While a number of questions linger, AFRICOM seems to be progressively finding its niche within both U.S. policy and Africa's own security architecture.

KEYWORDS *African security, George W. Bush, Barack Obama, United States Africa Command (AFRICOM), U.S. foreign policy, U.S.–Africa relations*

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INTRODUCTION

The announcement in February 2007 by President George W. Bush of his decision to establish a United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) to “enhance [American] efforts to bring peace and security to the people of Africa and promote our common goals of development, health, education, democracy, and economic growth in Africa” by strengthening bilateral and multilateral security cooperation with African states and creating new opportunities to bolster their capabilities¹ was arguably the most significant change in nearly half a century of U.S. foreign policy with respect to the continent.² It also proved to be one of the most controversial, eliciting an ongoing storm of protests and criticism from policymakers and commentators not only in Africa but also within the United States,³ which was met in turn with equally impassioned rejoinders as well as more dispassionate analysis.⁴ AFRICOM became fully operational as America’s sixth “geographic unified combatant command”⁵ on October 1, 2008, and is now led by General David M. Rodriguez, who took over for General Carter F. Ham in April 2013. General William E. Ward served as the command’s inaugural commander, completing his tenure in March 2011. AFRICOM’s seven years of operations to date (counting its first year as a subordinate command under the U.S.

¹White House Office of the Press Secretary, “President Bush Creates a Department of Defense Unified Command for Africa,” February 6, 2007, accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2007/02/20070206-3.html>.

²See Claudia E. Anyaso, ed., *Fifty Years of U.S. Africa Policy: Reflections of Assistant Secretaries for African Affairs and U.S. Embassy Officials* (Washington, D.C.: Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, 2011).

³See, *inter alia*, Mark Malan, “AFRICOM: A Wolf in Sheep’s Clothing,” Testimony Before the Subcommittee on Africa, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, 110th Congress, August 2007, accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/MalanTestimony070801.pdf>; Jeremy Keenan, “U.S. Militarization in Africa: What Anthropologists Should Know About AFRICOM,” *Anthropology Today* 24, no. 5 (October 2009): 16–20; and Gilbert L. Taguem Fah, “Dealing with Africom: The Political Economy of Anger and Protest,” *Journal of Pan African Studies* 3, no. 6 (March 2010): 81–93.

⁴See, *inter alia*, Sean McFate, “U.S. Africa Command: Next Step or Next Stumble?” *African Affairs* 107, no. 426 (January 2008): 111–21; J. Peter Pham, “America’s New Africa Command: Paradigm Shift or Step Backwards?” *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 15, no. 1 (Fall/Winter 2008): 257–72; D. G. Jamieson, “AFRICOM: A Threat or an Opportunity for African Security?” *South African Journal of International Affairs* 16, no. 3 (December 2009): 311–29; and J. Peter Pham, “AFRICOM from Bush to Obama,” *South African Journal of International Affairs* 18, no. 1 (April 2011): 107–24.

⁵The other geographic unified combatant commands are the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), the U.S. European Command (EUCOM), the U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM), the U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM), and the U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM). In addition, there are three functional commands: the U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM), the U.S. Strategic Command (STRATCOM), and the U.S. Transportation Command (TRANSCOM). In May 2010, the U.S. Cyber Command (CYBERCOM) was activated as a sub-unified command subordinate to STRATCOM, while the U.S. Joint Forces Command (JFCOM) was disestablished as a distinct command in August 2011, having largely accomplished its mission to embed joint operations in all branches of the military.

European Command) provide an opportunity for a closer examination of both its evolving doctrine and its activities that indicates that it has neither lived up to the best promises of its proponents nor justified the worst fears raised by its critics.

While some of the controversy surrounding the initial establishment of AFRICOM can be attributed to the failure of the U.S. government to adequately communicate its motivations, capabilities, and intentions,⁶ senior officials did not make the situation any better by minimizing the significance of the undertaking as, in the words of one summary, “primarily an internal bureaucratic shift, a more efficient and sensible way of organizing the U.S. military’s relations with Africa”⁷ and refraining from any discussion of the strategic calculus behind the biggest internal shuffle within the American military since the entry into force of the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986. Unfortunately, this disingenuous response only heightened suspicions—and not just among fringe conspiracy theorists—that a hidden agenda was being pursued, thereby undermining the efforts made by General Ward and key members of the initial leadership team to explain to diverse audiences their mission of conducting “sustained security engagement through military-to-military programs, military-sponsored activities, and other military operations as directed to promote a stable and secure African environment in support of U.S. foreign policy.”⁸

In the interest of both greater transparency and more effective dialogue, the strategic reasons motivating this historic commitment by the U.S. military to Africa should be spelled out, examined, and, where necessary, critiqued and debated. Thus this article will argue that there are several rational reasons why AFRICOM made strategic sense for the United States at the command’s outset—and why these reasons remain relevant today—and that articulating a realist policy based on these considerations, rather than avoiding the discussion altogether, is the most likely path for achieving understanding of American political and security purposes in Africa, even if there is not always agreement as to whether these ends necessarily align with the goals that Africans have themselves set. Even where the interests are complementary, there are lingering questions about both the identity of AFRICOM as a military structure for advancing those objectives and its very sustainability, especially in the current fiscal environment.

⁶See James J. F. Forest and Rebecca Crispin, “AFRICOM: Troubled Infancy, Promising Future,” *Contemporary Security Policy* 30, no. 1 (April 2009): 5–27.

⁷Greg Mills, Terence McNamee, and Mauro De Lorenzo, *AFRICOM and African Security: The Globalization of Security or the Militarization of Globalization?* Discussion Paper 4 (Johannesburg: Brenthurst Foundation, 2007), 1.

⁸U.S. Africa Command, “Fact Sheet: United States Africa Command,” October 18, 2008, accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://www.africom.mil/getArticle.asp?art=1644>.

U.S. INTERESTS IN AFRICA

The *raison d'être* for the existence of AFRICOM is the recognition that the United States does indeed have significant national interests in Africa that require it to engage the continent, its states, and its peoples, and that ultimately these interests are significant enough for the United States to justify sustaining a long-term commitment. While this assertion may seem a bit tautological, it should be recalled that it was barely fourteen years ago that none other than George W. Bush, while campaigning for the White House, responded negatively to a question from a television interviewer about whether Africa fit into his definition of the strategic interests of the United States: "At some point in time the president's got to clearly define what the national strategic interests are, and while Africa may be important, it doesn't fit into the national strategic interests, as far as I can see them."⁹

In truth, Bush's assertion was not particularly exceptional except perhaps in the brusque manner of its expression. Princeton Lyman, a former assistant secretary of state who also previously served as U.S. ambassador to Nigeria and to South Africa and later served as President Barack Obama's special envoy to Sudan and South Sudan, acknowledged that Bush's comment basically reflected "what had in fact been the approach of both Democratic and Republican administrations for decades."¹⁰ With the exception of the Cold War period, when strategists worried about perceived Soviet attempts to secure a foothold on the continent, American interests in Africa have historically been framed almost exclusively in terms of the humanitarian consequences of poverty, war, and natural disaster, rather than strategic considerations. Moral impulses, however, rarely had the staying power to sustain anything beyond episodic attention. In fact, during the administration of President Bill Clinton, in 1995, barely one year after the Rwandan genocide, some Pentagon planners argued in an official position paper that the United States should hold itself aloof from engagement on the African continent because they could "see very little traditional strategic interest in Africa" and were convinced that "America's security interests in Africa are very limited."¹¹

Hence it stands to reason that if, in just over a decade, the foreign and defense policy establishment within the United States went from a disavowal

⁹George W. Bush, interview by Jim Lehrer, *NewsHour*, PBS, February 16, 2000, accessed August 19, 2014, at http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/election/jan-june00/bush_2-16.html.

¹⁰Princeton N. Lyman, "A Strategic Approach to Terrorism," in *Africa-U.S. Relations: Strategic Encounters*, ed. Donald Rothchild and Edmund J. Keller (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2006), 49.

¹¹U.S. Department of Defense, Office of International Security Affairs, "United States Strategy for Sub-Saharan Africa," August 1, 1995, accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://www.defenselink.mil/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=943>.

of any security interest in Africa to such an embrace of the continent's geopolitical importance that the creation of a unified combatant command was not only justified, but imperative, a shift in strategic perspective with respect to national interests must have taken place. So what might these perceived interests have been?

