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Scholars and policy analysts from the northern industrialized democracies are increasingly attempting to take stock of the successes and failures associated with the restructuring of Africa's once moribund economic and political systems—the so-called African renaissance—that gathered strength in the post-Cold War era. An important point of departure of these analyses is an optimistic belief in both the willingness and the ability of democratically elected leaderships in the northern industrialized democracies to correct past deficiencies in Africa policies and ultimately play a supporting role on the African continent. In the case of the United States, Michael Clough captured the inherent optimism of the American Africanist community in the immediate aftermath of the fall of the Berlin Wall by arguing that the United States was “free at last” of the conceptual and ideological “shackles” of its Cold War competition with the former Soviet Union and could henceforth embark on a bold new relationship with the African continent.¹ For Clough and others, including myself, the Cold War's end had rendered obsolete a formerly interventionist policy built upon the twin themes of anti-communism and containment, especially after Washington's primary perceived adversary, the Soviet Union, had followed in the footsteps of other great empires throughout history, fragmenting into a host of smaller, independent, and ultimately less-threatening countries.
Much to our chagrin, however, the Cold War’s end in many respects reinforced the historical tendency among U.S. policy makers to treat Africa as a “back-burner” issue. In a play on words of the Reagan administration’s much-debated policy of “constructive engagement” toward South Africa, Clough poignantly argued that the post-Cold War tendency to downgrade Africa was captured by the de facto policy of “cynical disengagement” of the first Bush administration (1989–93) in which policy was guided by three principles:

- Do not spend much money [on Africa] unless Congress makes you.
- Do not let African issues complicate policy toward other, more important parts of the world.
- Do not take stands that might create political controversies in the United States.

Although no two administrations are ever alike, most scholars would agree that these three principles have significantly guided U.S. policy toward Africa during both the Clinton administration (1993–2001) and the second Bush administration (2001–present), and in fact were reinforced in the aftermath of two decisive political-military turning points during the first years of both administrations: the October 1993 deaths of eighteen U.S. soldiers serving in Mogadishu, Somalia, as part of a UN-mandated intervention commonly referred to in the United States as Operation Restore Hope; and the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks against the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, DC, which resulted in the deaths of more than 2,000 civilians.

Having recently celebrated the “crystal” (fifteen-year) anniversary of the Cold War’s end (which coincided with the 2004 U.S. presidential elections) against the backdrop of an ever-widening global war against terrorism, the time appears ripe for a reassessment of U.S. policy toward Africa. Although many complex issues must be considered as part of any healthy foreign policy debate, one guiding question in particular stands out: Should the United States draw on its idealist-inspired “Uncle Sam” mythology and seek to play a more benevolent, proactive role in the African renaissance, or will a continued emphasis on other regions of greater perceived interest, most notably in the post-September 11 era, invariably reinforce a more realist-inspired “Uncle Scrooge” policy in which Africa at best remains neglected by U.S. policy makers?
Historical Context: From the Revolutionary War of 1776 to the War on Revolutionary Terrorism (2001–present)

A common thread of contemporary Africanist scholarship is that U.S. policy toward Africa during the Cold War was marked by indifference at worst, and neglect at best. A corollary of this argument is that, regardless of who has occupied the White House, policies were marked more by continuity than change. In his presidential address to one of the annual meetings of the African Studies Association, for example, Crawford Young underscored the “essential continuity” of U.S. policy toward Africa since the founding in 1958 of a separate Bureau of African Affairs within the State Department. Although he carefully added that “note-worthy fluctuations” had occurred, he nonetheless concluded that “these variations have been above all of style, tone, and the subtler chemistry of policy articulation, and not its underlying substance.”

Five years later (and one year prior to the fall of the Berlin Wall), Brian Winchester concurred, noting that U.S. foreign policy “demonstrated remarkable coherence and regularity despite the differences between Republican and Democratic administrations and the tenure of nine different Assistant Secretaries of State for African Affairs.”

The adoption of a more extended historical perspective demonstrates that one can distinguish between at least five periods of continuity and change in which U.S. involvement on the African continent either expanded or contracted:

- 1776–1861: Revolutionary fervor and expansion
- 1861–1947: Civil War, retrenchment, and restrained involvement
- 1947–89: Cold War struggle and renewed expansion
- 1989–2001: Partial retrenchment in the Cold War’s aftermath
- 2001–present: War on terrorism—contradictory trends

The first century of the American republic (1776–1861) was marked by the gradual expansion of foreign policy activity as demonstrated by the gradual spread of consulates and embassies to all regions of the African continent. Many of these diplomatic missions were downgraded or closed, however, as a result of the U.S. Civil War (1861–65) and the retrenchment that followed, as the U.S. federal government focused on internal reconstruction and development. During this period of retrenchment, the Berlin Conference of 1884–85, which the United States
attended as an observer, not only consecrated the formal creation of European empires and spheres of influence throughout Africa, but significantly restrained the pace of U.S. efforts at regaining levels of influence enjoyed prior to the U.S. Civil War. This second period of U.S. involvement (1861–1947) is thus best described as one of retrenchment in which future involvement was restrained by the African continent’s subdivision into formal European colonial empires.

A renewed period of U.S. expansion occurred during the Cold War era (1947–89). The combination of declining colonial influence of Belgium, Britain, Germany, Italy, Portugal, and Spain (with France being the exception) with the growing diplomatic activities of the Soviet Union and its allies prompted Washington to open embassies in almost every African country that achieved independence. The hallmark of this era was the enunciation of a variety of presidential doctrines, beginning with the Truman Doctrine in 1947 and culminating in the Reagan Doctrine of the 1980s; that underscored Washington’s self-appointed right to intervene against communist advances throughout the world, including in Africa. This approach transcended partisan loyalties as both Democratic and Republican administrations sought to enlist African leaders on the side of the United States in an emerging East-West rivalry with the communist bloc. The policy makers of Charles de Gaule’s France, Mao Zedong’s China, and Nikita Krushchev’s Soviet Union shared Washington’s perception of Africa’s importance in the emerging Cold War environment of the 1950s. As a result, they were equally fervent in the pursuit of African allies, contributing to Africa’s emergence as an arena of great power competition.

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 signaled the end of the Cold War but not the end of international rivalry in Africa. As deftly noted by Jeffrey E. Garten, former undersecretary of commerce for international trade in the Clinton administration, the ideologically based Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union was replaced by a “cold peace” in which the great powers increasingly struggled for economic supremacy in all regions of the world, including in Africa. Although I have argued elsewhere that this cold peace manifested itself in rising U.S.-French tensions in francophone Africa during the 1990s, not least of all due to an expanding U.S. economic presence in this region, the Cold War’s end not surprisingly fostered a reevaluation that resulted in a certain degree of political-military retrenchment from 1989 to 2001, albeit not nearly on the same scale as what occurred in the aftermath of
the U.S. Civil War. Perceptions of Africa's decreased political-military importance in the post–Cold War era were aptly captured by three trends: the State Department downsized its Bureau of African Affairs and closed several consulates in Africa, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) closed fifteen “stations” (centers of operation) in Africa and withdrew dozens of case officers, and only the “eleventh-hour intervention” of the Congressional Black Caucus prevented the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives from merging its subcommittees on African and Latin American affairs. We have never been in Africa to report on Africa,” explained one CIA official. “We went into Africa as part of the covert activity of the Cold War, to recruit [as spies] Soviet, Chinese, Eastern European and sometimes North Korean officials under circumstances that were easier to operate under than in their home countries.”

The most recent turning point in U.S. policy toward Africa resulted from the terrorist attacks of September 11 and their aftermath. These attacks exerted a profound influence on U.S. foreign policy as the Bush administration announced a global war on terrorism, replete with an official doctrine (the Bush Doctrine) and pledges to aid countries threatened by terrorism, that harkened back to the initial stages of the Cold War, when President Truman in 1947 pledged to aid countries threatened by communism. If current U.S. policy toward Africa follows in the footsteps of its Cold War predecessor, we are potentially at the beginning of a renewed period of U.S. expansionism on the African continent as this and future administrations seek African allies in the war on terrorism. It is equally possible, however, that the war on terrorism will lead to U.S. retrenchment as valuable resources are diverted to the geopolitical center of this conflict: the Middle East and South Asia.

