In October 1884, the major European colonial powers of the era were invited to a conference in Berlin by the German Chancellor, Otto von Bismarck. The United States also attended the proceedings as an observer nation, and its representative, John A. Kasson, signed the Berlin Convention, one of the primary purposes of which was to regulate escalating imperial conflict by officially delineating the territorial boundaries of colonial possessions. Although warfare between colonial armies in Africa during World War I underscored the failure of negotiators to avoid yet another global military conflict, the Berlin conference none the less consecrated the creation of formal European empires and ‘spheres of interest’ throughout the continent. Except for the unique cases of Ethiopia and Liberia, independent Africa eventually ceased to exist.

From 1884 to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, France was the only former colonial power that maintained and expanded its presence throughout the continent, most notably in what is still referred to as ‘francophone Africa’—those former French and Belgian colonies where, among a variety of factors, French serves as an ‘official language
of administration and education'\textsuperscript{3} Indeed, French Presidents from the conservative Charles de Gaulle to socialist François Mitterrand consistently claimed that historical links and geographical proximity justified placing francophone Africa within France’s traditional sphere of influence.\textsuperscript{4} ‘According to this French version of the Monroe Doctrine’, explains Guy Martin, ‘francophone Africa is seen as constituting a natural French preserve (domaine réservé, or pré-carré), off limits to other foreign powers, whether perceived as friends (the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Germany) or foes (the former Socialist states, Libya)\textsuperscript{5}.

The steadfast belief that francophone Africa constitutes a chasse gardée – literally, an ‘exclusive hunting ground’ – explains why some Africa specialists within the French establishment cautiously greeted the fall of the Berlin Wall and the decline of communism. In sharp contrast to the preceding era when the West (especially America) sought to strengthen and enhance France’s privileged rôle in francophone Africa as a bulwark against communism, the end of the cold war seemingly has heightened economic and political competition among the Western powers. As a result, French policy-makers increasingly claim that the US and Japan, and to a lesser degree, Germany and Canada, pose potential economic and political threats to French interests in francophone Africa. According to Stephen Smith, such statements are perhaps indicative of a growing ‘duel’ between Washington and Paris over Africa.\textsuperscript{6}

This article offers some tentative thoughts on this emerging rivalry by comparing and contrasting the foreign assistance policies of France and two of its greatest perceived challengers – the United States and Japan – in francophone Africa during and after the cold war.\textsuperscript{7}

\textsuperscript{3} According to Guy Martin, ‘Francophone Africa in the Context of Franco-American Relations’, in John W. Harbeson and Donald Rothchild (eds.), \textit{Africa in World Politics: post-cold war challenges} (Boulder, San Francisco, Oxford, 1995 edn.), p. 163, among other factors that make francophone Africa ‘unique and distinctive’ are: (i) ‘a common (French or Belgian) colonial experience’; (ii) ‘a broad cultural unity… resulting from a fusion of French and African cultures’; (iii) ‘a tradition of moderation and compromise arising out of a peaceful transfer of power at independence’; and (iv) ‘the perpetuation of Franco-African relations characterized by a pattern of continuing French political, economic, and cultural power and influence’.

\textsuperscript{4} For a good overview, see Claude Wauthier, \textit{Quatre présidents et l’Afrique: De Gaulle, Pompidou, Giscard d’Estaing, Mitterrand} (Paris, 1995).

\textsuperscript{5} Martin, loc. cit. p. 168.


\textsuperscript{7} For a discussion of Canada’s policies in Africa, see Olav Stokke (ed.), \textit{Western Middle Powers and Global Poverty: the determinants of the aid policies of Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden} (Uppsala, 1989), and for those of Germany, see Rolf Hofmeier, ‘German–African Relations: present and future’, in Stefan Brüne, Joachim Betz, and Winrich Kühne (eds.), \textit{Africa and Europe: relations of two continents in transition} (Münster and Hamburg, 1994), and Isabelle
Specifically, it examines their official development assistance (ODA), including grants and concessional loans, as detailed in the annual reports of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). ODA commitments as compiled by the OECD have been chosen as the means for examining Western economic competition in francophone Africa due to the comparability of this indicator across donor nations and, most important, the rôle of ODA (as opposed to security-related forms of foreign assistance) as an important foreign-policy tool of France, Japan, and the US. After outlining their policies towards francophone Africa, particularly during the last decade of the cold war, attention focuses on the evolution of ODA flows during the initial years of the 1990s. Unless otherwise noted, all figures for francophone Africa are derivative of a larger set of data being compiled for Africa as a whole.8

FRANCE AND THE CULTURAL IMPERATIVE OF PROMOTING 'LA FRANCOPHONIE'

The establishment of a large and powerful foreign aid programme in francophone Africa during the cold war became a ‘keystone’ of French foreign policy.9 The goal was to reassert France’s historical position in the ‘front rank’ of global powers, a status that had been lost during a 75-year span stretching from the franco-Prussian war to World War II.10 Henry Kissinger, the former US Secretary of State, captured the essence of why francophone Africa fits so perfectly within French aspirations to international leadership:

France’s penchant for associating with countries ready to accept its leadership has been a constant factor in French foreign policy since the Crimean War. Unable to dominate an alliance with Great Britain, Germany, Russia, or the United States, and considering junior status incompatible with its notions of national grandeur and its messianic role in the world, France has sought leadership in pacts with lesser powers.11

The evolution of French ODA towards francophone Africa during the cold war was driven by cultural, economic, and security interests.


8 The initial data set for the 1980s was compiled as the basis of a statistically based analysis of foreign aid policies towards the various regions of the Third World. See Steven W. Hook, National Interest and Foreign Aid (Boulder, CO, 1995). The African portion of this data set was updated by Hook, Bruce Taylor, and Peter J. Schraeder, and is the basis of an on-going research project devoted to understanding the evolution of foreign assistance policies towards the continent.


11 Quoted in Hook, National Interest and Foreign Aid, p. 66.
First, assistance was designed to promote the *rayonnement* (radiation) of such ‘exceptional’ cultural values as the French language, intellectual traditions, and way of living.\(^\text{12}\) Also referred to as the promotion of ‘cultural nationalism’,\(^\text{13}\) or the cultivation of *la francophonie* (a greater French-speaking community),\(^\text{14}\) such a policy ensured that a large portion of foreign assistance would be directed to former French colonies in Africa, as well as to where French constitutes one of the national languages, such as the former Belgian colonies of Burundi, Rwanda, and Zaire. As explained by de Gaulle, French leaders have considered it their ‘historic vocation’ to assist in the ‘ascension of all peoples to modern civilization’ – in other words, French culture.\(^\text{15}\)

The extent to which French cultural nationalism shaped foreign policy is illustrated by the fact that throughout the 1980s francophone Africa annually received approximately 82 per cent of all French ODA allocated to the continent – a figure which translated into close to $15,000 million. In the transition year of 1989, which marked the fall of the Berlin Wall, the top ten African recipients of French foreign assistance – Algeria, Morocco, Côte d’Ivoire, Senegal, Cameroon, Mali, Gabon, Madagascar, Chad, and Guinea – were all former French colonies. Over $100 million ODA was received by each (except Guinea), and over $2,200 million by all francophone African countries during the same calendar year.