Counterterrorism

In the context of America's counterterrorism efforts, it is imperative to prevent Africa's poorly governed spaces from being exploited to provide facilitating environments, recruits, and eventual targets for Islamist terrorists. As the 2002 *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* noted, "Weak states . . . can pose as great a danger to our national interests as strong states. Poverty does not make poor people into terrorists and murderers. Yet poverty, weak institutions, and corruption can make weak states vulnerable to terrorist networks and drug cartels within their borders."¹² With the possible exception of the wider Middle East (including Afghanistan and Pakistan), nowhere did this analysis seem more applicable at the time than Africa, where regional conflicts arising from a variety of causes, including poor governance, external aggression, competing claims, internal revolt, and ethnic and religious tensions, had all led "to the same ends: failed states, humanitarian disasters, and ungoverned areas that can become safe havens for terrorists."¹³ The attacks by al-Qaeda on the U.S. embassies in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and Nairobi, Kenya, in 1998, as well as the group's simultaneous attacks on an Israeli-owned hotel in Mombasa, Kenya, and an Israeli commercial airliner in 2002, only underscored for Washington policymakers the deadly reality of the terrorist threat in Africa,¹⁴ as did the "rebranding" of the Algerian Islamist terrorist organization GSPC (*Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat*, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat) as the Organization for Jihad in the Land of the Islamic Maghreb (also known as Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, or AQIM).¹⁵ Also noted were the ongoing activities of various militant Islamist movements in the

¹²White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, September 17, 2002, accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/nsc/nss/2002/>.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴See J. Peter Pham, "Next Front? Evolving U.S.-African Strategic Relations in the 'War on Terrorism' and Beyond," *Comparative Strategy* 26, no. 1 (2007): 39-54; idem, "Securing Africa," *Journal of International Security Affairs* 13 (Fall 2007): 15-24; and Peter Schraeder, "The African Dimension in U.S. Foreign Policy in the Post-9/11 Era," in *Estratégia e segurança na África austral*, ed. Manuela Franco (Lisbon: FLAD/IPRI, 2007), 171-96.

¹⁵See Guido Steinberg and Isabelle Werenfels, "Between the 'Near' and the 'Far' Enemy: Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb," *Mediterranean Politics* 12, no. 3 (2007): 407-13; also see J. Peter Pham, "Foreign Influences and Shifting Horizons: The Ongoing Evolution of al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb," *Orbis* 55, no. 2 (Spring 2011): 240-54; and idem, "The Dangerous 'Pragmatism' of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb," *Journal of the Middle East and Africa* 2, no. 1 (January-June 2011): 15-29.

territory of the former Somali Democratic Republic,¹⁶ including al-Shabaab, an al-Qaeda-linked group designated a “foreign terrorist organization” by the U.S. State Department in early 2008, as well as the threat posed to global commerce by Somali piracy.¹⁷ While the Somali piracy threat has largely been stemmed—the Somali coast experienced 15 incidents in 2013, down from 75 incidents in 2012 and a peak of 237 incidents in 2011¹⁸—thanks to the placement of armed guards on ships, the establishment of international naval guards, and, perhaps more marginally, the influence of Somalia’s government,¹⁹ the fight against terrorism throughout the continent is far from over. As was underscored by an AQIM splinter group attack on Algeria’s In Amenas gas plant in January 2013 that left at least thirty-nine foreign hostages dead and al-Shabaab’s attack on Nairobi’s Westgate Mall in September 2013 in retaliation for the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM), an operation heavily backed by the United States, that left more than sixty-seven dead²⁰—to say nothing of the September 2012 attack on the U.S. diplomatic compound in Benghazi, Libya, which ultimately cost the lives of U.S. ambassador J. Christopher Stevens and three other American diplomatic and intelligence officials—violent extremists continue to demonstrate their destructive capabilities and threat to Western interests across the African continent. In fact, shortly before he retired from his command, General Ham testified before the U.S. Senate that counterterrorism is AFRICOM’s “highest priority and will remain so for the foreseeable future”²¹ as extremist organizations—namely AQIM and its affiliates in North and West Africa, al-Shabaab in the Horn of Africa,²² and Boko Haram in Nigeria and neighboring countries²³—increasingly interact with each other across the continent.

¹⁶See, *inter alia*, Shaul Shay, *Somalia Bbetween Jibad and Restoration* (Edison, NJ: Transaction, 2008).

¹⁷See Bibi van Ginkel and Frans-Paul van der Putten, eds., *The International Response to Somali Piracy: Challenges and Opportunities* (Leiden & Boston: Martinus Nijhoff, 2010).

¹⁸International Chamber of Commerce, “Somali Pirate Clampdown Caused Drop in Worldwide Piracy, IMB Reveals,” January 15, 2014, accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://www.icc-ccs.org/news/904-somali-pirate-clampdown-caused-drop-in-global-piracy-imb-reveals>.

¹⁹BBC, “Drop in sea piracy helped by big Somali improvement, says watchdog,” January 15, 2014, accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-25746045>.

²⁰See Bronwyn Bruton and Paul D. Williams, “Cut-rate counterterrorism: Why America can no longer afford to outsource the war on al-Shabab,” *Foreign Policy*, October 7, 2013, accessed August 19, 2014, at http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/10/07/cut_rate_counterterrorism.

²¹U.S. Africa Command, “AFRICOM, TRANSCOM Commanders Testify Before Senate Armed Service Committee,” March 7, 2013, accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://www.africom.mil/Newsroom/Transcript/10566/transcript-africom-transcom-commanders-testify-before-senate-armed-services-committee>.

²²See Stig Jarle Hansen, *Al-Shabaab in Somalia: The History and Ideology of a Militant Islamist Group, 2005–2012* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

²³See J. Peter Pham, *Boko Haram’s Evolving Threat*, African Security Brief 20 (Washington, D.C.: Africa Center for Strategic Studies, National Defense University, 2012).

Strategic Resources

Two other U.S. interests have been the protection of access to hydrocarbons and other strategic resources that Africa has in abundance and promotion of the integration of African nations into the global economy. Early in the Bush administration, even before the 9/11 attacks, the president's National Energy Policy Development Group, chaired by Vice President Dick Cheney, published a report that argued that the only way to maintain American prosperity was to ensure that the United States had reliable access to increasing quantities of oil and natural gas from both domestic and foreign sources.²⁴ Specifically, the report expressed concern about the "policy challenge" posed by "the concentration of world oil production in any one area of the world"²⁵ (i.e., the Persian Gulf region) and suggested that among those places to which America might turn for a more diversified supply was sub-Saharan Africa, which held "7 percent of world oil reserves and 11 percent of world oil production" and was "expected to be one of the fastest-growing sources of oil and gas for the American market."²⁶ In fact, in 2008, the last year of the Bush presidency, data from the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration showed that African countries were the source of more of America's petroleum imports (916,727,000 barrels, or 19.5% of U.S. imports) than were the states of the Persian Gulf region (868,516,000 barrels, or 18.4%).²⁷

While the prospects for oil in Africa remain optimistic—124 billion barrels of proven oil reserves as of the end of 2012²⁸—the inauguration of Barack Obama as president appears to have led to a digression from the Bush strategy. The new administration's White House website proclaims its goal to "eliminate our current imports from the Middle East and Venezuela within ten years."²⁹ In fact, much of America's demand for oil has been met by increased Gulf imports and ramped-up domestic American production, especially as a result of the "shale gas revolution," rather than by additional

²⁴National Energy Policy Development Group, *Reliable, Affordable, and Environmentally Sound Energy for America's Future: Report of the National Energy Policy Development Group* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, May 16, 2001), accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA392171&Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf>.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration, "US Total Crude Oil and Products Imports," February 27, 2009, accessed August 19, 2014, at http://tonto.eia.doe.gov/dnav/pet/pet_move_impcus_a2_nus_ep00_im0_mbb1_m.htm.

²⁸KPMG Africa, *Oil and Gas in Africa: Africa's Reserves, Potential, and Prospects* (KPMG Africa Limited, 2013), accessed August 19, 2014, at <https://www.kpmg.com/Africa/en/IssuesAndInsights/Articles-Publications/Documents/Oil%20and%20Gas%20in%20Africa.pdf>.

²⁹White House, "Energy Plan Overview," accessed August 19, 2014, at http://www.whitehouse.gov/agenda/energy_and_environment/.

imports from Africa, which have actually decreased.³⁰ American imports of Nigerian crude, for example, have virtually ceased altogether.³¹ Nevertheless, U.S. planners are also cognizant that other countries, including China, India, and Russia, have been attracted by the African continent's natural wealth and have recently increased their own engagements there.³²

Of course, hydrocarbons are not the only natural resources for which there is high demand. Africa holds 95 percent of the world's reserves of platinum group metals, 90 percent of its chromite ore reserves, and 85 percent of its phosphate rock reserves, as well as more than half of its cobalt and one-third of its bauxite. African agriculture's importance is also growing as demand for food by the developing world's rising and increasingly affluent populations surges, even as local resources diminish. In contrast, in many places in Africa, the proportion of arable land under cultivation is negligible: in South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to cite just two cases, less than 10 percent of potential cropland has been exploited.³³

Although most U.S. officials have, insofar as possible, avoided confrontation with other outside actors—and, indeed, have gone out of their way to seek cooperation in areas where their interests, and those of Africans, complement each other—representatives of both American political parties have also been careful to emphasize the need to be vigilant to ensure that there are no monopolies or preferential treatment. In fact, during the 2008 presidential contest, Witney Schneidman, a former deputy assistant secretary of state for African affairs who served as co-chair of the Obama campaign's Africa advisory group, spoke explicitly of the need to “engage the Chinese to establish the rules of the road and to ensure that we are working at common purpose to enhance economic development on the continent.”³⁴

³⁰U.S. Energy Information Administration, “U.S. Imports by Country of Origin,” June 2014, accessed August 19, 2014, at http://www.eia.gov/dnav/pet/pet_move_impcus_a2_nus_ep00_im0_mbbbl_m.htm.

³¹See John Ofikhenua, “U.S. stops importation of Nigeria's oil over shale,” *Nation* (Lagos), June 5, 2014, accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://thenationonlineeng.net/new/u-s-stops-importation-nigerias-oil-shale-says-minister/>.