Although it is risky to draw conclusions from unfolding events, it appears that at the very minimum the events of September 11 are prompting U.S. policy makers to de facto divide Africa into at least two spheres of variable U.S. foreign policy interest: those regions (North and East Africa) destined to receive a greater degree of U.S. attention due to their proximity to the Middle East, the perceived epicenter of the global war on terrorism; and the remainder of Sub-Saharan Africa (Central, Southern, and West Africa) which, except for some prominent cases, such as Nigeria and South Africa, is destined to be relegated to the back burner of U.S. foreign policy. It is striking to note, for example, that the microstate and former French colony of Djibouti emerged in 2003 as the site for the Defense Department’s Combined Joint Task Force–Horn
of Africa (CJTF-HOA), the primary responsibility of which is to gather intelligence and wage war on potential terrorist groups in neighboring Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen. The country enjoys the distinction of hosting the only formal U.S. military base on the African continent. In the aftermath of hosting several high-ranking official U.S. visitors, most notably Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Djibouti also agreed to station on its territory Radio Sawaa, Washington’s post—September 11 Arabic language program that is beamed to all Middle East countries (as well as Sudan), twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Djibouti’s rising fortunes are clearly linked to its status as an “island of stability” in a troubled region (the Horn of Africa) that sits astride the strategically important Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb and the Arabian Peninsula.

Competing Foreign Policy Interests

A hallmark of U.S. policy toward Africa is the lack of consensus within the policy-making establishment over Africa’s importance to the United States. In many respects, the determination of U.S. interests in Africa varies depending on the portion of the policy-making establishment that is defining those interests. The Congressional Black Caucus and other lobbying groups derivative of the African-American community are quick to emphasize the importance of cultural interests, due to the important reality that more than 34 million U.S. citizens (roughly 12 percent of the U.S. population according to the 2000 U.S. census) claim an African-American heritage. Other members of Congress underscore the importance of U.S. humanitarian interests in alleviating chronic drought and famine. The Department of Commerce not surprisingly focuses on economic interests, most notably increasing U.S. exports to the African continent and ensuring U.S. access to African petroleum reserves. The Department of State focuses on political interests, including the potential electoral weight of fifty-three African votes in the United Nations. The Department of Defense naturally focuses on security interests, including Africa’s geographic proximity to the strategically important regions of Europe and the Middle East.

These differences notwithstanding, two sets of interests—security and economic—have both dominated and historically competed for preeminence in U.S. policy toward Africa. From a broad historical perspective, the pursuit of economic self-interest historically has been in the forefront

The U.S. response to the terrorist attacks of September 11 nonetheless signifies the continued importance of national security interests in U.S. policy toward Africa during the contemporary era (2001–present). In North Africa, for example, the construction and opening in December 2002 of a new $42 million U.S. embassy in Tunis demonstrated Tunisia's rising strategic importance as an Arab country that offers strong support for the war on terrorism. Tunis boasts a State Department office for assessing regional threats, a Pentagon regional training center for U.S. Special Forces destined for combat in the Arab world, and a Foreign Service Institute for teaching the Arabic language to numerous U.S. government personnel who are preparing to work in Arabic-speaking countries. Tunisia is not unique, but rather indicative of the strengthening of U.S. security ties with North and East African countries deemed important to the Bush administration's war on terrorism.

**Cold War Trends**

The fact that U.S. policy toward Africa appears once again to be entering an anomalous period in which strategic interests predominate warrants a few words as to the dominant trends in its Cold War predecessor (1947–89). Two themes aptly illustrate how U.S. policy makers perceived Africa's role in the various strategies of containment applied to Africa in varying forms during the Cold War era. First, policy makers perceived the African continent as a means for solving non-African problems. Rather than being regarded as important in their own right, African countries were perceived by U.S. policy makers as a means for preventing the further advances of Soviet communism, and therefore U.S. relationships with African regimes evolved according to their relative importance within an East-West framework. Emperor Haile Selassie was courted from the 1940s to the 1970s, for example, due to Ethiopia's
of the American republic in its phases of contraction and expansion, from three periods: 1776–1861, strategic location and partnership in a global telecommunications surveillance network directed against the Soviet Union. When the security relationship between the United States and Ethiopia shattered during the 1970s, the United States turned to Siad Barre primarily because access to bases in Somalia could enhance the U.S. military capability to counter any Soviet threat to Middle Eastern oil fields. Similarly, Washington policy makers viewed Mobutu Sese Seko and a host of Afrikaner governments positively because the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Congo-Kinshasa; formerly Zaire) and South Africa could serve as regional bulwarks against communism. In each of these cases, an overriding preoccupation with anti-communism led Washington to overlook the authoritarian excesses of these regimes in favor of their willingness to support U.S. containment policies in Africa.15

The second major outcome of Washington’s containment policies was the emergence of the African continent as a battlefield for proxy wars as both the United States and the Soviet Union became involved in regional conflicts. In almost every case, regional conflict was exacerbated by one superpower’s reaction to the other’s involvement in a particular crisis. Soviet involvement, as well as merely the “threat” of Soviet involvement, was enough to capture the attention of the White House, and usually provoke an escalation of the conflict. In the case of Congo-Kinshasa, the political instability of the early independence years, even when coupled with only relatively limited Soviet involvement, was enough to warrant White House–authorized covert assassination attempts, as well as military operations involving U.S. troops and transport aircraft. During the 1975–76 Angolan civil war, Soviet-Cuban involvement led to a tacit U.S.–South African–Congolese alliance in which Washington supported the direct involvement of Congolese and, more onerous from the point of view of most African countries, South African troops. The Reagan administration continued in this tradition and seized upon the Ethiopian-Somali border conflict of 1982 to demonstrate renewed U.S. resolve to stand by anti-communist allies who were threatened by Soviet-backed, communist regimes. In these and other cases, local conflicts having little, if anything, to do with the ideological concerns of communism or capitalism threatened to become East-West flashpoints in the face of growing U.S.-Soviet involvement.

A full array of interventionist tools, listed in order from the least to most coercive, were employed by Washington throughout the African continent in the name of anti-communism:
• The pursuit of classic diplomacy, most notably inviting key African allies, such as Mobutu Sese Seko of Congo-Kinshasa, to make official head-of-state visits to the White House in Washington, DC;
• The provision of economic and military aid to anti-communist client states, such as the regime of Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie;
• The attachment of political conditionalities to the foreign policy relationship, as in the case of the Carter administration making the strengthening of U.S.-Somali ties contingent on the Siad Barre regime’s promise to refrain from further military intervention in the Ogaden region of Ethiopia;
• The imposition of economic sanctions against perceived “radical” regimes backed by the Soviet Union, such as that of Egypt’s Gamal Abdul Nasser;
• The pursuit of covert intervention, including the successful assassination of Patrice Lumumba, the nationalist leader of Congo-Kinshasa;
• The funding of paramilitary intervention, as witnessed by U.S. assistance to the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) guerrilla forces of Jonas Savimbi to overthrow a self-proclaimed Marxist regime in Angola;
• The use of military intervention, as witnessed by the Johnson administration’s decision to send U.S. combat troops to Congo-Kinshasa.

The provision of economic and military aid was the most extensively utilized tool of intervention during the Cold War era, and as such merits special attention. Three conclusions can be drawn from a larger statistically oriented project that two colleagues and I undertook to assess the foreign aid motivations of a variety of northern industrialized democracies, including the United States, toward Africa during the last decade of the Cold War. First, our analysis confirmed widely held presumptions that U.S. Africa policies were largely driven by strategic interests. The existence of military access agreements in particular ensured the generous provision of foreign aid. The most notable example of such an arrangement was the Carter administration’s negotiation of military access agreements with Egypt, Kenya, Somalia, and Sudan at the end of the 1970s. These security agreements served as the basis for extensive foreign aid relationships during the 1980s, although only the agreements with Egypt and Kenya lasted throughout the decade.
Our analysis also confirmed widely held assumptions of the importance of ideological concerns in U.S. Africa policies. During the 1980s, the U.S. government denied foreign aid to the self-proclaimed Marxist regimes of Angola, Ethiopia, and Mozambique, whereas it treated capitalist countries such as Congo-Kinshasha, Kenya, and Senegal as ideological allies deserving of aid. Socialist regimes were neither strongly supported nor strongly opposed. This finding is clarified by calculating the percentages of U.S. aid provided to each type of ideological regime during the 1980s. Whereas capitalist regimes annually received 88 percent of all U.S. aid to the African continent, Marxist and socialist regimes received only 6 percent each.

Our statistical analysis also demonstrated the existence of a negative relationship between U.S. aid levels and the gross national product (GNP) per capita of African recipients (i.e., higher aid levels were enjoyed by countries with a low GNP per capita). This finding reflects the fact that U.S. aid consistently was provided to African regimes that had “consistently worse economic growth rates” than those enjoyed by other African countries. For example, one of the largest recipients of U.S. aid in 1989 was the regime of Mobutu Sese Seko, an authoritarian leader who in 1965 assumed power in a military coup d’état, and who increasingly relied upon the Congolese army and foreign aid to maintain himself in power as his popular support progressively eroded throughout the 1980s. Similar to the foreign policy relationships cultivated with other authoritarian African allies, such as Egypt, Liberia, Somalia, and Sudan, which were among the top recipients of U.S. foreign aid during the 1980s, preoccupations with anti-communism led American policy makers to overlook rising economic deterioration and government repression as long as African leaders supported U.S. containment policies.