France’s determination to preserve and strengthen *la francophonie* is best demonstrated by the regular franco-African summits attended by the Presidents of France and francophone Africa, the eighteenth of which was held in Biarritz, 8–9 November 1994. They have been described as the ‘centrepiece’ of franco-African cultural relations, most notably in terms of their ‘familial character’ and the ‘permanent tête-à-tête maintained between the French president and each of the francophone African heads of state’.\(^\text{16}\) The careful nurturing of close, high-level personal ties is the cornerstone of each gathering, and is equally important as regards the day-to-day decision-making related to French foreign policy towards Africa.\(^\text{17}\) Although the world-wide francophone summit also serves as a meeting ground of French and African heads of state (the sixth is scheduled to be held in Cotonou,


\(^{15}\) Quoted by Grosser, op. cit. p. 205.

\(^{16}\) Martin, loc. cit. p. 170.

Benin, in November 1995), it does not serve as intimate a rôle as the franco-African summit due to the attendance of powerful francophone states, notably Canada and to a lesser degree Belgium, that are perceived by France as cultural rivals.\textsuperscript{18}

The promotion of economic interests was perceived as integral to the advance of French culture, and served as the second most important rationale for ODA policies during the cold war era. French leaders from de Gaulle onwards have assumed that the economic interests of their country would develop naturally as French culture spread into the Third World.\textsuperscript{19} Towards this end, foreign assistance constituted ‘one component of a remarkably integrated system of economic relationships’ that maintained and enhanced the francophone world’s network of cultural ties.\textsuperscript{20} As many as 13 former French colonies,\textsuperscript{21} as well as Equatorial Guinea, are members of la zone franc,\textsuperscript{27} a supranational financial system in which France serves as a central bank, and a common currency – the Communauté financière africaine (CFA) franc – is tied to the French franc and guaranteed by the French treasury. By wedding its fiscal policy to that of the franc zone, France preserved monetary stability throughout the region. Concurrently, it co-ordinated regional financial flows, regulated fiscal policies, provided emergency credit, subsidised private investments to member-states, and offered tax breaks to French companies doing business in the region.

While the members of la zone franc gained financial stability, they lost a significant degree of autonomy over domestic macro-economic policy. For example, one of the most effective tools for promoting exports – devaluation of the national currency – is deferred to French authorities, and therefore is unavailable to member-states. Scholars none the less have demonstrated that the related flows of foreign assistance and investment capital had a positive impact on francophone Africa. As explained by John Ravenhill:

Quantitative studies showed that until the mid-1980s, the economic performance of franc zone countries was no worse than that of other developing economies and significantly better than the average for sub-Saharan Africa... Until the mid-1980s, the franc zone countries had

\textsuperscript{19} Kolodziej, op. cit. p. 479.
\textsuperscript{20} Theresa Hayter, French Aid (London, 1966), p. 43.
\textsuperscript{21} These 13 countries are: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, Gabon, Mali, Niger, Senegal, and Togo.
\textsuperscript{22} For example, see Patrick and Sylvianne Guillaumont, Zone franc et développement africain (Paris, 1984), and Olivier Vallée, Le Prix de l’argent CFA : heurs et malheurs de la zone franc (Paris, 1989).
consistently lower rates of inflation than other African countries; the convertibility of the CFA franc was also attractive to foreign investors.23

It should be noted that cultural considerations, such as first and foremost maintaining la francophonie, ensured the continuation and, in most cases, the expansion of French ODA despite deteriorating economies, and a significant decline in the metropole’s overall trade relationships with its former colonies. To be specific, 58 per cent of their total imports came from France during 1958–63, as against only 38 per cent from 1974 to 1986. Similarly, France purchased 56 per cent of their exports during 1958–63, but only 25 per cent from 1974 to 1986.24

France’s tendency to subjugate economic interests to cultural ideals was at the centre of its unwillingness from 1947 to 1994 to devalue the CFA franc, despite arguments that this would enhance francophone Africa’s economic competitiveness and promote greater trade links with France.25 According to Ravenhill, ‘Although most of the other countries in black Africa undertook (often massive) devaluations of their real exchange rate, the CFA appreciated in real terms’. Moreover, ‘This divergence of exchange rates made it very difficult for franc zone countries to sell their export crops on world markets’. Ravenhill further underscores that this state of affairs at the end of the 1980s was in ‘complete contrast, for instance, to the situation in the 1970s when Ivory Coast successfully expanded its cocoa exports – to a considerable degree at the expense of neighboring Ghana, whose currency was overvalued at the time’.26

The third major determinant of French ODA policies was the promotion of security interests which, despite public pronouncements to the contrary, were heavily underwritten throughout the cold war era.27 French leaders signed numerous defence accords, generously provided arms and military coopérants for training purposes, and authorised numerous interventions by French military forces to ensure maintenance of the status quo.28 In this regard, one can argue that

25 For example, see Guillaumont, op. cit.
policy-makers in France sought to spread French culture with the same ideological fervour as those in the United States sought to prevent the spread of communism. Consequently, when francophone régimes tried to renounce their special relationship with France, as Guinea did in 1958 when it decisively voted in a referendum against the creation of a revised Communauté française, French retribution was swift (in this case, all aid was cut off by an angry de Gaulle).

But as long as francophone countries maintained close ties with France, even their most authoritarian leaders were unlikely to find themselves under heavy pressure from Paris to democratise. Indeed, when asked why France did not militarily intervene when David Dacko, the democratically elected President of the Central African Republic, was overthrown in an armed coup d’État in 1966, Jacques Foccart, the architect of France’s policies towards francophone Africa under both Presidents de Gaulle and Georges Pompidou, noted in his memoirs that the new leader, Jean-Bedel Bokassa, ‘after all was a very pro-French military man’.29

WASHINGTON’S IDEOLOGICALLY INSPIRED PURSUIT OF ANTI-COMMUNISM AND CONTAINMENT OF THE SOVIET UNION

As World War II drew to a close, the rise of the cold war and superpower rivalry marked the beginning of widespread American involvement in the Third World.30 A variety of presidential doctrines – beginning with Harry Truman’s in 1947 and culminating in Ronald Reagan’s during the 1980s – declared the self-appointed right of the United States to intervene throughout the globe.31 To promote US security interests, especially those associated with containing the spread of communism, the transfer of ODA emerged as a critical foreign policy tool. From 1946 to 1986, the US provided approximately $450,000 million in ODA, as well as a further $424,000 million in related security and direct military assistance.32