³²See J. Peter Pham, “China's African Strategy and Its Implications for U.S. Interests,” *American Foreign Policy Interests* 28, no. 3, (May/June 2006): 239–53; idem, “India's Expanding Relations with Africa and Their Implications for U.S. Interests,” *American Foreign Policy Interests* 29, no. 5 (September/October 2007): 341–52; idem, “Back to Africa: Russia's New African Engagement,” in *Africa and the New World Era: From Humanitarianism to a Strategic View*, ed. Jack Mangala (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 71–83; idem, “Inde-Afrique, un Marriage Discret,” *Alternatives Internationales* 53 (December 2011): 10–13; idem, “What Xi sees in Africa,” *New Atlanticist*, March 25, 2013, accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/what-xi-sees-in-africa>; idem, “India's New African Horizons: An American Perspective,” *Africa Review* 5, no. 2 (2013): 93–103; and idem, “Russia's return to Africa,” *New Atlanticist*, March 13, 2014, accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/publications/articles/russia-s-return-to-africa>.

³³See idem, “Africa Emergent: Five Trends Driving Africa's Buoyant Economic Prospects,” *Diplomatic Courier* 6, no. 4 (July/August 2012): 8–10.

³⁴Witney Schneidman, “Africa: Obama's three objectives for the Continent,” *allAfrica.com*, September 29, 2008, accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/200809291346.html>.

Humanitarian Assistance and Development

Yet another priority of U.S. foreign policy is the empowerment of Africans and other partners to cope with the myriad humanitarian challenges, both manmade and natural, that afflict the continent at a seemingly disproportionate rate. These challenges include not just the devastating tolls that conflict, poverty, and disease, especially HIV/AIDS, exact on Africans, but also the depredations the inhabitants suffer at the hands of the continent's remaining rogue regimes. While not an "interest" in the classical political realist sense, this preoccupation reflects a certain type of idealism that has been part and parcel of the United States' foreign policy throughout its history.³⁵ While Africa boasts the world's fastest rate of population growth—by 2030, Africans will number more than 1.6 billion,³⁶ up from 900 million at the dawn of the twenty-first century and more than the combined populations of Europe and North America—the dynamic potential implicit in this expected growth is constrained by economic and epidemiological factors. At the time AFRICOM was created, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had determined that all twenty-two of the countries with "low development" in the world were African states.³⁷ While sub-Saharan Africa was then home to only 10 percent of the world's population, nearly two-thirds of the people infected with HIV (24.7 million) were sub-Saharan Africans, with an estimated 2.8 million becoming infected in 2006, more than in any other region in the world.³⁸ Rates of HIV infection appear to have stabilized—with an estimated 1.6 million new infections in 2012—although the 25 million sub-Saharan Africans currently living with HIV present a formidable public health challenge.³⁹

Although the Bush administration's 2003 *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* argued that terrorist organizations have little in common with the poor and destitute, it also acknowledged that terrorists can

³⁵See Walter Russell Mead, *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World* (New York/London: Routledge, 2001).

³⁶Population Reference Bureau, "World Population Data Sheet 2013," accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://www.prb.org/Publications/Datasheets/2013/2013-world-population-data-sheet/world-map.aspx#table/world/population/2013>; and African Development Bank Group, "Africa's Demographic Trends," March 7, 2012, 1, accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Policy-Documents/FINAL%20Briefing%20Note%204%20Africas%20Demographic%20Trends.pdf>.

³⁷United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Human Development Report 2007/2008. Fighting Climate Change: Human Solidarity in a Divided World* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 229–32.

³⁸Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), *2006 AIDS Epidemic Report* (Geneva: UNAIDS, 2006), 10.

³⁹UNAIDS and World Health Organization, "Core Epidemiology Slides," September 2013, 4, accessed August 19, 2014, at http://www.unaids.org/en/media/unaids/contentassets/documents/epidemiology/2013/gr2013/201309_epi_core_en.pdf.

exploit these socioeconomic conditions to their advantage.⁴⁰ And exploitation of the poor remains a potential threat, as evidenced by the 2013 *Human Development Report*, in which the UNDP found that, out of forty-four “low development” countries, thirty-five are African states.⁴¹ The Bush administration, working with Congress, consolidated the comprehensive trade and investment policy for Africa introduced by the Clinton administration in the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) of 2000, which substantially lowered commercial barriers between the United States and African countries and allowed sub-Saharan African countries to qualify for trade benefits. It also made HIV/AIDS on the continent a priority, with twelve of the fifteen focus countries in the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) being in Africa, including Botswana, Côte d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. With a five-year, \$15 billion price tag, PEPFAR, announced in 2003, was the largest commitment ever made by any nation to an international health initiative dedicated to a single disease—and that was before the 110th Congress, by a broad bipartisan majority, passed the Tom Lantos and Henry J. Hyde United States Global Leadership Against HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria Reauthorization Act of 2008, tripling the initiative’s funding to \$48 billion over the next five years. The initiative’s funding has remained steady since then, averaging over \$6 billion a year into 2013 for a cumulative \$52.3 billion spent on PEPFAR programming since its inception.⁴² Meanwhile, the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), established in 2004, is perhaps the most important innovation in bilateral foreign assistance in several decades.⁴³ Before a country can become eligible to receive assistance, the MCC’s board examines its performance using a series of independent policy indicators, selecting eligible countries based on positive trends. The MCC’s Millennium Challenge Account provides money to qualifying countries for “compact agreements” to fund specific major programs designated by the aid recipient and targeted at reducing poverty and stimulating economic growth; the MCC also funds “threshold programs” that aim to improve countries’ performance with an eye toward their achieving “compact” status. More than half of the eighty-three countries worldwide that

⁴⁰White House, *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, February 14, 2003, accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Digital-Library/Publications/Detail/?ord516=OrgaGrp&ots591=0c54e3b3-1e9c-be1e-2c24-a6a8c7060233&lng=en&id=10217>.

⁴¹UNDP, *Human Development Report 2013. The Rise of the South: Human Progress in a Diverse World* (New York: UNDP, 2013), 192–93, accessed August 19, 2014, at http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/14/hdr2013_en_complete.pdf.

⁴²U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, “Shared Responsibility—Strengthening Results for an AIDS-Free Generation: The Latest PEPFAR Funding,” March 2014, accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://www.pepfar.gov/documents/organization/189671.pdf>.

⁴³See Steven W. Hook, “Ideas and Change in U.S. Foreign Policy: Inventing the Millennium Challenge Corporation,” *Foreign Policy Analysis* 4, no. 2 (April 2008): 147–67.

have been eligible for some MCC funding, either through the “threshold program” or through “compact assistance,” since the initiative’s inception are in Africa.⁴⁴ Under the Obama administration, funding for this signature initiative peaked at \$1.105 billion in fiscal year 2010 before leveling off at just over \$898 million for fiscal years 2011 to 2014. The request that the administration has submitted to Congress for fiscal year 2015 (which begins October 1, 2014) is for \$1 billion.⁴⁵

Increasingly, trade and investment have become the points of emphasis in U.S. discussions of African development as policymakers from the president down come to recognize the extraordinary entrepreneurial dynamism that characterizes much of African business, as well as the reality that the continent is home to seven of the ten fastest-growing economies in the world and is not just a perennial beneficiary of charitable handouts in need of constant rescue. In fact, this new tone dominated the first-ever U.S.–African Leaders Summit held in Washington in August 2014.⁴⁶

Shared Interests

Of course, the United States is not alone in having strategic interests in Africa, and, in fact, Washington policymakers and analysts are showing greater sensibility of the common objectives on the continent that they share with many of America’s treaty allies and other traditional partners, both in Africa and in Europe. Increasingly, these allies have sought ways to work together to achieve those goals. For example, the links between the United States and Morocco are among the oldest of America’s diplomatic bonds, with Sultan Mohammed III being, in 1777, the first foreign sovereign to recognize the independence of the thirteen former British colonies. However, it is only more recently that the vital role the North African country can play in African security and development has become more fully appreciated by the United States.⁴⁷ Following a November 2013 meeting in Washington between

⁴⁴African countries currently eligible for MCC “threshold” or “compact” assistance include Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Republic of Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Of course not all “eligible” countries are awarded the modest “threshold” grants, much less given the sought-after “compacts” that are the ultimate goal.

⁴⁵See Curt Tarnoff, “Millennium Challenge Corporation,” *Congressional Research Service*, April 8, 2014, 19, accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL32427.pdf>.

⁴⁶See Jim Randle, “Trade, investment, growth are key issues at U.S.-Africa summit,” *Voice of America*, July 30, 2014, accessed October 27, 2014, at <http://www.voanews.com/content/trade-investment-growth-are-key-issues-at-us-africa-summit/1968479.html>.

⁴⁷See J. Peter Pham, *Morocco’s Vital Role in Northwest Africa’s Security and Development*, Atlantic Council Issue Brief, November 2013, accessed August 19, 2014, at http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/images/publications/Moroccos_Vital_Role.pdf.