Policy-Making Process: Bureaucratic Influence Amid White House and Congressional Neglect

The formulation and implementation of U.S. policy toward Africa is effectively explored by treating the U.S. policy-making establishment as a series of three concentric circles: the inner White House circle that includes the president and his principal foreign policy advisors, most notably the national security advisor; a second circle that comprises the bureaucracies of the executive branch; and an outer circle that includes Congress and the larger African affairs constituency.
White House Neglect of the African Continent

Beginning with the innermost circle, it is typically assumed by foreign observers that presidents and their principal foreign policy advisors will be the most influential and the most activist in shaping U.S. policy toward Africa. Throughout the Cold War and its aftermath, however, presidents traditionally have devoted less attention to Africa than to regions of perceived greater concern, most notably Western Europe, Eastern Europe (including Russia and the other countries that were once part of the Soviet Union), and more recently the Middle East and South Asia.

Neglect of Africa at the highest reaches of the U.S. policy-making establishment is the direct result of a wide variety of factors: a president's typical lack of knowledge and therefore the absence of a deep-felt interest in a region that historically enjoyed few enduring political links with the United States as compared with the former European colonial powers; a tendency to view Africa as the responsibility of those same European colonial powers, especially France, whose leaders were often willing to take the lead in crises; the impracticality of one person monitoring relations with nearly 200 countries worldwide, including 53 in Africa, and therefore the necessity of delegating responsibility for handling foreign policy for those regions considered marginal to the White House; and, most important, the necessity of balancing domestic priorities with foreign affairs necessities, especially during a first term in office in which the ultimate priority of all presidents is to assure re-election, with simple electoral logic typically suggesting that Africa is not a priority for the vast majority of the voting public. It should therefore come as no surprise that Clinton's historic trips to the African continent in 1998 and 2000, which raised awareness of Africa within the United States to levels previously unseen in the country's history, were undertaken during his second term in office. In this regard, although these trips raised the foreign policy bar as concerns Africa for subsequent administrations, the efforts of the Clinton White House must be assessed against the larger backdrop of the president's more activist approach during his second term toward all regions of the world, in which Africa relatively speaking still remained the region of least concern.

President George W. Bush's early statements of his administration's self-proclaimed "realist" policy toward Africa offered clear evidence of the continent's decreased standing at the level of the White House from the high benchmark set by the Clinton administration during its second
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to Africa than to regions Western Europe, Eastern ries that were once part of the East and South Asia. f the U.S. policy-making ty of factors: a president’s sence of a deep-felt interluring political links with European colonial pow- rsity of those same Euro-leaders were often willing of one person monitoring s, including 33 in Africa, nsibility for handling forinal to the White House; 3 domestic priorities with first term in office in which re reelection, with simple s is not a priority for the therefore come as no sur- un continent in 1998 and the United States to lev were undertaken during these trips raised the sequent administrations, be assessed against the approach during his sec-Africa relatively speak-
ts of his administration’s offered clear evidence of of the White House from stration during its second term. Two statements during the presidential election campaign of 2000 were particularly revealing. In response to a question concerning Africa’s place within a future Bush administration, Bush noted that the continent did not “fit into the national strategic interests” of the United States “as far as I [Bush] can see them.” This response, consistent with a realist approach that perceives Africa as marginal in terms of U.S. national security interests, was followed by a statement concerning the lack of U.S. intervention in Rwanda in 1994 to prevent genocide in that country. “No one liked to see it on our TV screens,” explained Bush, who further noted that the Clinton administration had done “the right thing” in deciding not to intervene. This latter statement captured Bush’s strong aversion to U.S. involvement in peacemaking operations, often derisively referred to during the presidential campaign as ill-conceived exercises in “nation-building” (discussed further below).

The realist tendencies of the Bush White House ensure that Africa remains marginalized by a White House team that does not perceive the continent as an important part of the overall international strategic landscape. As signaled by President Bush’s selection of Mexico as the country to be honored with the first presidential visit of the new administration (since World War II it was Canada that was so honored), as well as his high-profile involvement in the April 2001 Summit of the Americas and presidential tour of Chile, El Salvador, and Mexico in April 2002, Latin America was supposed to be the region of the Southern hemisphere to receive priority attention from the Bush White House. This foreign policy focus changed, of course, with the terrorist attacks of September 11 and the emergence of the Middle East as the focal point of a global war on terrorism. Even Bush’s highly trumpeted visit to five African countries (Botswana, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, and Uganda) in July 2003 failed to reverse perceptions of Africa’s marginalization at the level of the White House. In fact, for many observers, the July presidential visit (originally set for earlier in the year but canceled due to the looming war in Iraq) actually reinforced perceptions of Africa’s neglect in the Bush White House. African reporters, who dubbed Bush’s visit as that of a “cowboy in Africa” and representative of “Tarzan politics,” were especially critical of the shortness of the stopovers (often lasting only a few hours) that were limited to small, choreographed audiences, suggesting that the visit was designed more to achieve sound bites destined for audiences in the U.S. (most notably the African-American community) than to provide serious engagement with African policy makers and their peoples. 24
Congressional Neglect of the African Continent

The outer concentric circle of the policy-making process revolves around Congress (the Senate and the House of Representatives) and a variety of African affairs interest groups, such as the Congressional Black Caucus and other African-American groups (e.g., the African American Institute), and a wide array of lobbyists representing the interests of various African countries (the so-called K street crowd). The Africa Subcommittee of the International Relations Subcommittee (House of Representatives) and the African Affairs Subcommittee of the Foreign Relations Committee (Senate) historically were the two most important congressional watchdogs of U.S. policy toward Africa during the Cold War era. In the Cold War’s aftermath, however, other congressional committees have become increasingly important in debates over issues such as the importance of aid versus trade, the proper U.S. role in peacekeeping, and the normative goal of promoting democracy. Among the influential committees in the Senate (which have counterparts in the House) are the Foreign Operations Subcommittee of the Appropriations Committee, the International Finance Committee of the Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee, and the International Trade Committee of the Finance Committee.

A variety of constitutionally mandated prerogatives, including the confirmation of presidential appointees, the convening of hearings, and the drafting of and voting on key legislation, suggests that Congress theoretically should play an important role in defining U.S. foreign policy toward Africa. Like their White House counterparts, however, members of Congress historically have neglected Africa relative to other regions of perceived greater interest. Reelection pressures and time constraints imposed by terms of office (two years for representatives and six years for senators) force them to select and prioritize the domestic and the international issues that will receive their attention. Since the primary objective of most members is to be reelected, and since most U.S. citizens know or care very little about the African continent, conventional wisdom suggests that it is politically unwise to incur the possibility of alienating their constituencies by focusing on Africa. Membership in the Africa subcommittees is among the least desired congressional positions in both houses of Congress, and is therefore relegated to relatively junior representatives and senators.
An important impact of congressional neglect of Africa is that even highly motivated chairpersons of the Africa subcommittees face an uphill task in pushing African issues to the forefront of congressional debate. In the absence of crisis, partisan and ideological differences within Congress prevent activist groups from achieving congressionally mandated changes in U.S. policy toward Africa. Even during short-term crises when an issue may attract the attention of a significant number of members of Congress, control of the policy-making process naturally flows to the White House and the bureaucracies of the executive branch. In this regard, the resurgence of guerrilla activity in the eastern provinces of Congo-Kinshasa at the beginning of 1999, let alone the involvement of several foreign armies in this conflict (what some policy makers typically referred to as “Africa’s First World War”), failed to rise to the level of a policy-making crisis in the non-ideological context of the post-Cold War era, a far cry from the crisis atmosphere that prevailed in the 1960s when a guerrilla insurgency within the same region was perceived by U.S. policy makers as threatening to install a pro-Soviet regime under the leadership of Patrice Lumumba.