The reconstruction of Europe during the 1940s under the auspices of the Marshall Plan served as the centre-piece of American ODA


programmes at the beginning of the cold war. They indirectly aided francophone Africa in that a portion of the nearly $3,000 million in aid provided to France was ultimately diverted to its African colonies. After 1956, Washington's foreign assistance priorities shifted to East and Southeast Asia as a result of US-led military actions to counter perceived communist expansionism in these regions. Beginning in 1976, US concerns over access to oil and military bases in the Middle East led that region to become the largest recipient of US aid. By way of contrast, Africa was marginalised within the foreign assistance hierarchy, receiving only 3.3 per cent of all bilateral US aid from 1946 to 1986.33

Throughout the cold war, the White House expected its European allies – most notably France – to take the lead in their former colonial territories.34 As succinctly summarised in 1968 by George Ball, Under-Secretary of State in the Kennedy Administration, the US recognised Africa as a 'special European responsibility', just as European nations were expected to recognise 'our particular responsibility in Latin America'.35 Consequently, they were also presumed to have primary responsibility for thwarting communist and other 'radical' powers from exploiting instability in Africa. One of the most cited examples of this trend occurred in 1983 when President Reagan is said to have told President Mitterrand that any needed interventionist measures in Chad's growing crisis were 'France's historic responsibility'.36 Yet when a withdrawing colonial power was unable or unwilling to maintain order in a crisis, the White House tended to take an active rôle. For example, Belgium's perceived inability to manage rising conflict in Zaire during the immediate independence era led to significant long-term US involvement in that country beginning with Dwight Eisenhower's Administration.37 According to American policymakers, France emerged as the only European power with both the political will and the necessary military force to remain an active and long-term player in Africa.

Because the US backed France as the dominant power in francophone Africa, the region only received marginal, albeit growing

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33 Ibid. p. 79.
levels of American assistance during the cold war. This reached its height when ODA more than doubled from $243 million in 1980 to $542 million in 1989. Moreover, whereas only 14 per cent of all American ODA to Africa in 1980 was targeted towards francophone régimes, this had increased to 22 per cent in 1984 and 26 per cent in 1988. It is important to note, however, that US aid for Africa was divided among 25 francophone countries, and was still much lower than that provided to other regions of the world. Most important, overall figures can be misleading and must be carefully interpreted. For example, in the transition year of 1989, although the US gave francophone Africa $671 million in ODA, as much as $255 million, nearly 40 per cent, was allocated exclusively to Zaïre, one of its primary clients during the cold war.38

American ODA to francophone Africa, similar to US policies pursued throughout the continent, was primarily driven by a combination of ideological and security interests.39 Those associated with anti-communism ensured that capitalist-oriented administrations, such as Senegal under Abdou Diouf and Cameroon under Paul Biya, would be treated as potential US allies deserving of ODA, whereas African-Marxist states, such as Madagascar under Didier Ratsiraka and Benin under Mathieu Kérékou, would be isolated. The importance of ideology in Washington’s calculations was further illustrated by the fact that capitalist countries received on average 88 per cent of all American ODA to Africa during the 1980s, as against only 6 per cent each for Marxist and socialist countries.

As demonstrated by Côte d’Ivoire receiving less than $20 million in ODA from the United States during the entire decade of the 1980s, shared ideological beliefs were not sufficient to attract Washington’s involvement in francophone Africa. Rather, the top recipients of aid most often were strategically important regional powers, such as Morocco, which also offered special military access rights or maintained US technical facilities (e.g. telecommunications relay stations) on their territories. Similar to the foreign policy relationships cultivated by the US with authoritarian African allies who were among the top recipients of ODA during the 1980s, including Liberia under Samuel K. Doe, Somalia under Siad Barre, and the Sudan under Gaafar Mohamed Nimeri, an overriding preoccupation with anti-communism led

38 See, for example, Michael G. Schatzberg, Mobutu or Chaos? The United States and Zaïre, 1960–1990 (Lanham, MD, 1991).
39 Schraeder, United States Foreign Policy Toward Africa, especially pp. 11–50.
Washington policy-makers to downplay rising economic deterioration and politico-military repression in francophone countries as long as their leaders were willing to support US containment policies. One of the clearest cases in this regard is Mobutu Sese Seko, who relied upon foreign assistance as well as his armed forces to maintain himself in power as his popular support progressively eroded from the 1970s to the beginning of the 1980s.

The case of Zaïre is especially instructive in terms of understanding what France perceived as low-level US–French competition in francophone Africa during the cold war era. Since the end of World War II, French leaders remained equally concerned about rising Anglo-Saxon and communist bloc influence in the French preserve of francophone Africa. As a result, they perceived, as witnessed by the memoirs of Foccart, the US-supported Mobutu as facilitating the penetration of Anglo-Saxon influence into the ‘largest country of francophone Africa’, and therefore as a clear ‘victory’ for the US at the expense of French interests.

Although Foccart believes that Washington policy-makers ‘never seriously’ sought to supplant French interests during the cold war, his memoirs none the less reveal a preoccupation with the economic and political power of the United States. At the very least, the French placed the potential US threat to francophone Africa on a par with that posed by the former Soviet Union, and in the extreme depicted this as the primary long-term obstacle to French interests in Africa. ‘The U.S. policy was very explicit, giving major responsibility for Africa in global terms to the major metropolitan power’, explained Herman Cohen, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs in George Bush’s Administration, in a reaction to criticisms of US actions described in Foccart’s memoirs. ‘The problem with the French is that they never believed it, because they extended the Gaullist vision of the U.S. as an imperialist power in Europe into Africa’.

43 Foccart parle, pp. 310–11.
44 Ibid. p. 227.
FOREIGN ASSISTANCE IN FRANCOPHONE AFRICA

JAPAN'S PURSUIT OF ECONOMIC SELF-INTEREST DURING THE COLD WAR

In sharp contrast to the superpower status that victory bestowed upon the United States, Japan was physically and economically ravaged at the end of World War II, and was a net recipient of foreign assistance for the next two decades. Prohibited from rebuilding a sizeable military under its post-war constitution, Japanese leaders concentrated on internal economic reconstruction and development. After regaining full sovereignty in 1952, Japan embarked on a modest ODA programme that took the form of delayed reparation payments to such regional neighbours as Burma, the Philippines, and Indonesia. Japanese ODA eventually surpassed that of any of the other industrialised democracies in 1989, and encompassed all regions of the Third World, including francophone Africa, where French policymakers noted the rising economic strength and anglophone proclivities of America’s Asian protégé.

As a rising economic superpower with the world's second largest gross national product (GNP), Japan clearly sought to use ODA in its quest for global economic supremacy during the cold war. According to John Stirling, Japan conducted a ‘business foreign policy’ in which governmental and corporate actors promulgated an ‘industrial policy’ targeted towards enhancing exports through concessional aid. Taking this one step further, Robert Scalapino argues that Japan’s protection under a US-led military umbrella enabled its leaders to reconstitute ‘national security’ in largely economic terms. In short, they were able to pursue a neo-mercantilist foreign assistance strategy that concentrated on securing Japan’s ‘regional geoeconomic interest while skirting any political entanglements.’