President Barack Obama and King Mohammed VI, a joint statement noted that “the two Heads of State were pleased to note their common assessment of the critical role of human and economic development in promoting stability and security on the African continent, and committed to explore in greater detail concrete options for pragmatic, inclusive cooperation around economic and development issues of mutual interest.” This statement further committed both countries “to explore joint initiatives to promote human development and stability through food security, access to energy, and the promotion of trade” across Africa.⁴⁸

Similarly, during the February 2014 state visit to the United States of French president François Hollande, he and Obama published a joint opinion editorial hailing Franco-American cooperation in Africa:

Perhaps nowhere is our new partnership on more vivid display than in Africa. In Mali, French and African Union forces—with U.S. logistical and information support—have pushed back al-Qaeda-linked insurgents, allowing the people of Mali to pursue a democratic future. Across the Sahel, we are partnering with countries to prevent al-Qaeda from gaining new footholds. In the Central African Republic, French and African Union soldiers—backed by American airlift and support—are working to stem violence and create space for dialogue, reconciliation and swift progress to transitional elections.

Across the continent, from Senegal to Somalia, we are helping train and equip local forces so they can take responsibility for their own security. We are partnering with governments and citizens who want to strengthen democratic institutions, improve agriculture and alleviate hunger, expand access to electricity and deliver the treatment that saves lives from infectious diseases. Our two countries were the earliest and are among the strongest champions of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.⁴⁹

AFRICOM IN ACTION

If the establishment of a military command was intended primarily to secure U.S. national interests in Africa—and evidence seems to indicate that this is not an unfair characterization, the repeated denials of some officials

⁴⁸White House, Office of the Press Secretary, “Joint Statement of the United States of America and the Kingdom of Morocco,” November 22, 2013, accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/11/22/joint-statement-united-states-america-and-kingdom-morocco>.

⁴⁹Barack Obama and François Hollande, “France and the U.S. enjoy a renewed alliance,” *Washington Post*, February 10, 2014, accessed August 19, 2014, at http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/obama-and-hollande-france-and-the-us-enjoy-a-renewed-alliance/2014/02/09/039ffd34-91af-11e3-b46a-5a3d0d2130da_story.html.

notwithstanding—how has the experiment worked out so far? And how have the interests of Africans fared in the process?

Amid all the controversy that the establishment of the new command engendered, one would be excused for mistakenly believing, on the basis of the arguments adduced by both its critics and some defenders, that American security engagement in Africa was an entirely new phenomenon, rather than one with a history dating back two centuries.⁵⁰ In fact, U.S. Defense Department agencies have been continuously involved in a number of security cooperation efforts across Africa, responsibility for the implementation of which was simply assumed by AFRICOM after its creation instead of being parceled out among three separate commands.⁵¹

Pan-Sahel and Trans-Sahara

The U.S.-led counterterrorism program in the Maghreb and Sahel is an example of this evolution. In late 2002, for example, the State Department launched the Pan-Sahel Initiative (PSI), a modest effort to provide border security and other counterterrorism assistance to Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger using personnel from U.S. Army Special Forces attached to the Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR), a component of the Stuttgart, Germany-based U.S. European Command. Funding for the PSI was modest, amounting to under \$7 million in fiscal year 2004, most of which was spent on training military units from the four partner countries. U.S. Marines were also involved with certain aspects of the training, and Air Force personnel provided support, including medical and dental care for members of local units as well as neighboring residents. The program's modest funding was stretched to provide participating military forces with nonlethal equipment, including Toyota Land Cruisers, uniforms, and global positioning system (GPS) devices.⁵² As a follow-up to the PSI, as well as to overcome what then—Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for African Affairs

⁵⁰See J. Peter Pham, "Been There, Already Doing That: America's Ongoing Security Engagement in Africa," *Contemporary Security Policy* 30, no. 1 (April 2009): 72–78.

⁵¹Before the establishment of AFRICOM, EUCOM's area of responsibility embraced Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, in addition to some fifty Eurasian states. CENTCOM had responsibility in Africa for Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Seychelles, Somalia, and Sudan, as well as the waters of the Red Sea and the western portions of the Indian Ocean not covered by PACOM. PACOM's African responsibilities included Comoros, Mauritius, and Madagascar, as well as the waters of the Indian Ocean, excluding those north of 5° S and west of 68° E (which were covered by CENTCOM) and those west of 42° E (which were part of EUCOM's space).

⁵²See Stephen Ellis, "Briefing: The Pan-Sahel Initiative," *African Affairs* 103, no. 412 (July 2004): 459–64.

Theresa Whelan called its “Band-Aid approach,”⁵³ the U.S. State Department funded the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative (TSCTI). The TSCTI was launched in 2005 with support from the U.S. Defense Department’s Operation Enduring Freedom-Trans Sahara (OEF-TS) and added Algeria, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Morocco, Senegal, and Tunisia to the original four PSI countries.⁵⁴ Funding for the TSCTI (which was, in turn, renamed the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Program, or TSCTP, when the newly created AFRICOM assumed responsibility for its military component in late 2007, and, subsequently, the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership, likewise TSCTP) was increased steadily from \$16 million in 2005 to \$30 million in 2006, with incremental increases up to about \$100 million a year through 2011. Funding in recent years for the partnership has fluctuated but for fiscal year 2013 was just over \$83 million.⁵⁵ Today the TSCTP works with partner nations to provide training and support, with an emphasis on preventing terrorism, enhancing border and aviation security, promoting democratic governance, and building public support against extremism. The participation of Algeria and Morocco in this program is significant, since Algiers voiced official opposition to the creation of AFRICOM, and even Morocco, long one of America’s closest allies, has expressed misgivings about being asked to host any part of the command.⁵⁶

Military support for the TSCTP comes through OEF-TS, the regional iteration of the American military’s counterterrorism program, responsibility for which devolved to AFRICOM after the command’s establishment in 2008 (in addition to the TSCTP countries, OEF-TS also includes Burkina Faso and Libya).⁵⁷ The achievements of this program in terms of military interoperability and capacity building were put on display in February and March of 2014 during a three-week-long exercise called Flintlock 2014. This regional military exercise includes African, Western, and U.S. counterterrorism forces and has taken place annually since 2006. Flintlock 2014 involved some 1,000 troops—including advisors from eighteen African countries—hailing from Burkina Faso, Canada, Chad, France, Mauritania, the Netherlands,

⁵³Quoted in Donna Miles, “New counterterrorism initiative to focus on Saharan Africa,” American Forces Press Service, May 16, 2005, accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://www.defenselink.mil/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=31643>.

⁵⁴Cameroon joined the TSCTP in January 2014.

⁵⁵Office of the Secretary of Defense, “Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 President’s Budget,” May 2013, 22, accessed August 19, 2014, at [http://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/fy2014/FY2014_Presidents_Budget_Contingency_Operations\(Base_Budget\).pdf](http://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/fy2014/FY2014_Presidents_Budget_Contingency_Operations(Base_Budget).pdf); and U.S. Department of State, “Congressional Budget Justification, Volume 2: Foreign Operations,” February 13, 2012, 133, accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/185014.pdf>.

⁵⁶“Opposition to AFRICOM Grows,” *Africa Research Bulletin: Political, Social and Cultural Series* 44, no. 8 (September 2007): 17,208.

⁵⁷In addition to the military component, the TSCTP also receives support from other State Department initiatives—especially the Anti-Terrorism Assistance (ATA) program and the Terrorist Interdiction Program (TIP)—and other U.S. government agencies, including the U.S. Agency for International Development, the Department of the Treasury, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Nigeria, Senegal, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the host nation, Niger. Kicked off in Niamey, the exercises were conducted throughout Niger and were designed to build partner capacity to strengthen stability across the Sahel and North Africa. The exercises focused on the advancement of mutual security capacity and strengthening partnerships and bonds among participants. Military exercises of Flintlock 2014 consisted of military drills, including airborne supply delivery, weapons training, rehearsals for small-unit tactics, and humanitarian aid delivery to remote areas.⁵⁸ The tactical portion of Flintlock 2014 included small-unit combined counterterrorism training and relief operations that provided basic medical, dental, and veterinary access to a number of communities in Niger.⁵⁹

Africa Partnership Station

Alongside the predominantly Army-led initiatives onshore, the U.S. Navy conducts a number of programs related to maritime security off the African littoral. To date, the most significant naval contribution has been the Africa Partnership Station (APS), a part of the American Navy's "Global Fleet Station" initiative, which is designed to provide a platform with the capacity and persistent presence to support training and other partnership efforts in parts of the world where access and sustainability have historically been challenging. Building on progressively more intense engagements dating back to July 2004, when the aircraft carrier USS *Enterprise* led a battle group of some thirty vessels from nine countries, including Morocco, in exercises off the western coast of Africa as part of the worldwide Summer Pulse '04 deployment, the APS is designed to promote maritime safety and security in Africa through a collaborative effort, focusing initially—and primarily, although no longer exclusively—on the Gulf of Guinea.

The maiden voyage of the APS, which concluded in early 2008 and involved the six-month deployment of the amphibious dock landing ship USS *Fort McHenry*, accompanied by the catamaran HSV-2 *Swift*, included eighteen ports of call in ten countries. During this voyage, U.S. personnel provided shipboard training to more than 1,700 officers and sailors from partner nations in everything from small-boat handling, port security, and maintenance to noncommissioned officer leadership and international maritime law. Working with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) as well as nongovernmental organizations like the medical relief group Project HOPE, the *Fort McHenry* delivered one million high-nutritional

⁵⁸Will Cambardella, "Niger army trains on air resupply during Flintlock 2014," U.S. AFRICOM Newsroom, March 2014, accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://www.africom.mil/Newsroom/Article/11806/niger-army-trains-on-air-resupply-during-flintlock-2014>.