Historical congressional neglect of Africa and therefore the absence of congressional activism as concerns U.S. policy toward Africa was reinforced by the Democratic Party’s stunning defeat in the November 1994 congressional elections that led to Republican control over both the House and the Senate for the first time in decades. From January 1995 to January 2001, a Democratic White House had to deal with an increasingly hostile, Republican-controlled Congress that was at odds with many aspects of White House foreign policy, including that directed toward the African continent. The likelihood of congressional activism in Africa is further hindered by the slim margins of Republican Party control of both houses of Congress in the aftermath of the November 2004 elections. Whereas the Republicans hold a majority of 55 seats in the Senate as opposed to 44 seats for the Democrats and one for the independents, they hold 231 seats in the House as opposed to 202 for the Democrats and 1 for the independents (as well as 1 vacancy as of this writing). In both cases, slim partisan majorities militate against activist policies in regions considered to be of minor concern (i.e., Africa), as both parties seek to avoid missteps in preparation for the congressional elections of November 2006.
Bureaucratic Influence in the Policy-Making Process

The net result of White House and congressional neglect of Africa is that U.S. policy toward Africa, perhaps more so than that toward any other region of the world, essentially is delegated to the high-level bureaucrats and political appointees within the bureaucracies of the executive branch. In order to fully understand continuity and change in that policy, one must therefore focus on the policies and interactions of the African affairs bureaus of the traditional national security bureaucracies, such as the State Department, the Pentagon, and the CIA, as well as their counterparts within the increasingly important economic realm, most notably the Department of Commerce. What I have elsewhere referred to as "bureaucratic influence" in the policy-making process will more often than not characterize the formulation and implementation of U.S. policy toward Africa in "routine" situations (i.e., during the absence of crisis).26

Secretary of State Colin Powell and the State Department, most notably its Bureau of African Affairs under the leadership of Walter Kansteiner III, emerged at the beginning of the Bush administration as the lead bureaucratic voice in the formulation and implementation of U.S. policy toward Africa. An African American who enjoyed a distinguished thirty-five-year military career that included serving as national security advisor to President Reagan and as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff under both Bush (senior) and the first year of the Clinton administration, Powell underscored his determination to make Africa a priority under the new Bush administration by making the Africa Bureau the first stop of his numerous get-acquainted meetings at the State Department. Along with Condoleezza Rice, the first African-American woman to head the National Security Council (NSC), Powell's African-American heritage was viewed by many as a natural bridge to ensure effective relations with African leaders and their respective diplomatic corps.

Early press reports suggested cautious optimism on the part of several African leaders that Powell and others in the Bush administration would elevate Africa's standing in Washington. "My impression was that he has a very keen interest in African affairs," explained Seth Kimanzi, secretary general in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Rwanda, a country considered one of the "favorites" of the Clinton administration. "He may prove different from what has been propagated in [the] media—that the Bush administration is ignorant of African affairs."27
This image was reinforced by Powell's week-long tour of four African countries (Kenya, Mali, South Africa, and Uganda) during May 2001, less than four months after the inauguration of the new administration. Others, of course, lamented what they perceived as a potential turn for the worse under a Republican administration, as witnessed by the question posed in the headline of Africa Business magazine: "After the Clinton Smile, Will It Be the Bush Snarl?"

Regardless of whether Powell is remembered by the history books as having succeeded where his predecessors failed in cajoling a recalcitrant White House and Congress to improve Africa's standing in the U.S. foreign policy hierarchy (an unlikely conclusion as unfolding events forced Powell to focus on other regions of more immediate concern), an important outcome of bureaucratic influence in the policy-making process is that, in the absence of active coordination of policy at the highest reaches of the U.S. government (i.e., the White House), U.S. policy toward each African country tends to become fragmented and interpreted differently, according to the established organizational missions of bureaucracies that were historically created to deal with different aspects of the foreign policy relationship. Each bureaucracy essentially fosters a unique institutional culture that both supports its mission and socializes individuals into working toward its attainment. Although other sources of bureaucratic behavior such as the substantive views and personal ambitions of individual bureaucrats are important, the critical point here is that members of a bureaucracy often become the advocates of their agencies and tend to interpret U.S. foreign policy according to their agency's role and mission in the foreign policy establishment, often leading to a less than harmonious relationship. Bureaucracies do not run wild within a political void, but rather constitute part of a domestic political process—in this case, bureaucratic politics. To this end, they bargain and compromise, ultimately seeking to maximize their own positions within the policy-making establishment.

A textbook example of foreign policy fragmentation is the Clinton administration's handling of Operation Restore Hope. In this case, the absence of high-level White House attention to an inherited, ongoing U.S. intervention in Somalia resulted in the reinforcement of an already fragmented policy in which various executive branch bureaucracies were pursuing different, often contradictory, goals. While the State Department was emphasizing the need for political reconstruction and negotiated outcomes among all of the various clan militia groups, the Pentagon
was carrying out military operations designed to militarily defeat and capture militia leader Mohammed Farah Aidid, leading to a policy-making situation in which an emphasis on political reconstruction was at best contradicted by an exclusionary military approach favored by military officials in the field.31 Most important, the first high-level analysis of growing contradictions in U.S. policy toward Somalia only occurred as a result of a crisis—the deaths of eighteen U.S. soldiers in October 1993—approximately eight months after the Clinton administration assumed office. To his credit, Clinton recognized the shortcomings of the policy as it had evolved and quickly announced the impracticality of a military solution imposed from abroad, as well as the ultimate withdrawal of U.S. troops. However, the structural problem inherent in the Clinton administration’s foreign policy apparatus, that is, the lack of high-level attention and coordination of U.S. Africa policies except when a crisis or domestic politics forced those policies to the top of the foreign policy agenda, continued to foster a variety of unevenly applied policies.

Foreign policy fissures have also emerged in the Bush administration between the conservative and moderate wings of the Republican Party, as witnessed by rising bureaucratic competition between the Pentagon under Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and the State Department under Secretary of State Powell. As concerned the brewing debate in 2003 over what should constitute the proper U.S. response to the intensification of civil conflict in Liberia, Rumsfeld fiercely opposed the involvement of U.S. ground troops, preferring instead that a regional peacekeeping force led by Nigeria and composed of African troops take responsibility for military action.32 Powell, who also preferred that Nigerian troops take the lead, nonetheless supported the introduction of a few U.S. troops to secure the port and capital city, as well as nearby relief corridors. Although observers correctly noted that the White House decision to send in a force of 200 ground troops on August 14, 2003, represented somewhat of a victory for Powell, he nonetheless was increasingly marginalized within the Bush administration, and was ultimately replaced by Condoleezza Rice as secretary of state after Bush’s victory in the 2004 elections.

One must be careful, however, not to overestimate the impact of a new administration on promoting change in U.S. policy toward Africa. An important outcome associated with bureaucratic influence in the policy-making process—the dominant feature of U.S. Africa
policy—is the creation of a bureaucratic mindset among a career civil service elite that fosters a fundamental resistance to change or a predilection toward maintenance of the status quo. Among the most important factors contributing to bureaucratic conservatism are the safety of relying on established and accepted standard operating procedures, as well as the realization that undue risk taking may permanently damage one’s career by effectively blocking upward mobility through the ranks. As explained in a classic study by Morton A. Halperin, the net result is that the “majority of bureaucrats prefer to maintain the status quo, and only a small group is, at any one time, advocating change.”

Consequently, members of a bureaucracy, especially its politically appointed head, will often put up a fierce fight rather than submit to changes they perceive as infringing on their “territory,” or threatening the integrity of their organization’s bureaucratic mission. In short, the inherent conservativism of bureaucracies prompts their members to resist change.

The self-interested nature of bureaucracies nonetheless propels their members to attempt to expand their realm of influence within the policymaking establishment. Since, as was noted earlier, members of a bureaucracy tend to identify national security in terms of their agency’s mission in the foreign policy establishment, it follows that these same members will seek to widen the role of their organization. The primary means of achieving this has typically been through the expansion of bureaucratically inspired activities associated with each of Africa’s fifty-three countries. These have included the Africa Bureau’s (State Department) pursuit of White House visits for African heads of state; the Pentagon’s interest in strengthening joint military maneuvers with African militaries, most notably the expansion of a wide array of military assistance programs with Nigeria; the CIA’s willingness to share intelligence findings with friendly African regimes, such as the Kagame regime of Rwanda; and the Commerce Department’s interest in securing new trade and investment accords, with South Africa and the various oil-producing states (e.g., Angola) serving as the centerpiece of U.S. economic policy. Regardless of the particular strategy pursued in strengthening ties with a particular African country, the term “incrementalism” best captures the resulting process of change: once a foreign policy relationship is established with an African country, the self-interested nature of bureaucracies often contributes to the maintenance and/or gradual enhancement of relations that are difficult to reverse.
Defense Department planning as concerns Africa’s strategic role in the post–September 11 era offers an impressive example of incrementalist logic at work. According to an interview that General James Jones, head of the U.S. European Command (which oversees most U.S. military operations in Africa), provided to the New York Times, the Defense Department is gradually strengthening U.S. military ties with select African countries as it enlists them in the Bush administration’s war on terrorism. Jones is particularly interested in ensuring U.S. access to a “family of bases” in friendly African countries, including “forward operating bases each with an airfield nearby that could house up to a brigade, 3,000 to 5,000 troops,” as well as “bare-bones bases that Special Forces, Marines or possibly an infantry rifle platoon or company could land at and build up as the mission required.”