Economic self-interest (kokueki) clearly shaped Japanese ODA towards francophone Africa during the cold war. Specifically, policymakers consciously targeted ODA to those countries which (i) possessed important raw materials vital to Japanese industry, such as copper.

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in Zaire, uranium in Niger, and chromium in Madagascar; (ii) represented potential sources of such raw materials (and hence heavy future investments), including oil in Gabon; (iii) offered access to highly valued Japanese imports, such as fish products in Senegal; and (iv) constituted important economic markets in terms of facilitating exports, such as the rôle of Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire as markets for Japanese automobiles.\footnote{Ibid.}

In comparison to long-term French and American involvement in francophone Africa, Japan is a newcomer. It was only in 1986 that its ODA consistently surpassed $200 million, thereafter being incrementally increased to $494 million in 1989. Although approaching the level of American aid for that same year, Japanese assistance none the less lagged far behind the $2,260 million in French ODA.

Unlike their American counterparts, Japanese policy-makers were less likely to impose ideological litmus tests as the basis for extending ODA, preferring instead to secure markets for both imports and exports.\footnote{Robert M. Orr, Jr., The Emergence of Japan’s Foreign Aid Power (New York, 1990), p. 58.} During the decade of the 1980s, for example, Japan on average provided 21 per cent of its ODA to socialist countries (as opposed to 6 per cent by the US). One of the most noted examples of this policy was the extensive levels of ODA provided to Tanzania under the leadership of President Julius Nyerere, the so-called ‘dean’ of African socialism and prominent spokesman of the anti-\textit{apartheid} struggle against South Africa. The majority of Japanese ODA (approximately 70 per cent) none the less was targeted towards capitalist countries in Africa during the 1980s.

A country’s colonial past seemingly played an important rôle in Japanese calculations about their ODA. The majority (approximately 70 per cent) was consistently targeted towards former British colonies during the 1980s, as against only 23 per cent for francophone Africa. Although many reasons for this relationship can be offered (e.g. greater ease of fixing deals in English-speaking countries), the leaders of Japanese business often note that the francophone economies were more difficult to penetrate due to powerful French monopolies and a conscious French policy to back them up. By the end of the final cold war decade, France remained the premier, if not unchallenged, source of ODA in francophone Africa.
'LA FRANCOPHONIE' UNDER THREAT IN THE POST-COLD WAR ERA

The most notable international development that accompanied the end of the cold war was the rise of democratization movements seeking an end to single-party rule. In March 1995, according to the African Governance Program of the Carter Center in Atlanta, Georgia, out of a total of 54 African countries for which data were compiled, 15 (ca. 28 per cent) were described as either maintaining or having ensured a successful transition to democratic forms of governance, in sharp contrast to the five democracies (ca. 9 per cent of the total) that existed as late as 1990. Another 22 countries (ca. 41 per cent) were described as 'in transition' from various types of authoritarian rule to potentially more democratic forms of governance. In short, most African countries (69 per cent) by the beginning of 1995 either had become democratic, or embodied a transition process potentially leading to more democratic forms of governance.

At the sixteenth franco-African summit held in La Baule, France, in June 1990, President Mitterrand announced that French ODA commitments henceforth would favour those countries that were either democratic or seriously pursuing democratic change. According to what ultimately became known as the 'La Baule Doctrine' or the 'Paristroika' of francophone Africa, France urged its allies to initiate a process of democratization patterned after Benin's February 1990 conférence nationale in order to remain favoured members of the francophone family. In such a political summit, individuals from all major elite groups – including ruling and opposition political leaders, ethnic and religious representatives, elders and heads of women's organisations, labour and student activists – debate the outlines of a new democratic order. In the case of Benin, 'Kérékou was unable to portray himself as a gradual reformer, largely because of the corruption that had devastated the Beninese economy'. He accepted the national

52 For a variety of summaries of this trend, see Goran Hyden and Michael Bratton (eds.), Governance and Politics in Africa (Boulder and London, 1992); Guy Martin, 'Democratic Transition in Africa', in Issue: a journal of opinion (Los Angeles), 21, 1–2, 1993, pp. 6–7; and Peter J. Schraeder, 'Elites as Facilitators or Impediments to Political Development? Some Lessons from the "Third Wave" of Democratisation in Africa', in The Journal of Developing Areas (Macomb, IL), 29, 1, October 1994, pp. 69–90. 53 Africa Demos (Atlanta), September 1994.

54 The remaining countries are described as falling under one of three categories: 'directed democracy' (11 per cent), 'authoritarian' rule (6 per cent), and 'contested sovereignty' (15 per cent).


conference’s unilateral declaration of sovereignty, ‘and in exchange was pardoned for all crimes that he may have committed’. He surrendered supreme power to the Haut conseil de la république, which drafted an electoral calendar that led to the country’s first free and fair multi-party elections in 1991.

In addition to optimistically assuming that other authoritarian leaders could be induced to accept a national conference’s self-declared right to take control of the political process, proponents also believed that France would punish recalcitrant leaders by applying economic and political sanctions. As demonstrated by the distribution of French ODA in the 1990s, however, it is clear that the idealist objectives associated with Paristroika were never intended to replace the more traditional goals of preserving and strengthening la francophonie. In Côte d’Ivoire, the Mitterrand Government rewarded President Félix Houphouët-Boigny’s co-optation of the democratisation process by providing their favoured client with over $1,460 million in ODA from 1990 to 1992 – a dramatic increase from the already high level of $549 million received during the preceding three-year period.

The case of Cameroon is especially instructive. Unlike the relatively peaceful tactics employed by Houphouët-Boigny, the incumbent President Paul Biya and his ruling Rassemblement démocratique du peuple camerounais (RDPC) sanctioned high levels of state-sponsored violence against the opposition to ensure victory in the country’s first multi-party elections held in October 1992. ‘Widespread irregularities during the election period, on election day, and in the tabulation of results seriously call into question, for any fair observer, the validity of the outcome’, explained a report of the US National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), one of the foreign groups that monitored the elections. ‘It would not be an exaggeration to suggest that this election system was designed to fail.’

The Mitterrand Government, rather than condemning the violence used to manipulate the Cameroonian political process, in essence helped to fund these tactics. It supplied Biya's administration during the three-year 'democratisation' process with $159 million in ODA in 1990, $224 million in 1991, and $436 million the election year of 1992. This means that the total figure of $819 million was more than double the $344 million in ODA provided during the preceding three-year period. Part of the explanation may be due to the fact that the most likely person to replace Biya was John Fru Ndi, the charismatic leader of the Social Democratic Front (SDF) from anglophone Cameroon. According to Fru Ndi, who took second place in the presidential elections with 35.9 per cent of the votes cast, he returned after an earlier visit to Paris in 1992 'with a clear message from the French government that it did not want to see an English-speaking president in Cameroon'. In short, the sharp increase in ODA to that country points to France's steadfast goal of preserving and strengthening la francophonie, despite extensive human-rights violations.