⁵⁹Scott Nielsen, "African-led exercise Flintlock kicks off in Niger," U.S. AFRICOM Newsroom, February 24, 2014, accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://www.africom.mil/Newsroom/article/11773/african-led-exercise-flintlock-kicks-off-in-niger>.

meals and twenty-five pallets of medical, hygienic, and educational supplies, along with hospital beds and other medical equipment valued at over \$100,000, donated through the Navy's Project Handclasp. During their port visits, sailors and other APS personnel used their liberty time to participate in some twenty-three community relations projects ranging from building tables for a school to painting a clinic.

As part of this inaugural deployment, the naval presence off the coast of Africa was also augmented by the *Los Angeles*-class nuclear-powered attack submarine USS *Annapolis*, which became the first U.S. submarine ever to make a visit to sub-Saharan Africa, and the *Ticonderoga*-class guided-missile cruiser USS *San Jacinto*. Altogether, the first APS cruise included visits to Angola, Benin, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, and Togo. Subsequently, the next action of the APS was the two-month deployment in mid-2008 of the *Hamilton*-class cutter USCGC *Dallas*, which visited Cape Verde, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Ghana, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Senegal. In early 2009, in response to the increasing reach of Somali pirate attacks and the demand for greater maritime security engagement on the part of states on the eastern littoral of Africa, the *Oliver Hazard Perry*-class frigate USS *Robert G. Bradley* brought the APS to Mozambique, Tanzania, and Kenya. The guided-missile destroyer USS *Arleigh Burke* followed in July and August of the same year, with theater security cooperation exercises with Djibouti, Kenya, Mauritius, Seychelles, South Africa, and Tanzania. In 2010, the *Whidbey Island*-class dock landing ship USS *Gunston Hall* led the APS's deployment to West and Central Africa, while the *Oliver Hazard Perry*-class frigate USS *Nicholas* led the initiative in East Africa. The fifth iteration of the APS in 2011 involved officers and seamen from thirty-four African, European, and South American countries in addition to U.S. Navy personnel, with the dispatch of the *Bradley* to West African waters and her sister ship, the USS *Stephen W. Groves*, to those off East Africa.

The steady pace of APS engagements has continued and has increasingly involved vessels from the navies of America's European and other allies. In February 2012, the program brought together more than thirty African, European, North American, and South American countries to launch a training program in Nigeria led by the guided-missile frigate USS *Simpson*, which then went on to complete a six-month deployment in the Gulf of Guinea, during which it was joined by the *Fort McHenry* and the *Swift*.⁶⁰ During 2013, the APS operated from the Royal Netherlands Navy landing platform dock

⁶⁰U.S. Navy, "Africa Partnership Station 2012 begins," Navy News Service, February 15, 2012, accessed August 19, 2014, at http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story_id=65351; and Joseph A. Schnieders, "USS Simpson returns from African Partnership Station 2012 deployment," *Florida Times-Union*, July 25, 2012, accessed October 27, 2014, at <http://jacksonville.com/military/mayport-mirror/2012-07-25/story/uss-simpson-returns-african-partnership-station-2012>.

HNLMS *Rotterdam* and expanded from a training-intensive program to provide more real-world maritime operations involving more than ninety U.S. Marines—as well as Dutch, Spanish, and British forces—visiting Senegal, Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroon, and Benin during a three-month period from August to November.⁶¹ So far in 2014, Obangame Express, an annual exercise under the APS umbrella, has brought the United States and twenty-one European and African navies—including those of Angola, Benin, Cameroon, Republic of Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Ghana, Nigeria, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Togo—together to increase capabilities and interoperability in the Gulf of Guinea.⁶²

Bilateral Engagements

In addition to these major initiatives aimed at building up partner capacity on a multilateral basis, a vast array of engagements regularly take place between elements of the U.S. armed forces—now operating under the aegis of AFRICOM—and countries in the region. These bilateral efforts are aimed at reinforcing relationships and increasing interoperability, as well as addressing specific potential challenges in the theater of operations. For example, more than 350 U.S. Marines, military police, and Air Force personnel participated with 150 Royal Moroccan Armed Forces members in an exercise called African Lion 2014, which took place south of Agadir, Morocco, in March 2014. The exercise also included units from the German military, NATO personnel, and representatives from thirteen African and European partner nations. An annual exercise facilitated by U.S. Marine Corps Forces Africa (MARFORAF), African Lion is the largest of its kind on the African continent. The most recent iteration in early 2014 included disaster and humanitarian relief operations, stability operations with law enforcement and nonlethal weapons elements, intelligence capacity building, a field-training exercise with live fire, and a multinational observer program.⁶³

⁶¹U.S. Department of Defense, “Africa command helps partners promote maritime security,” American Forces Press Service, October 25, 2013, accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=121007>; and U.S. Navy, “Planning begins for Africa Partnership Station 2013,” Navy News Service, April 6, 2012, accessed August 19, 2014, at http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story_id=66343.

⁶²U.S. Africa Command, “International partners finalize plans for Obangame Express 2014,” U.S. AFRICOM Newsroom, February 11, 2014, accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://www.africom.mil/Newsroom/Article/11758/international-partners-finalize-plans-for-obangame-express-2014>.

⁶³Mel Johnson, “Moroccans, U.S. Engage in Stability Operations Training,” Marine Forces Europe and Africa, April 2, 2014, accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://www.marforeur.marines.mil/News/NewsArticleDisplay/tabid/7617/Article/161871/moroccans-us-engage-in-stability-operations-training.aspx>; Tatum Vayavanand, “Intelligence building workshop an indication of interoperability during African Lion 14,” U.S. AFRICOM Newsroom, April 1, 2014, accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://www.africom.mil/Newsroom/Article/11991/intelligence-building-workshop-an-indication-of-interoperability-during-african-lion-14>; and Defense Video and Imagery Distribution System, “Exercise African Lion 2014 is underway in

It is worth noting that an array of lower-key engagements regularly take place between elements of the U.S. armed forces and those of all but a few African countries. The controversies surrounding AFRICOM notwithstanding, these security relations continue to be cultivated, even with South Africa, whose former defense minister was among the new command's most vociferous public critics. In August 2013, for example, AFRICOM conducted a bilateral exercise with the South African National Defense Forces, which involved more than 4,000 troops. The exercise, called Shared Accord 2013, included a vast array of operations that took place throughout South Africa and ranged from tactical movements—including air landings, air assaults, and beach landings—to live fire exercises and provision of primary health and veterinary care.⁶⁴

Furthermore, each year, more than 1,000 African military officers and other personnel receive professional development at U.S. military schools and other training assistance through the State Department-administered International Military Education and Training (IMET) program. On an even broader scale, the Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI), which in 2004 subsumed the Clinton administration's African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI) as well as the Bush administration's earlier Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) program, has trained and equipped 175,000 military troops, a majority of them African, for peacekeeping operations on the continent.⁶⁵ Like IMET, GPOI is a State Department-funded program, but its participants engage with AFRICOM, which administers and supports the security cooperation program.

Camp Lemonier: The Only Permanent Base

Almost from the moment that the creation of AFRICOM was announced, rumors have flown that a massive increase in U.S. military presence on the continent was in the offing. Yet, seven years later, the command's largest military installation in Africa remains one whose existence predates the command by more than a decade: the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA), established in 2002 as a subordinate command of CENTCOM.⁶⁶

Agadir, Morocco," April 1, 2014, accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://www.dvidshub.net/news/123640/exercise-african-lion-2014-underway-agadir-morocco#.U5sRnflDWPs>.

⁶⁴Daniel Stoutamire, "U.S., South African militaries celebrate completion of successful bilateral exercise," U.S. AFRICOM Newsroom, August 14, 2013, accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://www.africom.mil/Newsroom/Article/11132/us-south-african-militaries-celebrate-completion-of-successful-bilateral-exercise>.

⁶⁵See Benedikt Franke, "Enabling a Continent to Help Itself: U.S. Military Capacity Building and Africa's Emerging Security Architecture," *Strategic Insights* 6, no. 1 (January 2007): 1–13; and U.S. Department of State, "Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI)," April 30, 2013, accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://www.state.gov/t/pm/rls/fs/2013/208094.htm>.

⁶⁶The CJTF-HOA's "area of responsibility" includes Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Seychelles, Somalia, and Sudan, although its "area of interest" also includes Burundi, Chad, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and Yemen.