The process of incrementalism nonetheless helps explain the rarity of dramatic shifts in U.S. policy toward the vast majority of Africa’s fifty-three countries, even when a new administration with seemingly different beliefs than its predecessor takes power (as in the shift in power from the Clinton to the Bush administrations). As noted earlier, the time constraints associated with relatively short terms of office for presidents and most members of Congress, coupled with the traditionally low level of attention they pay to African issues, favor bureaucratic influence, and therefore generally support policies of maintaining the status quo. Perhaps the most significant barrier to change, however, is that the numerous activities of the bureaucracies simply do not fall within the realm of presidential action. As President Johnson’s secretary of state, Dean Rusk, commented during the transition from the Johnson to the Nixon administrations: “A transition is not so earth-shaking. Of the thousand or so cables that go out of here every day, I see only five or six and the President only one or two. Those who send out the other 994 cables will still be here [long after the administration is gone].” Adopting a train metaphor to clarify his thoughts, Rusk noted that a transition “is a little bit like changing engineers on a train going steadily down the track. The new engineer has some switches he can make choices about—but 4,500 intergovernmental agreements don’t change.”

Although somewhat exaggerating the importance of bureaucracies during presidential transitions, Rusk’s train metaphor is correct in one key respect. It suggests that established bureaucratic missions greatly increase the possibility that U.S. policy toward the vast majority of African countries will continue to chug along on established tracks until
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some event (such as a crisis) potentially attracts the attention of the White House or other U.S. domestic actors and provides the basis for a reassessment. In the absence of crisis, White House attention will invariably be focused elsewhere, and established policies will continue to be maintained and strengthened by the bureaucratic train. As a result, although policy toward some African countries may shift, due to the secretary of state's reordering of U.S. priorities or the idiosyncratic interests of certain members of Congress or an ascendant African affairs interest group (such as the Christian coalition), U.S. policy toward Africa under the Bush administration, even in the post-September 11 era, will demonstrate strong threads of continuity with its Democratic predecessor, the Clinton administration.

Foreign Policy Challenges and Responses

Every newly elected administration attempts to set a new tone in U.S. policy toward Africa by underscoring what it will do differently than its predecessors, especially when the change in office is the result of partisan rivalry, as when the Clinton administration entered office after twelve years of Republican control of the White House (1981–93). The inauguration in January 2001 of George W. Bush as the forty-third president of the United States was no different. As was the case with two previous presidential transitions in which Republican presidents took office after a period of Democratic Party control of the White House (Nixon's replacement of Johnson in January 1969 and Reagan's replacement of Carter in January 1981), the Bush foreign policy team castigated the Clinton administration as having pursued an overly idealistic and ultimately unsuccessful "feel good" policy toward Africa that was long on rhetoric but short on substance. The corrective, according to the newly minted foreign policy triumvirate of Secretary of State Powell, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, and National Security Advisor Rice, was a more "realist"-oriented foreign policy reminiscent of the Reagan and especially the Nixon administrations that emphasizes a more "hard-headed" analysis of concrete U.S. interests. The essential thrust of this realist approach with regard to Africa, which was reinforced by the events of September 11 and its aftermath, can be summarized as follows: "Forget the rhetoric and boost the geopolitics."37

To be sure, there do indeed exist important differences in how Democratic and Republican administrations assess and understand the nature
of political-military and socioeconomic changes on the African continent. Those who tend to focus on the internal dimensions or origins of change can be conceptually referred to as regionalists. For these policy makers, typically prominent in Democratic administrations, domestic instability and conflict are due primarily to the internal shortcomings of any given regime. Any solution, therefore, must focus on the reform of that regime, including support for the protection of human rights, the promotion of socioeconomic development, and the adoption of democratic practices, often in conjunction with regional and international organizations, most notably the African Union and the United Nations. In sharp contrast, those who tend to focus on the international dimensions or origins of change can be conceptually referred to as globalists. For these policy makers, typically prominent in Republican administrations, international influences are often at the heart of rising domestic instability and conflict. The proper solution, according to the globalists, is the containment of these foreign threats, as was the case with the U.S. policy of containment of communism during the Cold War era. In addition to emphasizing the importance of strategic cooperation with threatened countries, these individuals are typically wary of U.S. involvement in international organizations, most notably the United Nations.

The differences between regionalists and globalists are significantly mitigated, however, by the simple reality of bureaucratic influence in the policy-making process as concerns Africa. Specifically, the prominent role played by the State Department and especially its Bureau of African Affairs in the formulation and implementation of U.S. policy toward Africa under both Democratic and Republican administrations has fostered a great deal of consistency in how Africa's key problems are assessed, especially during the post-Cold War era. For example, regardless of whether one reviews the Senate confirmation hearings for Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Susan Rice (under theClinton administration) or Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Walter Kansteiner III and his successor, Constance Berry Newman, under the Bush administration, one is struck by the consensus over the problems that plague the African continent. In these and other confirmation hearings, five sets of foreign policy challenges are typically described as worthy of U.S. attention:

- reversing grinding poverty and the lack of sustainable growth and development;
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- mitigating the deleterious impacts of corruption and authoritarianism;
- stemming the multiplication of civil conflicts;
- containing and eliminating transborder threats;
- halting the spread of HIV/AIDS.

**Foreign Policy Challenge #1: Reversing Grinding Poverty and the Lack of Sustainable Growth and Development**

The U.S. foreign policy solution for reversing grinding poverty and the lack of sustainable growth and development involves basically the promotion of economic liberalization in overly statist African countries, in which trade and foreign investment gradually replace foreign aid as the preferred economic tools of U.S. statecraft. Especially during the Clinton administration, the predilection of conservative Republican members of Congress to oppose foreign aid, combined with Africa's low priority compared to other regions of greater perceived interest at the level of the White House, reinforced a post-Cold War trend of reducing U.S. foreign aid commitments. According to one authoritative estimate, U.S. bilateral aid to Sub-Saharan Africa (inclusive of development assistance, economic support funds, food aid, and foreign disaster relief) fell from a peak level of $1.93 billion in 1992 to $933 million in 2000, a 52 percent decrease in overall aid. Although foreign aid resources to the African continent have in fact increased in the post-September 11 era as part of the Bush administration's overall expansion of foreign aid programs, Africa remains marginalized in a foreign aid hierarchy that continues to favor other regions of perceived greater concern, most notably the Middle East.

To its credit, the Clinton administration in 1996 unveiled the first formal trade policy for aggressively pursuing new markets throughout Africa. This report included the formal launching of an interagency Africa Trade and Development Coordinating Group, which was jointly chaired by the National Economic Council (NEC) and the National Security Council (NSC). The centerpiece of this economic strategy was congressional legislation, the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), designed to enhance U.S.-African trade. Although sharply criticized by African leaders, such as former president Nelson Mandela of South Africa, as well as influential members of the U.S. African affairs constituency, most notably the Congressional Black Caucus, a
compromise bill was passed by both the House of Representatives and the Senate in 2000, and subsequently embraced by the Bush administration. The stakes associated with U.S.-African economic ties, although small when compared to U.S. economic ties with its leading trade partners of Japan, Canada, and the European Union, are nonetheless substantial: approximately $24 billion in trade and $10 billion in U.S. direct investment as of 2002.

The Bush administration has sought to build on the Clinton administration’s successes by strengthening and extending AGOA, ensuring high-level participation in business-oriented summits, such as the Corporate Council for Africa’s biannual U.S.—Africa Business Summit held in June 2002, and offering rhetoric in favor of the aims embodied in the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD). It is highly unlikely, however, that the foreign aid and investment recommendations of a NEPAD peer review mechanism would be followed by an administration focused on promoting U.S. national security, and that in any case remains predisposed to favor trade over aid. Like his post–Cold War predecessors, Powell in particular argued that foreign policy should serve as the facilitator of U.S. private enterprise in all areas of the world, including Africa. “Open trade is an enormous force,” he explains. “It powers more than just economic reform and growth; it creates better relations between nations.”

The Bush administration’s primary focus in U.S.-African trade ties not surprisingly has involved ensuring U.S. access to and investment in Africa’s burgeoning oil sector. This is the direct result of the Bush administration’s national energy policy (which places an overriding emphasis on enhancing the supply of oil available to the U.S. economy) and the search for new markets outside of the Middle East in the post-September 11 era, not to mention the extremely close ties of senior Bush administration officials with the oil industry. Not only does Bush himself come from a family involved in the oil business, Cheney was the chief executive officer of Halliburton (a major oil services corporation) and Rice was a senior manager with Chevron (with the company even naming an oil tanker after her). In this regard, specialists in U.S. policy toward Africa are well advised to focus on evolving U.S. economic ties with such oil-rich African countries as Angola, Chad, Congo (Brazzaville), Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and Nigeria.