The unwillingness of France to strongly embrace democratisation movements if accompanied by instability was underscored at the seventeenth franco-African summit held in Libreville, Gabon, 5-7 October 1992. The French Prime Minister, Pierre Bérégovoy, stated that when confronted with the simultaneous and potentially conflicting goals of promoting democracy, ensuring development, and maintaining security, francophone African leaders were expected to adhere to the following order of priorities: first and foremost, security; followed by development and, finally, democratisation. This shift in priorities also reflected growing French disillusionment with the sovereign conférence nationale in favour of an Africanised version of the 'cohabitation' model of governance introduced into French politics during the 1980s. Under this system, often referred to as a gouvernement de l'unité nationale, incumbent leaders and parties that have no intention of relinquishing power are expected to compensate for the lack of democracy by asking opposition parties to join a government of national unity.

The shift in French priorities was demonstrated by the case of Senegal, as witnessed by the evolution of politics under the leadership of Diouf and his ruling Parti socialiste sénégalais (PS). After successfully weathering political and civil unrest following the strongly contested presidential elections of 1988, Diouf temporarily co-opted Abdoulaye Wade and his Parti démocratique sénégalais (PDS) into the political  

62 Glaser and Smith, op. cit. p. 192.  
63 Huband, loc. cit. p. 43.  
64 Glaser and Smith, op. cit. p. 102.  
65 Ibid. p. 103.
process by extending an invitation in November 1990 to join a
government of national unity. Although Wade eventually withdrew
in order to contest the 1993 presidential elections – once again won by
Diouf amidst charges of electoral irregularities, and subsequently
followed by political and civil unrest – he ultimately agreed in March
1995 to take part in a second government of national unity. Throughout
this entire process Diouf’s regime was strongly supported by France –
for example, in the year preceding the 1988 elections, its ODA to
Senegal increased to $216 million, while the 1990–2 government of
national unity was rewarded with an additional $688 million.

A second trend that significantly affected French ODA policy in the
post-cold war era was the intensification of the economic crisis that has
affected the whole of the African continent, an important dimension
of which was the often severe dislocation that accompanied the
implementation of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) imposed
by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.
Equally important, internal economic decline often resulting from bad
policy choices was hastened by bloated, corrupt, and inefficient
bureaucracies – the so-called ‘crisis of the state’ – that increasingly
were incapable of responding to the day-to-day needs of their
populations. Given that the CFA franc had not been devalued since
the creation of la zone franc in 1948, the member-states that convened
for a conference in Dakar during 10–11 January 1994 were obviously
surprised when informed by French officials that their currency would
be devalued by 50 per cent beginning on 12 January. According to
Martin, several factors unique to francophone Africa precipitated this
remarkable decision:

Apart from the obvious fact (belaboured by the IMF and the World Bank) that
the CFA franc was grossly overvalued, thereby making goods in la zone franc
uncompetitive on African markets and encouraging cross-border smuggling
with non-CFA countries, capital transfer between francophone states and
European banks had sharply increased over the last year-and-a-half,
prompting the monetary authorities to suspend the free convertibility of the
CFA franc as from 2 August 1993. In addition, the French Treasury had been
repeatedly called upon to bail out francophone states on the verge of financial
bankruptcy (notably Cameroon, Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, Gabon, and Senegal)

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66 See Momar Coumba Diop and Mamadou Diouf, Le Sénégal sous Abdou Diouf: état et société
(Paris, 1990), and Babacar Kanté, ‘Senegal’s Empty Elections’, in *Journal of Democracy*
(Baltimore), 5, 1, 1994, pp. 96–108.

either by providing direct budgetary support, or by paying their arrears to the IMF and the World Bank.\textsuperscript{68}

The seriousness that French officials initially accorded to the growing necessity of 'bailing out' financially threatened francophone régimes, as opposed to the more politically damaging choice of devaluation ultimately pursued, was clearly demonstrated by a dramatic increase in ODA commitments. From 1990 to 1992, total French ODA to francophone Africa exceeded $8,200 million – a $2,100 million increase over the previous three-year period. Indeed, the amount of French ODA provided to francophone Africa exceeded $3,000 million for the first time in 1992. The members of \textit{la zone franc} constituted a privileged sub-group in that they received 79 per cent of French ODA in 1992, despite the fact that they comprise only 56 per cent of an already privileged francophone Africa.

None the less, the end of the cold war was accompanied by a concomitant increase in global economic competition that forced France seriously to reconsider its relationship with its former colonies. 'Ultimately', concludes Martin, 'the deepening economic and financial crisis in francophone Africa, coupled with a severe recession in the former metropole, led to the sobering realisation that the latter could no longer afford to foot the bill.'\textsuperscript{69} Interestingly enough, but clearly not by accident, the French decision to devalue the CFA franc was only announced and implemented after the death in December 1993 of the President of Côte d'Ivoire.\textsuperscript{70} The point is that Houphouët-Boigny could be counted on by other francophone leaders to utilise his diplomatic clout to squelch any French attempts at devaluation. The decision to devalue the previously sacred CFA franc clearly suggested the rising importance of economic factors in French calculations.

A third security-related trend of the post-cold war era that has captured the attention of policy-makers is the rise of Islamist movements, particularly in what the French refer to as the Maghreb, namely Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. (A more expansive concept of the 'wider Maghreb' includes Egypt, Libya, and Mauritania.) Algeria offers an especially poignant example of this evolving French security concern. Having fought a bloody war to gain independence from France in 1962, Algeria is currently locked in an intensifying civil war that, depending on the source, is causing from time to time as many as

\textsuperscript{69} Ibid.  
200 to 1,000 deaths a week. Tensions mounted after the Algerian military assumed governmental control in a coup d'etat, and subsequently cancelled multi-party legislative elections scheduled for December 1991. The army acted because the Front islamique du salut (FIS) was on the verge of winning majority control of the Algerian legislature. Since then the fanatical Groupe islamique armée (GIA) has led an anti-government guerrilla war which, among other actions, included the widely reported hijacking of an Air France jetliner in December 1994,71 and a series of terrorist bombings in 1995.

France's concerns over Islamist movements were evident in the 1980s. Fearing that an Algeria governed by Islamists would pose a direct threat to French interests in the Maghreb and sub-Saharan Africa, as well as radicalise the substantial Islamic community in France itself, policy-makers increased ODA commitments from the $192 million provided in 1986-8 to $574 million in the three years preceding and including the elections of 1991. In fact, during 1992, the Algerian military's decision to cancel parliamentary elections appears to have been supported by the provision of an additional $103 million in ODA. And at the beginning of 1995, the French Government was reported to be working closely with Michel Camdessus, the French director of the IMF, in a ‘behind-the-scenes’ effort to provide the Algerian military régime with ‘billions of dollars of fresh international aid and debt relief’.72 France's preoccupation with Islamist movements in Algeria is simply the latest manifestation of a long-term security interest in North Africa. Other examples of traditional French concern include Morocco and Tunisia, which together received approximately $1,000 million in ODA from 1990 to 1992.