Headquartered since 2003 at Camp Lemonier, a one-time French Foreign Legion post in Djibouti, the only permanent U.S. military base in Africa⁶⁷ is composed of approximately 4,000 sailors, soldiers, airmen, and marines, as well as civilian government employees and contractors. Originally conceived as an antiterrorism unit actively engaged in kinetic operations, the CJTF-HOA's mission has evolved into conducting "operations in the East Africa region to build partner nation capacity in order to promote regional security and stability, prevent conflict, and protect U.S. and coalition interests."⁶⁸ Today, the base plays an increasingly significant role as a major regional center supporting operations throughout Africa, as well as serving as a staging ground for counterterrorism operations in the Arabian Peninsula—specifically Yemen—and the Indian Ocean. Underscoring the increasing importance of the Camp Lemonier base to AFRICOM operations, the base's lease was renewed for twenty years in May 2014 at an estimated cost of \$70 million per year, with another \$1 billion of base improvements planned.⁶⁹

Thus, while U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) are present and actively engaged in action against suspected terrorists in the Horn of Africa, the CJTF-HOA has a separate mandate focused on indirect activities aimed at combating extremist ideologies and decreasing the ability of individuals and groups to exploit the vulnerabilities of the nations and societies in the subregion. The task force's operational concept includes a number of measures to foster interagency integration, including close coordination with U.S. diplomatic missions throughout its area of responsibility. This coordination is partly achieved by posting liaison teams at each of the embassies, a senior military advisor to the U.S. Mission to the African Union in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, a senior State Department officer as the CJTF-HOA commander's foreign policy advisor, and a veteran USAID officer as a CJTF-HOA senior development advisor. In addition to U.S. personnel, the CJTF-HOA also embeds military personnel from a number of coalition partner countries in its staff, involving them in all operational phases, including strategic and operational planning and execution.

⁶⁷There have been modest temporary, but nonetheless ongoing, deployments to Uganda, Niger, and Chad in support of intelligence-gathering and counterterrorism efforts, including the hunt for remnants of the Lord's Resistance Army in Central Africa, for AQIM and extremists from northern Mali, and for Nigeria's Boko Haram (and the kidnapped schoolgirls from Chibok). See J. Peter Pham, "Assessing the hunt for the LRA," *New Atlanticist*, October 17, 2011, accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/assessing-the-hunt-for-the-lra>; idem, "Niger needs more than drones," *New Atlanticist*, February 25, 2013, accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/niger-needs-more-than-drones>; and idem, "Making a hash(tag) of Africa policy," *The Hill*, May 28, 2014, accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://thehill.com/blogs/pundits-blog/international/207358-making-a-hashtag-of-africa-policy>.

⁶⁸U.S. Africa Command, Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, "Fact Sheet," accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://www.hoa.africom.mil/AboutCJTF-HOA.asp>.

⁶⁹Eric Schmitt, "U.S. signs new lease to keep strategic military installation in the Horn of Africa," *New York Times*, May 5, 2014, accessed August 19, 2014, at http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/06/world/africa/us-signs-new-lease-to-keep-strategic-military-installation-in-the-horn-of-africa.html?_r=1.

In addition to training with partner militaries in the region, the CJTF-HOA has worked closely with African regional and subregional institutions on their initiatives, including the establishment of the Eastern Brigade (EASTBRIG) of the African Union's African Standby Force and the development of a Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) for the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). The CJTF-HOA has also implemented numerous small-scale humanitarian projects, besides carrying out multiple medical civic action programs (MEDCAPs), dental civic action programs (DENTCAPs), and veterinary civic action programs (VETCAPs) aimed at winning the "hearts and minds" of the civilian population in its area of responsibility.

If the CJTF-HOA represents a microcosm of what one ought to expect to see on a larger scale in AFRICOM's future efforts to "promote a stable and secure African environment," it also underscores some of the potential pitfalls. For instance, arguably the greatest security challenge in the task force's theater of operations is the chaotic conditions prevailing in the territory of what was, until 1991, the Somali Democratic Republic. However, not only does Somalia lack an effective government with which the CJTF-HOA might partner—the current Federal Republic of Somalia, the sixteenth such attempt to constitute a central government since 1991, is plagued by corruption and political infighting, and largely unable to quell an Islamist insurgency⁷⁰—but until recently, AFRICOM lacked the naval resources with which to directly tackle the piracy that is one of the consequences of the disorder on land.⁷¹ The decreased piracy attacks off the Horn of Africa in recent years have largely been the result of a combination of the increased use of embarked armed security on commercial vessels transiting the area and the various ongoing naval deployments—including the U.S.-led Combined Task Force 151 (CTF 151),⁷² the European Union Naval Force Somalia's (EUNAVFOR Somalia) Operation Atalanta, and Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy

⁷⁰See J. Peter Pham, *State Collapse, Insurgency, and Counterinsurgency: Lessons from Somalia*, Strategic Studies Institute Monograph (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College Press, 2013). The Director of National Intelligence, Lieutenant General James Clapper, reported rather pessimistically on conditions in Somalia in his most recent annual worldwide threat assessment report to the U.S. Congress, noting: "In Somalia, al-Shabaab is conducting asymmetric attacks against government facilities and Western targets in and around Mogadishu. The credibility and effectiveness of the young Somali government will be further threatened by persistent political infighting, weak leadership from President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, ill-equipped government institutions, and pervasive technical, political, and administrative shortfalls." See James R. Clapper, "Worldwide Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community," Select Committee on Intelligence, U.S. Senate, January 29, 2014, accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://www.intelligence.senate.gov/140129/clapper.pdf>.

⁷¹See J. Peter Pham, "Putting Somali Piracy in Context," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 28, no. 3 July (2010): 325–41.

⁷²See Terry McKnight and Michael Hirsch, *Pirate Alley: Commanding Task Force 151 Off Somalia* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2012).

(PLAN) task forces⁷³—that have maintained a vigilant presence off the Somali coast since the height of the piracy epidemic.

EVOLVING DOCTRINE: AFRICOM UNDER OBAMA

The election of Barack Obama as America's first president of African descent could not but have a significant impact on U.S. policy toward the continent, where the victory was greeted with wild enthusiasm by millions of ordinary Africans. Addressing the Parliament of Ghana during his first visit to sub-Saharan Africa after his election, Obama affirmed that "Africa's future is up to Africans."⁷⁴ The American president went on to tell his audience that they had to take responsibility:

Now, it's easy to point fingers and to pin the blame of these problems on others. Yes, a colonial map that made little sense helped to breed conflict. The West has often approached Africa as a patron or a source of resources rather than a partner. But the West is not responsible for the destruction of the Zimbabwean economy over the last decade, or wars in which children are enlisted as combatants. In my father's life, it was partly tribalism and patronage and nepotism in an independent Kenya that for a long stretch derailed his career, and we know that this kind of corruption is still a daily fact of life for far too many

Development depends on good governance. That is the ingredient which has been missing in far too many places, for far too long. That's the change that can unlock Africa's potential. And that is a responsibility that can only be met by Africans.

Obama then proceeded to list four critical areas—building and sustaining democratic governments, supporting development that provides opportunities to more people, strengthening public health, and resolving conflicts peacefully—to which he pledged America's support:

As for America and the West, our commitment must be measured by more than just the dollars we spend. I've pledged substantial increases in our foreign assistance, which is in Africa's interests and America's interests. But the true sign of success is not whether we are a source of perpetual aid that helps people scrape by—it's whether we are partners in building the capacity for transformational change.

⁷³See J. Peter Pham, "Pirates and Dragon Boats: Assessing the Chinese Navy's Recent East African Deployments," *Journal of the Middle East and Africa* 4, no. 1 (January–April 2013): 87–108.

⁷⁴Barack Obama, "Remarks to the Ghanaian Parliament," Accra, Ghana, July 11, 2009, accessed August 19, 2014, at http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-the-President-to-the-Ghanaian-Parliament.

Moreover, he explained that it was in the interest of the United States to assist Africa's development, even if responsible government was a condition for the aid:

This is the simple truth of a time when the boundaries between people are overwhelmed by our connections. Your prosperity can expand America's prosperity. Your health and security can contribute to the world's health and security. And the strength of your democracy can help advance human rights for people everywhere. So I do not see the countries and peoples of Africa as a world apart; I see Africa as a fundamental part of our interconnected world—as partners with America on behalf of the future we want for all of our children.

This outlook clearly influenced the Obama administration's *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, released somewhat tardily after an extensive review process in May 2010. In that document, Washington's approach to Africa was couched largely in terms of broader development goals, rather than the traditional security concerns that were emphasized in the Bush administration's strategy papers:

The diversity and complexity of the African continent offer the United States opportunities and challenges. As African states grow their economies and strengthen their democratic institutions and governance, America will continue to embrace effective partnerships. Our economic, security, and political cooperation will be consultative and encompass global, regional, and national priorities including access to open markets, conflict prevention, global peacekeeping, counterterrorism, and the protection of vital carbon sinks. The Administration will refocus its priorities on strategic interventions that can promote job creation and economic growth; combat corruption while strengthening good governance and accountability; responsibly improve the capacity of African security and rule of law sectors; and work through diplomatic dialogue to mitigate local and regional tensions before they become crises. We will also reinforce sustainable stability in key states like Nigeria and Kenya that are essential subregional linchpins.⁷⁵

In June 2012, the Obama administration released a new *U.S. Strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa* that articulated how it has worked to translate the critical goals outlined in Obama's 2009 speech to the Ghanaian Parliament into action, as well as its four main pillars moving forward—strengthening democratic institutions; spurring economic growth, trade, and

⁷⁵White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, May 1, 2010, accessed August 19, 2014, at http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf.

investment; advancing peace and security; and providing opportunities and development:

Given the growing strategic importance of sub-Saharan Africa to the United States, over the next 5 years we will elevate our focus on and dedicate greater effort to strengthening democratic institutions and spurring economic growth, trade, and investment, while continuing to pursue other objectives on the continent. Stronger democratic institutions lead countries to achieve greater prosperity and stability; are more successful in mitigating conflict and countering transnational threats; and serve as stronger partners of the United States. Additionally, promoting sustainable, inclusive economic growth is a key ingredient of security, political stability, and development, and it underpins efforts to alleviate poverty, creating the resources to support health care, education, and other public goods.⁷⁶

In June 2013, amidst criticism that his administration had been ignoring the African continent—in particular sub-Saharan Africa—Obama made a second trip to Africa, visiting Senegal, South Africa, and Tanzania. Delivering the trip's major policy address at the University of Cape Town, Obama reiterated the United States' commitment to the continent, emphasizing a new U.S.–Africa partnership that moves beyond assistance and foreign aid and toward supporting African countries and their militaries to increase their capacity to solve problems:

Now, America has been involved in Africa for decades. But we are moving beyond the simple provision of assistance, foreign aid, to a new model of partnership between America and Africa—a partnership of equals that focuses on your capacity to solve problems, and your capacity to grow. Our efforts focus on three areas that shape our lives: opportunity, democracy, and peace.