A final element of U.S. economic policy under both the Clinton and Bush administrations has been a rejection of Washington’s past support
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for Europe’s privileged economic role in its former colonies in favor of
a more aggressive approach to promoting U.S. trade and investment (al-
though both administrations have pressed the European allies to be more
assertive in their former colonies in the political-military realm). “The
African market is open to everyone,” explained former assistant secre-
tary of state for African affairs Herman Cohen in a 1995 speech in
Libreville, Gabon. “We must accept free and fair competition, equality
between all actors.”44 Such an approach not surprisingly has contributed
to the intensification of economic competition between the United States
and the other northern industrialized democracies, most notably France,
as they compete for economic influence in the highly lucrative petro-
leum, telecommunications, and transport industries throughout Africa.

Foreign Policy Challenge #2: Mitigating the Deleterious
Impacts of Corruption and Authoritarianism

The U.S. foreign policy solution for dealing with the deleterious im-
acts of corruption and authoritarianism has been to offer both diplo-
matic and financial support for democratization. Entering office when
democratization movements were multiplying throughout the African
continent, the Clinton administration even went so far as to set out an
official democracy promotion doctrine, the “policy of enlargement,” that
was intended to replace the outmoded strategy of containment.45 Al-
though as an official doctrine enlargement proved to be short-lived, it
nonetheless embodied the belief of both Clinton and Bush that promot-
ing democracy is a worthy U.S. foreign policy goal. As such, it has in-
fused official administration statements, as when Powell denounced
President Robert Mugabe’s continuation in office as an impediment to
Zimbabwean democracy, or when Bush called upon President Charles
Taylor to step down from power as an important first step in establishing
democracy in Liberia.

One of the guiding principles of U.S. democracy promotion programs
is that democracy is best served by fostering a regularized political pro-
cess that has as its basis the holding of free and fair elections, as well as
the nurturing of effective state institutions, most notably an independent
legislature and judiciary and a civilian-controlled military. One result of
this approach is that U.S. policy makers are often prone to portray even
significantly flawed election results, especially in countries closely al-
lied to the United States, as nonetheless constituting “important starting
points” in the transition to democracy, which can be improved in later rounds of more democratic elections. It is precisely for this reason that critics have often criticized U.S. democracy promotion as placing too much faith in elections, as well as favoring a “top-down” approach to democratization that is too elite centered.46

Democracy promotion, however, has never served as the principal foreign policy interest of the northern industrialized democracies, including the United States. At best it has played a secondary role behind more self-interested pursuits.47 Equally important, rhetoric has not always conformed with actual policies. The cornerstone of Clinton administration policy toward Congo-Kinshasa, for example, was a permutation of the “Mobutu or chaos” thesis that dominated the thinking of the State Department, the Pentagon, and the CIA from the 1960s through the 1980s.48 This bureaucratically inspired consensus embodied the firm belief that “chaos,” meaning territorial disintegration, regional instability, and ultimately communist expansion into the heart of Africa, was the only alternative to Mobutu’s continued hold over power. The Mobutu or chaos thesis suggested the necessity for a strong (but not necessarily democratic) leader if the region is to avoid socioeconomic and political-military chaos. “Regardless of the fact that we are no longer faced with a communist threat,” explained a member of the State Department’s Africa Bureau, “the destabilization of Zaire [Congo-Kinshasa]—which borders nine other African countries—could have a tremendously negative impact on regional stability.”49 With the experiences of Somalia and Rwanda still etched in their minds, the Africa specialists of the executive branch bureaucracies successfully argued for the need to tread softly as, according to another member of the State Department’s Africa Bureau, the situation in Congo-Kinshasa “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.”50

It was particularly striking during interviews to hear members of the State Department’s Africa Bureau argue that, like his predecessor at the beginning of the 1990s, Kabila was both “part of the problem and part of the solution” to resolving the crisis in the Great Lakes region. Once again returning to current manifestations of the Mobutu or chaos thesis, there was a tendency for U.S. diplomatic personnel to argue against pushing Kabila too hard or too fast for fear that this would intensify an already chaotic political-military situation. As a result, initial U.S. support for the Kabila regime placed a heavy premium on his promise to create
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Especially in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, the Bush White House has had to weigh the benefits of democracy promotion when such a policy would potentially alienate important African allies in the war on terrorism. In the case of Djibouti, for example, a decision to make democracy promotion the principal U.S. foreign policy objective theoretically would have precluded the stationing on Djiboutian soil of hundreds of U.S. Special Forces. Indeed, all three of Washington’s North African allies (Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia) in the war on terrorism lack democratic political systems. "In short," explained a member of the U.S. embassy in Tunis in 2003, "foreign policy is about choosing, and in this case there is no question that the security interest of combating global terrorism with our allies in North Africa is more important than the degree to which the peoples of these countries enjoy democratic forms of governance." The problem with such rationales, according to proponents of democracy promotion, is that the emerging anti-terrorist consensus in U.S. foreign policy is fostering a return to a strategic approach to the African continent reminiscent of the Cold War era in which national security interests overshadowed the normative goals of promoting democracy and fostering economic development.

**Foreign Policy Challenge #3: Stemming the Multiplication of Civil Conflicts**

The U.S. policy response to Africa’s multiplying civil conflicts has been to limit White House exposure by curtailing U.S. involvement in United Nations-sponsored interventions and stressing a brand of conflict resolution that de facto embraces the theme “African solutions for African problems.” The turning point in the post–Cold War era occurred in October 1993, when dozens of U.S. soldiers were killed or wounded in a fierce battle in Mogadishu, Somalia, as part of Operation Restore Hope, a humanitarian military mission initially launched by President Bush (senior) after he was defeated in the 1992 presidential elections. The
Somali "debacle," as it came to be known, served as the cornerstone of a policy directive, Presidential Decision Directive 25 (PDD 25), that announced an extremely cautious approach to ethnically and religiously based conflicts in Africa. When confronted in 1994 with rising popular demands for U.S. intervention in Rwanda, for example, the Clinton administration, fearful of being drawn into "another Somalia," not only initially blocked the dispatch of 5,500 troops requested by UN secretary-general Boutros Boutros-Ghali, it instructed administration spokespeople to avoid labeling the unfolding ethnic conflict as "genocide" lest such a label further inflame American public sympathy and demand American intervention as was the case in Somalia, or trigger American obligations under international treaties dealing with genocide and its prevention.  

As noted earlier in this chapter, President Bush had made a public statement during the 2000 election campaign that the Clinton administration had "done the right thing" in deciding not to intervene. This statement clearly captured Bush's strong aversion to U.S. involvement in peacemaking operations, often derisively referred to during the presidential campaign as ill-conceived exercises in "nation-building." As a result, the Bush White House remains hesitant to support United Nations-sponsored attempts at peacemaking on the African continent, and will continue to be extremely reluctant to authorize the involvement of U.S. troops even in less-threatening peacekeeping operations in which all parties to the conflict desire the placement of a third-party military force on the ground. It is precisely for this reason that in 2003 the Bush administration resisted initial pleas from within the West African region and the international community to commit large numbers of U.S. troops to stem fighting in Liberia, offering instead a limited deployment of small numbers of U.S. troops designed to provide logistical support to a larger West African peacekeeping force led by Nigeria.

White House hesitation to become involved in United Nations-sponsored military interventions in Africa reflects growing concerns, especially among Republicans in the U.S. Congress, about the general role of the U.S. in the United Nations. As aptly noted by Daniel P. Volman, a specialist of the congressional role in U.S. policy toward Africa, Republican members of Congress have drawn on "public concern about the role of the United States in the United Nations to bolster their demands for cuts in U.S. financial support for the international body and for the curtailment of UN peacekeeping activities in Africa and other
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delled in United Nations- effects growing concerns, Congress, about the general noted by Daniel P. Volman, policy toward Africa, Re- on "public concern about nations to bolster their def- the international body and tivities in Africa and other parts of the world." It is precisely this global mindset that allowed Senator Jesse Helms (Republican—North Carolina), the former chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, to hold back U.S. funding for the UN until that body finally agreed to reduce the U.S. contributions to the overall UN budget (from 25 percent to 22 percent) and the UN peace-keeping budget (from 30 percent to 27 percent), with significant implications for UN activities in Africa.4 Indeed, the congressional furor during May 2001 over the U.S. loss of its seat on the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council prompted the passage of congressional legislation withholding $244 million in unpaid dues until the seat was reinstated.

The White House's hesitancy in supporting United Nations-sponsored peacekeeping missions has led to de facto support for African military solutions under the guise of "African solutions for African problems." It is precisely for this reason, argued critics of U.S. policy toward Africa, that the Clinton administration originally proposed the creation of an African Crisis Response Force (ACRF), subsequently reformulated under the guise of the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI). Africans, not Americans, were to take the lead in resolving African conflicts—a regional dynamic that stood in sharp contrast to extensive White House attempts at resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East and the series of crises in the Balkans in Western Europe.