The French response to genocide in Rwanda in 1994 is especially instructive in terms of understanding how French security interests have evolved since the end of the cold war. Due to a conscious effort to more effectively integrate the former Belgian colonies of Central Africa into the French sphere of influence, the Mitterrand Government during the decade of the 1980s provided significant amounts of ODA assistance to Zaïre ($461 million), Burundi ($243 million), and Rwanda ($199 million). The latter figure is noteworthy in that the annual amount (approximately $20 million) was doubled to an average of $40 million during the initial three years of the 1990s. The

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strategic significance of maintaining la francophonie served as one of the central reasons for the increase in French ODA to Rwanda, as well as for the series of French military involvements both before (Opération Noroit) and after (Opération turquoise) President Juvenal Habyarimana’s death in 1994 and the subsequent genocide carried out by members of his Hutu ethnic group. Specifically, the French Government sought to stem the invasion and steady advance beginning in October 1990 of the Front patriotique rwandais (FPR) – a guerrilla army supported by Uganda and perceived by French policy-makers as ‘hostile to France’ and ‘under Anglo-Saxon influence’.73

According to some French officials, the FPR’s military victory constituted the first time that a francophone country had ‘fallen’ to Anglo-Saxon influence, and Rwanda was perceived as the first in a series of regional ‘dominos’ that eventually could bring Burundi and an independent Shaba (the southeastern province of Zaire) under Anglo-Saxon domination to the ‘detriment’ of France and la francophonie.74 According to this culturally inspired theory, Central Africa could become a ‘Trojan horse’ projecting Anglo-Saxon influence throughout the remainder of francophone Africa. Indeed, French hostility towards the FPR régime – despite the fact of having neither initiated nor participated in the genocide that ultimately ended when it achieved military victory – was underscored by the Mitterrand Government’s refusal to invite Rwanda to the aforementioned franco-African summit held in Biarritz, November 1994.75

Zaïre offers a final example of some of the contradictory currents in recent French ODA policy. Desirous of strengthening franco-Zaïrian ties at the expense of American influence, France during the 1980s increased ODA levels from an average of $32 million during 1980–3 to $70 million during the three years preceding the fall of the Berlin Wall. With the end of the cold war, the United States, Belgium, and France – the so-called ‘troika’ – began to pressure Mobutu to democratise his political system. France’s willingness to consider limited sanctions coincided with a decrease in its ODA that began in 1989, and was reinforced when the French ambassador to Zaïre was killed at the beginning of 1993 during a period of civil unrest led by rioting soldiers. Mobutu none the less resurrected himself within la francophonie by

playing a critical rôle in French military and diplomatic efforts in Rwanda in 1994. As underscored by Foccart in his memoirs, Zaïre 'has the means to be a regional power', and therefore 'the long-term interest of France and its allies is evident'.

WASHINGTON'S QUESTIONING OF THE 'CHASSE GARDÉE' AND RISING AMERICAN–FRENCH ECONOMIC COMPETITION

Despite official pronouncements to the contrary, the end of the cold war reinforced the historical tendency among American policy-makers to treat Africa as a 'back-burner' issue. Adopting a play on words of Reagan's much-debated policy of 'constructive engagement', Clough poignantly argued that the manifestation of this historical tendency during the Bush Administration was a policy of 'cynical disengagement' guided by three principles:

(1) 'Do not spend much money [on Africa] unless Congress makes you.' (2) 'Do not let African issues complicate policy toward other, more important parts of the world.' (3) And, above all else, 'Do not take stands that might create political controversies in the United States'.

Although one can argue that the neglect of Africa by Bill Clinton's Administration, like that of its Democratic predecessors, is not cynically motivated, each of these guiding principles appears to characterise Washington's approach to francophone Africa.

The Clinton Administration's avoidance of policies that might create domestic controversies was clearly demonstrated by its initial response to genocide in Rwanda in 1994. Fearful of recreating the politically damaging domestic uproar that accompanied the killing in October 1993 of 18 US soldiers taking part in Operation Restore Hope in Somalia, the White House initially blocked the dispatch to Rwanda of 5,500 peacekeeping troops requested by the UN Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In addition, US spokespersons were instructed to avoid referring to the unfolding ethnic conflict as 'genocide', lest such a label inflame public sympathy and cause Americans to demand US intervention as in Somalia when Bush was still President. While a

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76 Foccart parle, p. 310.
80 See, for example, Alison Des Forges, 'Face au génocide, une réponse désastreuse des États-Unis et des Nations Unies', in Guichaoua (ed.), op. cit. pp. 455–64.
variety of Africanist groups, such as Human Rights Watch/Africa, claimed that the Administration’s ‘foot-dragging’ contributed to the deaths of thousands of civilians,\(^{81}\) Clinton’s decision none the less matched growing popular American sentiment against US involvement in UN-sponsored ‘peace-making’ operations.

The American President’s decision to avoid issues that might ‘complicate policy toward other, more important regions of the world’ was demonstrated by US policy towards Zaïre. During the 1992 presidential election campaign, Clinton attacked the Bush Administration for failing to distance itself from ‘corrupt and dictatorial leaders’ in Africa, specifically in terms of being ‘tepid, when it should have been decisive’ with respect to terminating aid to the Mobutu régime.\(^{82}\) Despite negotiating with the French and the Belgians to further reduce ODA commitments to Zaïre, the Clinton Administration ultimately adopted a more status quo policy by perceiving Mobutu as both ‘part of the problem’ and ‘part of the solution’ to what may become an increasingly violent political situation in Zaïre.\(^{83}\)

At the heart of this revised approach is an apparent acceptance of the ‘Mobutu or chaos’ argument advanced by Zairian specialists in the State Department, the Pentagon, and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) since Mobutu took power in the mid-1960s.\(^{84}\) ‘Regardless of the fact that we are no longer faced with a communist threat’, explained a Foreign Service Officer (FSO) of the State Department, ‘the destabilization of Zaïre – which borders nine other African countries – could have a tremendously negative impact on regional stability’.\(^{85}\) With recent setbacks still fresh in the minds of most policy-makers, the Clinton Administration backed away from a situation that, according to another FSO, ‘could easily turn into a Somalia and a Rwanda rolled into one, although this time in one of Africa’s largest and most populous nations’.\(^{86}\) In short, the lesson seemingly learned from Somalia and Rwanda was that African crises prevent the pursuit of policy priorities in ‘other, more important regions of the world’.

The avoidance of financial commitments to Africa constitutes the consensus viewpoint within both the White House and the Congress as of 1995. Regardless of whether the President has been a Democrat or


\(^{84}\) See Schatzberg, Mobutu or Chaos?, 1991.

\(^{85}\) Personal interview, Washington, DC.