America cannot put a stop to these tragedies alone, and you don't expect us to. That's a job for Africans. But we can help, and we will help. I know there's a lot of talk of America's military presence in Africa. But if you look at what we're actually doing, time and again, we're putting muscle behind African efforts. That's what we're doing in the Sahel, where the nations of West Africa have stepped forward to keep the peace as Mali now begins to rebuild. That's what we're doing in Central Africa, where a coalition of countries is closing the space where the Lord's Resistance Army can operate. That's what we're doing in Somalia, where an

⁷⁶White House, *U.S. Strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa*, June 2012, accessed August 19, 2014, at http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/africa_strategy_2.pdf.

African Union force, AMISOM, is helping a new government to stand on its own two feet.⁷⁷

This guidance with respect to the Obama administration's areas of emphasis had clearly been received at AFRICOM two months before the publication of the new *National Security Strategy* in May 2010, as evidenced by the "posture statement" presented to the armed services committees of the U.S. Congress by the first AFRICOM commander in March. In this statement, General William "Kip" Ward emphasized that "the challenges and opportunities in U.S. Africa Command's Area of Responsibility are complex and dynamic," and hence "the application of only military means is insufficient to help our partners address them."⁷⁸ Even on security issues, General Ward argued, "Africa's challenges require a holistic view," and the activities undertaken by the command "must provide immediate benefit and help our partners progress toward their long-term goals," including the development of capable and accountable professional military forces, supported and sustained by effective and legitimate security institutions and capable of increasing support for international peacekeeping efforts.⁷⁹

The Obama administration in general and the leadership of AFRICOM in particular have taken pains to emphasize that they envision this ambitious agenda being implemented primarily through the support of African institutions. Mary Carlin Yates, a former U.S. ambassador to Ghana and to Burundi who served as the inaugural deputy to the commander for civil-military activities at AFRICOM before becoming the special assistant to the president and senior director for Africa at the National Security Council, articulated the command's mission as follows:

The African Union is emerging as an important collective African organization, and the AU Peace and Security Commission has not only taken on significant peacekeeping missions but also is working hard on conflict prevention. African nations are collaborating to establish their own standby forces prepared to respond to contingencies across the continent. These forces are being aligned regionally, such as the brigade formed by ECOWAS. While in Ghana, I watched this evolve from a concept to a detailed draft command structure plan for the first regional brigade under the leadership of the then-chief of defense, a general who had been identified decades earlier and schooled and trained in U.S. military institutions. USAFRICOM, as requested, will work closely with the AU, its

⁷⁷White House, "Remarks by President Obama at the University of Cape Town," June 30, 2013, accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/06/30/remarks-president-obama-university-cape-town>.

⁷⁸U.S. Africa Command, "2010 Posture Statement," March 2010, accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://www.africom.mil/pdfFiles/USAFRICOM2010PostureStatement.pdf>.

⁷⁹Ibid.

regional communities, and allies in developing and training these forces. When U.S. military engagement in Africa was divided among multiple [geographic unified commands], it was difficult to have one consistent program that holistically addressed what is a continent-wide partner capacity-building requirement. USAFRICOM will be *value added*.⁸⁰

Thus, at least formally, the programmatic focus has shifted from a superpower's preoccupation with threats arising from Africa's vulnerabilities to helping partners on the continent to assume an ever-increasing role in preventatively addressing their own security concerns.⁸¹ This sentiment was echoed by AFRICOM's second commander, General Carter Ham, in his 2013 posture statement:

In support of advancing regional peace and security, U.S. Africa Command focuses on priority countries, regional organizations, and programs and initiatives that build defense institutional and operational capabilities and strengthen strategic partnerships. Cooperative security arrangements are key to addressing transnational threats, and U.S. Africa Command utilizes operations, exercises, and security cooperation engagements to foster multilateral cooperation and build the capacity of regional and sub-regional organizations. U.S. assistance, including focused military support, has contributed to significant progress by African forces in the past year in both peacekeeping and combat operations.

U.S. Africa Command's strategic approach addresses both threats and opportunities. We simultaneously address the greatest near-term threats to our national security while building long-term partnerships that support and enable the objectives outlined in the *U.S. Strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa*: strengthening democratic institutions; spurring economic growth, advancing trade and investment; advancing peace and security; and promoting opportunity and development. Countering terrorism is the Department of Defense's (DoD) highest priority mission in Africa and will remain so for the foreseeable future. While prioritizing addressing emerging security challenges through both direct and indirect responses, U.S. Africa Command views these challenges also as opportunities to deepen enduring relationships, strengthen partner capabilities, and foster regional cooperation.⁸²

⁸⁰Mary C. Yates, "U.S. Africa Command Value-Added," *Joint Force Quarterly* 52, no. 1 (2009): 154.

⁸¹See Benedikt Franke, *Security Cooperation in Africa: A Reappraisal*, (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2009).

⁸²"Statement of General Carter Ham, USA, Commander, United States Africa Command," March 7, 2013, 6, accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://www.africom.mil/Doc/10432>.

After assuming the leadership of AFRICOM in 2013, General David Rodriguez appeared to continue his predecessors' commitment to building and strengthening ties with African partners:

We believe efforts to meet security challenges in Africa are best led and conducted by African partners. We work with partners to ensure our military efforts support and complement comprehensive solutions to security challenges that leverage all elements of national and international power, including civilian efforts to gradually strengthen governance, justice and the rule of law.

We work closely with African and European partners to shape the security environment, share information, address immediate mutual threats, and respond to crisis. We coordinate with U.S. Government agencies and U.S. Embassies to ensure our activities support U.S. policy goals and the efforts of U.S. Ambassadors. We also work closely with other combatant commands, especially European Command, Central Command, Special Operations Command, and Transportation Command, to mitigate risk collaboratively, including through force-sharing agreements; by sharing intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assets; and by posturing forces to respond to crisis. The trust and teamwork between multinational and interagency partners is vital to the success of collective action.⁸³

WHITHER AFRICOM'S ASSUMPTIONS?

AFRICOM's mission, in its most recent reiteration, is to protect and defend "the national security interests of the United States by strengthening the defense capabilities of African states and regional organizations" and, when directed, to conduct "military operations, in order to deter and defeat transnational threats and to provide a security environment conducive to good governance and development."⁸⁴ What, then, are the assumptions implicit in the use of such a vehicle to achieve these objectives?

First, the very existence of AFRICOM assumes that by superseding an antiquated structural framework inherited from times when the continent was barely factored into America's strategic calculus, the various bilateral and multilateral military-to-military relationships would be better managed and the myriad security assistance programs already in place would benefit from more focused attention and advocacy. Unfortunately, the

⁸³Statement of General David M. Rodriguez, USA, Commander, United States Africa Command," March 6, 2014, 5–6, accessed August 19, 2014, at http://www.securityassistance.org/sites/default/files/Rodriguez_03-06-14.pdf.

⁸⁴Headquarters, U.S. Africa Command, "2011 Mission Statement and Commander's Intent," August 2011, accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://www.africom.mil/pdfFiles/2011%20Commander's%20Intent.pdf>.

resources the command requires to do even this much have not been readily forthcoming—even before the recent fiscal austerity. In fact, AFRICOM Commander General Ham acknowledged earlier in 2014 that “due to the vast challenges and opportunities on the continent, as well as current fiscal realities, we have prioritized regions in Africa to better focus our exercises, operations, and security cooperation activities.”⁸⁵

Second, even were it not for the current stretched capacities of the U.S. armed forces, AFRICOM is premised on the notion that what should be built up is local capabilities, so that African states can manage their own security challenges. This means that, without prejudice to preparedness for kinetic operations, defense intelligence activities, and other functions, the command will necessarily privilege military training with partner nations, working with Africans to build their regional security and crisis-response capacity. The difficulty with this doctrinal premise, however, is that the starting point of many African countries insofar as security capabilities are concerned is relatively low, even if, “compared to other national institutions in most of these countries, the military is well organized and adequately funded.”⁸⁶ Moreover, with the exception of the continent’s handful of natural resource-rich, low population-density countries like Angola, most of America’s would-be partners are constrained by a lack of financial wherewithal to upgrade their capabilities to meet even short-term priorities. It is a vicious cycle in which many are trapped: without security there can be no sustainable development, yet these states lack the basic means to pay for the security that would facilitate the stability and economic growth that would, in turn, generate revenues for governments.