The experience in Somalia also significantly affected the Clinton administration's approach to conflict resolution, most notably by resolving a debate between two current believers in the administration. The first emphasized the classic belief that African issues unnecessarily distract the administration and potentially plunge the White House into unwanted domestic political controversies. According to this viewpoint, U.S. involvement (even in terms of conflict resolution) should be restricted in order to avoid entanglement in "future Somalias." A second, more activist approach also derived from the Somali experience but underscored that the massive costs associated with Operation Restore Hope could have been avoided by earlier, preventive action. "The choice is not between intervening or not intervening," explained a policy maker at the beginning of the Clinton administration. "It is between getting involved early and doing it at a cheaper cost, or being forced to intervene in a massive, more costly way later."5 As witnessed by the Clinton White House's cautious approach to the initial stages of the Rwandan conflict, the events of October 1993 in Somalia clearly strengthened the
position of those warning against getting too closely involved in “intractable” conflicts in Africa.

The Bush administration clearly shares its predecessor’s maxim of avoiding undue U.S. involvement in African conflicts. As explained by Powell during his Senate confirmation hearings, the newly elected administration agreed with its predecessor that Africans needed to “do more for themselves” in the realm of conflict resolution. “In Sierra Leone, Liberia, Angola, the Congo [Kinshasa] and elsewhere, this means stopping the killing, taking the weapons out of the hands of children, ending corruption, seeking compromises, and beginning to work in peace and dialogue rather than war and killing,” explained Powell. “It means giving the profits from oil and diamonds and other precious resources to schools and hospitals and decent roads instead of to bombs, bullets, and feuding warlords.” According to what can be labeled the Powell Doctrine for Africa, African diplomats and military forces, and not those of foreign powers (including the United States) must take the lead in responding to African crises and conflicts. U.S. forces, if to be used at all, must be perceived as the source of last resort, and in any case must be severely limited in terms of size, mission, and timetable. This vision is integral to the Bush administration’s military training program known as the African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) program, which in turn replaced ACRI. The primary difference between ACRI and ACOTA is that the latter focuses on training for “offensive” military operations, including the ability of African troops to conduct operations in hostile environments.

U.S. foreign policy has particularly evolved as concerns the potential threat posed by state failure of varying degrees in Africa and other regions of the Southern hemisphere. Especially during the 1990s, the breakdown of central state authority fostered the emergence of several “warlord states” (in which vast stretches of the hinterland are actually controlled by regional military leaders opposed to the state) and “collapsed” or “failed” states (in which regime failure leads to the complete breakdown of central state authority over a given territory). The test case of the post–Cold War era for how the United States would respond to such states, of course, was U.S. intervention in Somalia, which made both the Clinton and Bush administrations wary of becoming involved in similar cases. Indeed, it is striking that Somalia was (and remains) permitted to drift without an effective centralized state structure since the collapse of the Siad Barre regime in 1991.
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In the post–September 11 era, the Bush administration has come to
the realization that failed states run the risk of becoming “breeding
grounds” for terrorist activities. This realization, however, has led to
neither the elaboration of an official policy as concerns failed states nor
a willingness to commit U.S. troops in such situations. The de facto
policy has become one of relying on the interventionist efforts of three
sets of actors: African regional powers or regional organizations with
direct stakes in the conflict, as in the case of Nigerian-led intervention
in Liberia; former colonial powers, as in the case of French intervention
in Côte d’Ivoire; and United Nations–led peacekeeping forces, as in the
case of Congo-Kinshasa.

Foreign Policy Challenge #4: Containing and Eliminating
Transborder Threats

The U.S. policy of containing and eliminating transborder threats, most
notably the deadly 1998 terrorist attacks against U.S. embassies in
Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and later terrorist attacks
in 2002 against tourist targets in Mombasa, Kenya, has followed a three-
fold approach. First and foremost, the United States has sought to culti-
vate ties with strategically placed African powers. As explained by
Powell, the Bush administration has focused its energies on Africa’s
leading regional powers, most notably Nigeria in West Africa and South
Africa in Southern Africa, harkening back to the Nixon administration’s
strategy of relying on such powers to ensure stability within their given
regions. This worldview represents somewhat of a departure from the
Clinton administration’s approach of relying on what was often referred
to as the “new bloc” of African leaders, including Isaias Afwerki of
Eritrea, Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia, Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, and
Paul Kagame of Rwanda, who control battle-hardened guerrilla armies
and who are committed to militarily reordering African international
relations. Apart from the fact that they control the reins of power, these
regimes were supported by the Clinton administration due to their abil-
ity to maintain stability and their commitment to creating “responsive
and accountable” but not necessarily democratic governments.

Critics of the Clinton administration’s policy, which like that the Bush
administration emphasizes the importance of maintaining stability over
the normative goal of democracy promotion, argue that its shortcom-
ings were clearly demonstrated by the emergence of interstate conflicts
between the members of this new bloc, including the border war between Ethiopia and Eritrea and the military clashes between Uganda and Rwanda in Congo-Kinshasa. According to this argument, the primary problem with the Clinton administration approach was to rely on personalized links with leaders who for whatever reason held the upper hand at any given moment, regardless of the true power of their countries—as in the case of Rwanda’s undue influence over its much larger neighbor, Congo-Kinshasa. A more effective long-term approach, according to the Bush administration’s realist worldview, is to focus on true regional powers that combine both the economic and military capabilities (not to mention the political intention) to ensure stability within their given regions. It is precisely for this reason, for example, that the Bush administration has pressured South Africa to play a more proactive role in resolving an intensifying political crisis in Zimbabwe, as well as support the decision of Nigeria to lead a peacekeeping force to Liberia.

A second element of U.S. containment and elimination of transborder threats has involved an aggressive policy toward regional pariah states, most notably Libya and Sudan. Especially in the early months of the Bush administration, a more bellicose conservatism overrode the more moderate instincts of Powell and the State Department. For example, the Bush administration refused to drop U.S. sanctions against Libya although the Qaddafi regime had finally handed over two suspects associated with the 1988 Lockerbie air disaster (in which a bomb destroyed Pan Am Flight 103, killing all on board), and an international court in January 2001 had found one of the suspects guilty, while releasing a second. As part of a conservative-inspired “get tough” policy with regional pariah states, the newly elected Bush administration raised new conditions for the suspension of sanctions, which included the Qaddafi regime’s formal admission of guilt and payment of compensation to the families of the deceased.59

U.S. foreign policy toward the Sudanese regime of Omar Hassan al-Bashir, although it had taken certain steps to marginalize the Islamist forces of Omar Hassan al-Turabi, further demonstrated the Bush administration’s “get tough” policy with regional pariah states in its early months. Whereas the Clinton administration focused on the regional threat associated with Sudan’s attempts to export its brand of Islamic revivalism, the Bush administration had initially focused on the human rights abuses associated with that country’s eighteen-year-old civil war,
The longest running in Africa. Powell noted in congressional testimony on March 7, 2001, for example, that there exists "perhaps no greater tragedy on the face of the earth today."

The principal driving force in U.S. policy toward Sudan, however, was not Powell's personal interest but rather rising pressures from a wide array of Christian groups—one of the Bush administration's most important grassroots constituencies—to "do something" to stop what they perceive as a genocidal policy that a northern-based Islamic regime is carrying out against a southern-based, predominantly Christian population. Christian groups are especially outraged by the ongoing practice of southern Christians being sold as slaves in northern Sudan, and have joined with sympathetic members of Congress, most notably Sam Brownback (Republican—Kansas), to call for a more aggressive U.S. policy stance. In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of September 11, however, the Bush administration softened its rhetoric due to Sudan's diplomatic support for Washington's global war against terrorism.

The third element of the U.S. approach to containing and eliminating transborder threats involves a series of interconnected anti-terrorist efforts. At the heart of these efforts is a significantly expanded embassy construction budget for upgrading the security of embassies at risk, as well as expediting the building of new embassies, such as the $42 million facility in Tunis, Tunisia, that now house once geographically dispersed buildings within one walled compound. The so-called hardening of U.S. diplomatic targets, which includes the construction of new diplomatic facilities in Nigeria and South Africa, is complemented by a series of anti-terrorist diplomatic initiatives, such as a $100 million counter-terrorism package for East Africa, designed to promote regional cooperation against a variety of terrorist threats in conjunction with U.S. intelligence and law-enforcement agencies, most notably the CIA and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

**Foreign Policy Challenge #5: Halting the Spread of HIV/AIDS**

The centerpiece of the U.S. foreign policy approach to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS has been funding for HIV/AIDS programs in the United States (Center for Disease Control), targeted African countries (such as Uganda, the continental leader in HIV/AIDS prevention), and the international system (such as the United Nations Global Fund to Fight AIDS,
Tuberculosis and Malaria). Although the Clinton administration had supported low levels of funding for a variety of HIV/AIDS programs throughout the 1990s, a “tipping point” was reached in the latter half of 1998, in the aftermath of Clinton’s twelve-day presidential visit to the African continent, which led to a series of policy initiatives. Of particular importance was an executive order signed by Clinton in May 2000 that would allow African countries confronted by medical emergencies to pursue two courses of action without risk of U.S. sanctions:

- “parallel imports” (purchasing patented pharmaceuticals from an inexpensive source in a Third World country);
- “compulsory licensing” (commissioning a domestic firm to produce a medication after forcing negotiated terms with the patent holder, so long as they were not in formal violation of the World Trade Organization’s international property rights agreement).