\(^{86}\) Personal interview, Washington, DC.
a Republican, US foreign assistance to Africa since the mid-1980s has been steadily cut due to popular pressures to trim the budget deficit and enhance spending for domestic social programmes. From 1985 to 1995, for example, bilateral assistance to Africa declined in both aggregate terms (from $1,870 to $1,080 million) and as a percentage of the US foreign aid budget (from 10.3 to 6.03 per cent). Although military and other security-related forms of assistance, such as economic support funds (ESF), have been almost totally abolished and account for the majority of these cuts, the Republicans, who as of 1995 control both the Senate and the House of Representatives, have vowed to severely slash ODA levels due to the lack of US strategic interests in Africa.

Although ODA figures are not yet available for 1993–5, it is significant that francophone Africa actually increased its share of American assistance in the initial post-cold war era. Whereas an average of $279 million was provided during 1980–2, this increased to $470 million in 1983–5, to $488 in 1986–8, and to $560 million in 1990–2. This last average is potentially misleading, however, in that the amount provided in 1992 ($406 million) represented a sharp decrease from the previous year ($702 million), and therefore most likely reflected the already mentioned overall decline in American foreign assistance to Africa.

Yet regardless of whether the levels of ODA significantly change, the form of even limited American commitments since the end of the cold war, when coupled with new directions in foreign policy towards Africa, have contributed to growing tensions with France. In numerous countries throughout francophone Africa, relatively small but effective amounts of ODA from the US have been designed to facilitate the transition to democracy (e.g. sending representatives to monitor elections), as well as to consolidate successful transitions that have already taken place. In the case of Benin, the US provided $41 million in ODA during the election year of 1991, and $14 million in ODA during 1992 after the installation of a democratically elected government.

Unlike their French counterparts, US policy-makers often have little


to lose in strongly denouncing francophone administrations that clearly manipulate the transition to a new political order. To the consternation of some French diplomats, the State Department strongly denounced President Biya's manipulation of the 1992 Cameroonian elections, and subsequently suspended American ODA. In contrast, the French Government, which provided Cameroon with over $400 million in ODA in 1992, 'sent a letter to Biya congratulating him on his victory'.89 The cases of Benin and Cameroon are not unique, but rather indicative of calculations by American policy-makers that the promotion of democracy (most notably the emergence of new ruling elites) throughout francophone Africa is a very low-cost strategy with potentially high returns (i.e. a new, more pro-US régime may be installed).

The gradual decline of ideologically based policies in favour of the pursuit of economic self-interest is a second important element of America's changing involvement in Africa.90 A contradiction seemingly exists, however, between official US government actions and increasing support for the private sector. Specifically, when the Republican majority in Congress was vowing in February 1995 to slash already reduced levels of ODA as a result of Africa's strategic and economic unimportance, Herman Cohen, former Assistant Secretary of State of African Affairs under the Bush Administration, was presiding over a conference in Libreville, Gabon, designed to strengthen US–African trade and investment. Despite their hesitation to provide the continent with financial assistance at the same levels as their French counterparts, few if any in Congress would disagree with the central theme of Cohen's opening presentation that the concept of a chasse gardée in Africa had no place in the post-cold war world. 'The African market is open to everyone', explained Cohen. 'We must accept free and fair competition, equality between all actors'.91 Towards this end, American officials increasingly are in agreement that foreign policy should serve as the facilitator of US private enterprise in all regions of the world, including francophone Africa.

The net result of this re-emphasised economic component of American foreign policy is to strengthen further the small but growing

89 Huband, loc. cit. p. 43.
90 For an economically based interpretation which, although recognising the importance of ideological factors, none the less argues that economic interests predominated even during the cold war, see David N. Gibbs, The Political Economy of Third World Intervention: mines, money, and U.S. policy in the Congo crisis (Chicago and London, 1991).
expansion into francophone Africa of certain key US industries, most notably oil and telecommunications, that has accompanied the end of the cold war. In the eyes of many French policy-makers, however, this constitutes 'at best an intrusion' and 'at worst an aggression' into their chasse gardée. The seriousness with which this issue is treated at the highest levels of the French Government was demonstrated by the public admission of Michel Roussin, Minister of Cooperation, that a series of meetings had been held on the theme of how best to 'defend' French interests, including those within the economic realm, against those of the United States.

The so-called 'oil war' between the Government of the Congo, Elf-Aquitaine (the French oil corporation), and Occidental Petroleum Corporation (Oxy), serves as an excellent example of the potential future stakes involved in rising French–American economic competition. Desperately in need of funds to pay the salaries of 80,000 civil servants prior to the rapidly advancing legislative elections, the newly elected President, Pascal Lissouba, 'naturally turned for help to Elf-Aquitaine (which controls 80 per cent of the country’s oil production)'. When its French manager refused to approve either a $300 million loan or 'a request for a $300 million mortgage on the future production of three promising new off-shore oil deposits', Lissouba initiated secret negotiations with the US-based Congo-Oxy. The net outcome was a signed purchase agreement – ultimately renounced by Lissouba's régime eight months later due to 'intense French pressure' – that resulted in a cash payment of $150 million in return for 75 million barrels of oil originally promised to Elf-Aquitaine.

The rising impact of the African/African–American summits also helps to explain the evolving US foreign policy towards francophone Africa. Whereas the first was held in Abidjan in April 1991, and an expanded second in Libreville in May 1993, the third summit, held in Dakar during May 1995, was the largest and most successful US–African gathering ever organised. In addition to hosting between 2,000 and 3,000 participants, including many prestigious African–American politicians, the summit co-ordinators also welcomed several heads of state and other high-level delegations from numerous African countries. Originally designed as a meeting ground to further strengthen cultural ties, the African/African–American gathering has evolved into a burgeoning forum for encouraging trade and investment

92 Glaser and Smith, op. cit. p. 186.  
93 Ibid. p. 187.  
94 Martin, 'Continuity and Change in Franco-African Relations', pp. 15–16.
FOREIGN ASSISTANCE IN FRANCOPHONE AFRICA

between America and Africa, and is threatening to overshadow the long-established franco-African summit. It is no accident, explained a senior French official in Dakar, that all three have targeted important francophone capitals of West Africa. Indeed, one of the most notable economic components of the third African/African–American summit was what the organisers labelled the ‘American Day’ – a series of workshops and presentations by numerous US Government officials, including the Secretary of Commerce, Ron Brown, whose agencies are promoting US–African trade and investment.

Mention must also be made of the growing perception within the US policy-making establishment that the spread of militant Islam on the African continent is a threat to American interests. Many officials believe that the decline of the former Soviet Union and communism has created a power vacuum that potentially could be filled by what they perceive as ‘radical’ Islamist movements, particularly those clearly sponsored by Iran, Libya, and the Sudan. The Clinton Administration had apparently come to the nuanced view that whereas ‘radical revivalism must be combatted by all means’ in Northeast Africa (Libya and Egypt), the francophone territories of Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria in Northwest Africa are of less strategic importance due to their distance from major petroleum sources, and therefore US involvement should be minimised. It is for this reason, for example, that the Administration, much to the consternation of French diplomats, has underscored the necessity of seeking a negotiated settlement within Algeria that, in the extreme, could result in US recognition of an Islamist, albeit democratically elected régime.