Third, and relatedly, AFRICOM’s overall objectives are focused on the nexus between security as a prerequisite for development and development as preventative for insecurity.⁸⁷ As operations in Afghanistan and Iraq have shown, while achieving security is a precondition for development, without noteworthy progress on the latter, the former is at best illusory. Hence, as the Pentagon has formally recognized, “stability operations” are now a “core U.S. military mission” that ought to “be given priority comparable to combat operations.” These operations are defined as “military and civilian activities conducted across the spectrum from peace to conflict to establish or maintain order in States and regions,” with the short-term goal of providing the local populace with security, essential services, and humanitarian necessities and the long-term objective of helping to “develop indigenous capacity for

⁸⁵Carter F. Ham, “Statement Before the Committee on the Armed Services, U.S. House of Representatives,” February 29, 2012, accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://www.africom.mil/fetchBinary.asp?pdfID=20120301102747>.

⁸⁶Robert E. Gribbin, “Implementing AFRICOM: Tread Carefully,” *Foreign Service Journal* 85, no. 5 (May 2008): 27.

⁸⁷See Sean McFate, “U.S. Africa Command: A New Strategic Paradigm?” *Military Review* 88, no. 1 (January/February 2008): 10–21.

securing essential services, a viable market economy, rule of law, democratic institutions, and a robust civil society.”⁸⁸

Translated into other terms, the security objectives of Americans and Africans cannot ultimately be achieved and sustained unless alongside the investment in building security there is an investment in developing the infrastructure, legal and physical, that will facilitate the emergence of both effective governance and markets that encourage the growth of prosperity. However, because recent global and domestic fiscal crises, combined with a bitter partisan divide, have created a political climate within the United States in which the sort of major increases in foreign aid promised by President Obama during his 2008 presidential campaign are simply not politically viable, the administration has looked for creative ways to encourage the private sector to become more engaged with efforts to develop and modernize Africa’s infrastructure. These efforts have included financing facilities through institutions such as the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) and the Export-Import (Exim) Bank of the United States and tax incentives, which might prove particularly attractive, insofar as they do not require direct public expenditures. Toward this end, the Obama administration announced in June 2013 the Power Africa program, a signature initiative to encourage private sector engagement in Africa and help African governments streamline key energy projects for sustainable long-term energy security. Working with African governments, the private sector, and multilateral partners such as the World Bank and the African Development Bank, the United States has pledged more than \$7 billion in the initiative’s first five-year phase to ultimately add 10,000 megawatts of clean, efficient electricity-generation capacity to six target countries: Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, and Tanzania.⁸⁹

Fourth, working with African nations to build their security and crisis-response capacity means that AFRICOM must aim to not just enhance bilateral military relationships, but also strengthen the capacities of Africa’s regional and subregional organizations. A point of entry for the United States will definitely be to support the well-articulated desire of African leaders to enhance their own joint capacity to deal with the continent’s myriad security challenges. Thus, the thinking behind the creation of AFRICOM presumed the provision of adequate resources both to assist in African capacity building and to deploy more uniformed U.S. personnel to collaborate in training missions and other similar activities.

⁸⁸U.S. Department of Defense, “Directive 3000.05 on the Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) Operations,” November 28, 2005, 2.

⁸⁹USAID, “Power Africa,” May 13, 2014, accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://www.usaid.gov/powerafrica>.

Given both the historical fluidity of the frontiers of many African states⁹⁰ and the current desire of many African governments and peoples to work through continent-wide and regional frameworks, the United States in general and AFRICOM in particular would do well to place a premium on support for and engagement with the African Union, subregional bodies like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and specialized multilateral institutions like the African Development Bank and the Maritime Organization of West and Central Africa (MOWCA), recognizing that Africans must take the lead. American security initiatives in Africa need to be multilateral as well as bilateral. For example, along the coast of the increasingly strategic Gulf of Guinea, it would seem to make very little sense to build up the maritime domain awareness capabilities of littoral states with very short coastlines like Togo (56 kilometers) and Benin (121 kilometers), when a cooperative, subregional coast guard would probably better serve the national interests of the individual countries. The assumption, of course, is that, all pan-Africanist rhetoric aside, these multilateral institutions actually have not only the capacity to engage on security issues, but also the institutional wherewithal and political capital to do so. There is also the assumption that today, unlike in the recent past, the United States will be able to sustain its support of African peacekeeping training programs rather than switching from one “new thing” to the next.⁹¹ One positive sign is the raft of security-related initiatives announced by President Obama during the August 2014 U.S.–African Leaders Summit⁹² that largely build on existing, and indeed, longstanding programs. These initiatives include \$110 million a year for a new African Peacekeeping Rapid Response Partnership, which aims to build the capacity of African militaries to respond to emerging conflicts; \$65 million for the creation of a new Security Governance Initiative to help an initial six countries (Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Tunisia); and the U.S.–Morocco Framework for Cooperation, signed on the margins of the meeting and aimed at developing Moroccan training experts and jointly training civilian security and counterterrorism forces with other partners in the Maghreb and Sahel regions.

⁹⁰See J. Peter Pham, “African Constitutionalism: Forging New Models for Multi-Ethnic Governance and Self-Determination,” in *Africa: Mapping New Boundaries in International Law*, ed. Jeremy I. Levitt (Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2008), 183–203; idem, “Legitimacy, Justice, and the Future of Africa,” *Human Rights and Human Welfare* 5 (2005): 31–49; idem, “Do Not Resuscitate,” *National Interest* 94 (March/April 2008): 21–25; and idem, “Review of *Africa: Unity, Sovereignty, and Sorrow*, by Pierre Englebert,” *Journal of the Middle East and Africa* 1, no. 2 (July–December 2010): 208–14.

⁹¹See A. Sarjoh Bah and Kwesi Aning, “U.S. Peace Operations Policy in Africa: From ACRI to AFRICOM,” *International Peacekeeping* 15, no. 1 (February 2008): 118–32.

⁹²Barack Obama, “Remarks at the Press Conference After the U.S.–Africa Leaders Summit,” Washington, D.C., August 6, 2014, accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/08/06/remarks-president-press-conference-after-us-africa-leaders-summit>.

The question in the post–Iraq War, post–Arab Spring, post–Afghanistan mission, unpredictable, and financially constrained “new, new world” of American defense planning is: How do these assumptions hold up? And while there has been in recent years a greater appreciation of the strategic importance of Africa, both for the United States and for the international system, have realistic goals for America’s engagement—to say nothing of the grand strategy and tools identified for this engagement—even been adequately defined?⁹³

CONCLUSION

In 2013, General David Rodriguez, previously commanding general of U.S. Army Forces Command, succeeded AFRICOM’s second commander, General Carter Ham, who retired after nearly four decades of military service.⁹⁴ With each successive transition, the commanders of the U.S. Africa Command have assumed charge of the organization in a much better position than that enjoyed by their predecessors. Under any circumstances, the birth of the new command would not have been easy. To many Africans with memories of liberation struggles still fresh in their minds, the very idea smacked of a neocolonial effort to dominate the continent anew—a notion not entirely unreasonable given the history of efforts by some erstwhile European imperial powers to continually meddle in the internal affairs of their former colonies, as evidenced, *inter alia*, by France’s nearly three dozen postindependence interventions in sub-Saharan Africa.⁹⁵ To others who recalled the cyclic nature of past U.S. engagements, it was a question of the long-term sustainability of the effort. Still others, noting the increased attention paid by U.S. analysts to the role in Africa being played by relative newcomers to the continent like China and India, worried about the possible polarization of the continent in some sort of new scramble between the great powers of the twenty-first century. To his credit, General Ward, through his tireless effort to engage leaders and other stakeholders across the continent, as well as through his forthright manner, allayed many of these concerns and laid the groundwork for the work of General Ham and General Rodriguez, who have strengthened relationships with African partners to create a more

⁹³See J. Peter Pham, “The United States Africa Command: The Strategic Assumptions,” in *African Security and the Africa Command: Viewpoints on the U.S. Role in Africa*, ed. Terry Buss, Joseph Adjaye, Donald Goldstein, and Louis Picard (Pittsburgh, PA: Matthew B. Ridgway Center for International Security Studies, University of Pittsburgh/Sterling, VA: Kumarian Press, 2011), 57–74.

⁹⁴Claudette Roulo, “Rodriguez succeeds Ham as Africom commander,” American Forces Press Service, April 5, 2013, accessed August 19, 2014, at <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=119699>.

⁹⁵See Antoine Glaser and Stephen Smith, *Comment la France a perdu l’Afrique* (Paris: Calmann-Leévy, 2005).

operationally focused AFRICOM. The election of Barack Obama, an event that was met with genuine enthusiasm across the continent, and his subsequent high-profile engagement of Africa, such as during the 2014 U.S.–Africa Leaders Summit, the largest gathering of African heads of state and government ever convened by an American president, likewise also helped. However, what has probably done the most to win AFRICOM a place and, indeed, at least grudging acceptance across Africa is perhaps the fact that African states and individuals discovered that it was not what they feared it to be, but rather it was both a continuation of already-existing security engagements and an opportunity for them to enhance their interests even as America pursued her own.

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