The momentum in the U.S. approach to the HIV/AIDS pandemic was strengthened at the beginning of the Bush administration by a White House commitment to provide $200 million to the United Nations’ Global Fund. Although some applauded this new direction, with others criticizing the $200 million as an extremely paltry amount that in reality did not even begin to address the true extent of the problem throughout Africa, most observers remained wary due to the simple fact that prominent leaders within both the Republican-dominated White House and Congress have typically not been sympathetic to a wide array of progressive social policies. For example, almost immediately upon taking the presidential oath, President Bush, with the firm backing of his conservative allies, reinstated the ban originally imposed by the Reagan administration (but overturned during the Clinton years) on providing U.S. federal aid to overseas entities that provide, or counsel in favor of, abortion services, an action that has had severe implications for the family planning programs of African governments.

Africanists were nonetheless heartened by Powell’s very public focus on African efforts to combat HIV/AIDS and a variety of other communicable diseases, most notably malaria and tuberculosis, during his week-long tour of four African countries in May 2001. The more realist underpinnings of the trip were nonetheless demonstrated by the fact that conflicts in neighboring countries and what Africans could do to resolve them with U.S. support served as an important component of private
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The HIV/AIDS pandemic was administration by a White administration’s budget provided no new funds for 2003. “The $10 billion in new money would start small, with much less than $1 billion disbursed in 2004 and with no guarantee that it would not be edged out of future budgets by rising costs of war in Iraq or other priorities pushed by powerful lobbyists,” explains Salih Booker, William Minter, and AnnLouise Colgan, three scholars associated with Africa Action. “Also The New York Times noted that the increase in AIDS funds comes partly by cutting nearly $500 million from international child health programs.” In short, these and other critics argue that funding is not at the level that was either promised by the Bush administration or that is necessary to deal with the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and remaining foreign aid resources are increasingly being targeted toward counter-terrorism and other national security objectives at the expense of development.

Toward the Future

The African continent and U.S. policy toward Africa are at important turning points as both African and American leaders grapple with decisions designed to strengthen the African renaissance at the beginning of the new millennium. African leaders are confronted with the reality that even the best of intentions are often not enough as they struggle with a variety of political-military and socioeconomic challenges. American
leaders are similarly confronted with the reality that attempts at facilitating the African renaissance require an enormous amount of political will and understanding of an extremely diverse African mosaic that historically has not constituted a priority concern within the global hierarchy of U.S. foreign policy.

Even the best of American intentions, which attempt to draw on America's benevolent Uncle Sam mythology in the active pursuit of facilitating the African renaissance, can be deemed contradictory, inadequate, or, in the extreme, as essentially constituting an Uncle Scrooge policy devoid of either true interest or sincerity. It is clear that the vast majority of African leaders and intellectuals at the very minimum perceive U.S. policies toward Africa as being both contradictory and inadequate. Although several recent high-profile events, most notably presidential visits to the African continent by Clinton in 1998 and 2000, and Bush in 2003, were designed to reverse this perception, and indeed are indicative of rising U.S. interests, such high-level attention is typically fleeting and therefore has been unable to convince the majority of Africans that the United States is seriously interested in African problems. Even in the case of Clinton's presidential visits to the African continent, which on average were more positively and warmly perceived than that undertaken by Bush in 2003, many African leaders and policy makers appreciated Clinton's warm rhetoric and sincere interest in African affairs, but were highly critical of the fact that rhetoric often was not followed by the implementation of concrete policies.

Observers of U.S. Africa policies are particularly critical of the impact of U.S. Cold War policies on the African continent. The Cold War tendency to perceive the African continent as a tool for solving non-African problems (i.e., through the East-West lens of containment of communism and the Soviet Union), which in turn ensured the emergence of the African continent as a battlefield for proxy wars as both the United States and the Soviet Union became involved in regional conflicts, often exerted a negative impact on the African countries that became unwitting or unwilling pawns on this East-West chessboard. To be sure, U.S. policy toward Africa achieved notable successes during the Cold War era, as demonstrated by the way adult Africans fondly remember their Peace Corps teachers and the educational opportunities that were opened up to tens of thousands of Africans through a vast array of cultural exchange programs. It is the broad strokes of policy that matter, however, and in this regard the broad strokes, at
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least during the Cold War, suggested that Africans were not important
in their own right.
It is precisely for this reason that many observers of U.S. foreign
policy look with trepidation upon the Bush administration’s ever-
widening global war against terrorism. Specifically, the emerging an-
terrorist consensus in U.S. foreign policy appears to be fostering a return
to a strategic approach to the African continent reminiscent of the Cold
War era in which national security interests overshadowed the norma-
tive goals of promoting democracy and fostering economic develop-
ment. Although many observers hoped that the Cold War’s end would
usher in a new era in U.S. policy toward Africa, the emergence of what
some are now referring to as a “second Cold War” (albeit in this case
against international terrorism) makes it highly likely that Africa will
once again be viewed by American policy makers through a strategic
prism that more likely than not will have little (if anything) to do with
the reality confronted by most African states. Indeed, as a result of the
events of September 11, the motto attributed to the initial months of the
Bush administration’s policy toward Africa—“Forget the rhetoric and
boost the geopolitics”—is potentially being replaced by an even more
negative variant—“Forget democracy and development and boost anti-
terrorism”—with severe implications for an entire generation of Afri-
can citizens.

Notes

1. Michael Clough, Free at Last? U.S. Policy Toward Africa and the End of the
2. Michael Clough, “The United States and Africa: The Policy of Cynical Dis-
3. For other recent examples, see Stephen J. Morrison and Jennifer G. Cooke,
ed., Africa Policy in the Clinton Years: Critical Choices for the Bush Administra-
tion (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies Press, 2001);
David P. Gordon, David C. Miller, Jr., and Howard Wolpe, The United States and
Africa: A Post–Cold War Perspective (New York: W.W. Norton, 1998); and Karl P.
Magyar, ed., United States Interests and Policies in Africa: Transition to a New Era
4. Crawford Young, “United States Foreign Policy Toward Africa: Silver Anniver-
5. N. Brian Winchester, “United States Foreign Policy Toward Africa,” Current
6. See Peter Duignan and L.H. Gann, The United States and Africa: A History
17. Ibid.
19. Ibid., pp. 76–100.
20. For a more extended analysis, see Peter J. Schraeder, *United States Foreign Policy Toward Africa: Incrementalism, Crisis and Change* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
28. The primary mission of the State Department’s Bureau of African Affairs, for example, is the maintenance of smooth and stable relationships with all African
governments. The emphasis is on quiet diplomacy and the negotiated resolution of any conflicts that may arise. In sharp contrast, the primary bureaucratic mission of the CIA’s Africa Division traditionally was to carry the ideological battle against the Soviet Union and communism to the African continent in efforts that ranged from the cultivation of local agents to the mounting of covert operations. Openly contemptuous of self-proclaimed Marxist and other “leftist” regimes, liberation movements, “radical” Islamist regimes, and, more recently, terrorist movements, the CIA prefers close liaison with the security services of European allies and friendly African regimes. In the case of the Pentagon, the primary bureaucratic mission of the Office for African Affairs (International Security Affairs) is to ensure continued access to strategically located bases and other facilities for responding to local crises and, most important, military contingencies in Europe and the Middle East. Finally, the primary bureaucratic mission of the Africa Office within the Department of Commerce is to foster U.S. trade and investment throughout the African continent.

29. For fascinating insights provided by a political appointee, see Smith Hempstone, Rogue Ambassador: An African Memoir (Seaville, TN: University of the South Press, 1997).


35. Quoted in ibid., p. 4.

36. Quoted in Halperin, Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy, p. 292.


39. Ibid.


42. A statement of Secretary of State-Designate Colin L. Powell prepared for the Confirmation Hearing of the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Jan. 17, 2001, p. 12.

44. Copy of speech provided by the U.S. embassy in Libreville, Gabon.
45. Anthony Lake, “From Containment to Enlargement,” address at the School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, Washington, DC, Sept. 21, 1993.
49. Quoted in Schraeder, United States Foreign Policy Toward Africa, p. 107.
50. Personal interview.
51. Personal interview.
65. Ibid., p. 196.