JAPAN’S STEADY AND LOW-KEY ECONOMIC EXPANSION INTO FRANCOPHONE AFRICA

Unlike their French and American counterparts who had significantly to readjust ODA policies in light of changing national interests after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, Japanese policy-

96 Personal interview, Dakar. It is important to note, however, that the organisers originally intended to hold the third summit in Nigeria, and were forced to cancel due to an unstable political environment in that country.
97 See, for example, John L. Esposito, The Islamic Threat: myth or reality? (New York, 1992), and Ian O. Lesser, Security in North Africa: internal and external challenges (Santa Monica, CA, 1993).
makers simply reinforced their previous pursuit of economic self-interest in francophone Africa. As underscored by a French diplomat posted in Dakar, 'a purely economic policy that is both ideologically and culturally blind – the essence of the so-called “Japanese model” – is ideally suited for the increasingly competitive economic environment of the post-cold war era'.

Indeed, in order to enhance trade and investment opportunities, the Japanese Government hosted a major conference on African ‘development’ in Tokyo in October 1993.

The significant increase in Japanese ODA underscores the seriousness with which their policy makers have sought to penetrate francophone Africa economically. Whereas an average of $101 million was provided during 1980–2, this rose to $309 million in 1986–8, and to $460 million in 1990–2. Not surprisingly, such ‘classic’ Japanese trading partners as Morocco, Senegal, and Côte d’Ivoire received major increases in aid. None the less, the aggregate ODA figure for 1990–2, despite being 50 per cent above that for 1986–8, understates Japanese interest in francophone Africa. Specifically, the provision of only $326 million in 1992 lowered the overall average, and constituted merely a temporary downturn in an otherwise expanding ODA programme.

It is interesting to note that although Japan’s ODA average for 1990–2 ($460 million) was not much lower than that for the United States during the same period ($560 million), its efforts in francophone Africa have not attracted as much French criticism or antagonism. This is perhaps due to the fact that Japan, like Germany, is not perceived as imposing upon French cultural institutions and leadership, as is the case with the US-supported African/African–American summits, or even Canada’s competition for leadership with la francophonie. Another reason might be that Japan is not a competitor in the extremely lucrative and jealously protected oil industry. However, as regards telecommunications and vehicles, the gains made in francophone Africa clearly underscore Japan’s movement away from its past rôle as purchaser of primary products in favour of greater penetration of traditional French export realms.

Although Japan is a recent arrival in francophone Africa compared to the United States and, regardless of the amount of aid extended, has not achieved a position of global leadership, its expanding ODA programme has generated both criticisms and concerns among French policy-makers. In addition to the fact that Japanese leaders (like their US counterparts) have nothing much to lose and everything to gain by
pressing for the political and economic liberalisation of francophone states (witness the provision of $14 million in ODA to Benin in 1992), Japan is none the less criticised as a strong supporter of Anglo-Saxon culture, most notably in terms of its adoption of English as the language of international diplomacy and business.100

The greatest potential perceived threat to French interests lies in the aforementioned Japanese ‘model of development’, the virtue of which, as highlighted by the Senegalese Prime Minister, Habib Thiam, is an openness to modernity and utilisation of the state as a motor for rapid economic development, at the same time that the country ‘preserves its own identity’.101 The implication is that francophone Africa can, and perhaps should, develop in association with foreign partners less concerned with imposing their ideological and/or cultural biases and preconceptions. As Hook has succinctly concluded:

The success of Japanese leaders in engineering their own country’s economic development and stimulating rapid growth among its East Asian neighbors was among the most noteworthy developments of the three decades [of the cold war] and represented a potential model for other ODA donors.102

**TOWARDS THE FUTURE**

The end of the cold war has had a dramatic effect on the evolution of ODA policies towards francophone Africa. Although Japan’s focus on trade and investment was simply reinforced and expanded, the French were prompted to reassess their culturally based promotion of *la francophonie*, while the United States had to restructure completely an ideologically influenced ODA policy based on the containment of a threat from communism that no longer existed. The common element of each of these three cases was a growing recognition (or reaffirmation in the case of Japan) of the importance of economics in the contemporary world.

French policy-makers have emerged as the protectors of the status quo in an increasingly competitive international economic environment. If one perceives the playing field as a zero-sum game (i.e. my win is your loss, and vice versa), as appears to be the case in France, the process of economic and political liberalisation throughout francophone Africa poses strong risks to the high levels of influence previously

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Table I
Evolution of Triangular ODA Competition in Francophone Africa, 1980–92

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<td>United States</td>
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Source: as explained in footnote 8 on p. 541.

enjoyed by the French. According to this perspective, both the Americans and the Japanese have little to lose and everything to gain from the creation of multi-party democracies in francophone Africa that are more fully integrated into the global economic system. In this regard, French policy-makers clearly emphasised the growing reality of a US threat, and to a lesser degree have begun to assess the nature of a rising Japanese influence.

Yet if one examines the evolution of the ODA competition between France, the United States, and Japan from 1980 to 1992 as shown in Table 1, an interesting picture emerges of official interest shown by the three powers in question, and therefore their potential future influence. Whereas France at the beginning of the 1980s provided 76 per cent of all ODA extended to francophone Africa, this average declined to 70 per cent in the mid-1980s, only to rise slightly to 73 per cent during 1990–2 due to the increase in French ODA commitments that accompanied the end of the cold war.

In contrast, the US was responsible for only 18 per cent of the triangular competition at the beginning of the 1980s. Although the share of ODA commitments rose to 21 per cent during the mid-1980s, it subsequently declined to a low of 15 per cent at the beginning of the 1990s. This trend suggests a declining American presence in francophone Africa, and seriously calls into question whether French policy-makers are correct in placing such a great emphasis on growing US economic inroads within the region. Indeed, if the Republicans in Congress have their way, US assistance to Africa will be severely slashed. If ODA commitments serve as a barometer of American interest and influence, the remainder of the 1990s would appear bleak.
as to the ability of US policy-makers to play a significant rôle in francophone Africa.

The most consistent trend is that exhibited by Japanese ODA. Whereas their policy-makers oversaw the commitment at the beginning of the 1980s of only 6 per cent of the total ODA of the triangular competition, this rose to 9 per cent in the mid-1980s, and to 12 per cent during 1990–2. The growing economic importance of Japan suggested by the figures is perhaps best symbolised by the completion and inauguration in May 1995 of a massive Japanese embassy overlooking the ocean in Dakar. As of 1992, Japan had displaced the United States as Senegal’s second largest foreign aid donor, and in March 1995 a major new assistance agreement was signed with the Government. In this regard, the response of a Cameroonian businessman to a question concerning the seriousness of US–French economic rivalry in francophone Africa offers an interesting vision of the future: ‘If one looks closely, it’s not the Americans that are [threatening French economic interests] but rather the Japanese’.

103 Be that as it may, the end of the cold war has clearly ushered in a new international system, that is increasingly marked by economic competition among the major world powers within all regions of the world – including francophone Africa.