The Bush Administration and Africa

A Resurgence of Geopolitics amidst a New Cold War?

PETER J. SCHRAEDER

George W. Bush's election as the 43rd president of the United States and his Administration's response to the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 against the World Trade Center and the Pentagon potentially heralded the beginning of a new era in US foreign policy towards Africa. As was the case with two previous presidential transitions in which Republican presidents took office after a period of Democratic control of the White House (Richard Nixon’s replacement of Lyndon Johnson in January 1969 and Ronald Reagan’s replacement of Jimmy Carter in January 1981), the Bush foreign policy team castigated its Democratic predecessor (the Clinton Administration) as having pursued an overly idealistic and ultimately unsuccessful ‘feel good’ foreign policy towards Africa. The corrective, according to the newly minted foreign policy triumvirate of Secretary of State Colin Powell, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, was a more realist-oriented foreign policy reminiscent of the Reagan and especially the Nixon Administrations that emphasized a more detached and ‘hard-headed’ analysis of concrete US foreign policy interests. Simply put, the Africa thrust of this realist approach could be summarized as follows: ‘Forget the rhetoric and boost the geopolitics’. This approach to Africa was reinforced by the terrorist attacks of 9/11, leading Africanists to ponder the implications of a resurgence of US geopolitical priorities amidst the emergence of a new cold war within the international system, albeit this time pitting the US against a global network of non-state terrorist organizations. This essay analyses the new thrust in US foreign policy in light of Africa’s historic neglect by Washington and the strong tendencies towards foreign policy continuity that have historically marked US-Africa policies, regardless of whether a Democrat or a Republican occupies the White House.

AFRICA’S STANDING WITHIN THE POLICYMAKING ESTABLISHMENT
Bush’s early statements of his Administration’s self-proclaimed ‘realist’ policy towards 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 term in office. 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 US national security interests, was followed by a statement concerning the lack of US 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 US involvement in peacemaking operations, often derisively referred to during the presidential campaign as ill-conceived exercises in ‘nation building’.

The realist tendencies of the Bush White House ensured that Africa would at best be marginalized by a White House team that did not perceive the continent as...
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...an important part of the overall international strategic landscape. As signalled by President Bush’s selection of Mexico as the country to be honoured with the first presidential visit of the new Administration (since World War II it was always Canada that had been so honoured), 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 designated as 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 9/11 and the emergence of South Asia and the wider Middle East as the epicentre of a new antiterrorist foreign policy.

Africa’s standing within Congress—a second major arena of policymaking initiatives in the US political system—also appeared unlikely to dramatically change under the Bush Administration. Historical congressional neglect of Africa and therefore the absence of congressional activism concerning US foreign policy towards Africa was reinforced during the 1990s 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 towards the African continent. Under Bush, the likelihood of congressional activism in Africa was further hindered by the razor-thin margins of Republican party control of both houses of Congress in the aftermath of the November 2002 elections. Whereas the Republicans hold a majority of 51 seats in the Senate as opposed to 48 seats for the Democrats and 1 for the Independents, they hold 229 seats in the House as opposed to 205 for the Democrats and 1 for the Independents. In both cases, slim partisan majorities militate against activist policies in regions considered to be of minor concern (for example, Africa), as both parties seek to avoid missteps in preparation for the presidential and congressional elections of November 2004.

The net result of White House and congressional neglect of Africa is that Bush Administration foreign policy towards Africa, perhaps more so than that towards any other region of the world, is essentially delegated to the high-level bureaucrats and political appointees within the bureaucracies of the executive branch. Secretary of State Powell and the State Department, most notably its Bureau of African Affairs under the leadership of Walter Kansteiner III, have emerged as the lead bureaucratic voices in the formulation and implementation of US foreign policy towards Africa. Kansteiner, however, unlike his Republican predecessors under Reagan (Chester Crocker) and Bush senior (Herman J. Cohen), does not enjoy a great deal of policy latitude, and in any case embodies a professional background that is highly troubling for many Africanists. Hailing from the more conservative wing of the Republican Party, Kansteiner was formerly associated with a conservative, Washington-based organization, the Institute on Religion and Democracy, served in Bush senior’s Administration, and has earned a living as a commodities trader. Salih Booker, Executive Director of Africa Watch in Washington, aptly captured the sentiment of many Africanists. ‘Like [Vice President] Cheney, he [Kansteiner] opposed sanctions against apartheid South Africa after they were in place and as late as 1990 considered the pro-democracy movement in South Africa, led by Nelson Mandela’s African National Congress, to be unrepresentative of most South Africans’, explains Booker. ‘With analytical skills like those, he appears singularly unqualified for the job except that he fits the profile of many new Bush staff: conservative ideologues who served Bush’s father’.

Secretary of State Powell has emerged as the dominant Administration voice on Africa, at least within the State Department. An African-American who enjoyed a distinguished 35-year military career that included serving as National Security Adviser...
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...or to Reagan and as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff under Bush senior and in 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 that of Condeleeza 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 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 Kharazi, secretary-general in Rwanda’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He may prove different from what has been propagated in [the] media—that the Bush Administration is ignorant of African affairs. 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 by a headline in 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 US foreign policy hierarchy (an unlikely conclusion as unfolding events have forced Powell to focus on other regions of more immediate concern), an important outcome of bureaucratic influence in the policymaking process is that, in the absence of active coordination of policy at the highest reaches of the US Government (that is, the White House), US foreign policy towards 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. Defense Department planning as concerns Africa’s strategic role in the post-9/11 era offers an impressive example of bureaucratic logic at work. According to an interview that Gen. James Jones, head of the US European Command (which oversees most US military operations in Africa), gave the New York Times, the Defense Department is in the process of gradually strengthening US military ties with select African countries as it enlists them in the Bush Administration’s war on terrorism. Jones is particularly interested in ensuring US 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’.

A hallmark of bureaucratic influence within the policymaking process is that it militates against dramatic shifts in US foreign policy towards the vast majority of Africa’s 53 countries, even when a new Administration with seemingly different beliefs than its predecessor takes power (as in the shift in power from Clinton to Bush). Established bureaucratic missions greatly increase the possibility that US foreign policy towards the vast majority of African countries will continue to chug along in established tracks until some event (such as a crisis situation) attracts the attention of the White House or other US 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 towards some African countries
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may shift, due to Powell's reordering of US priorities or the idiosyncratic interests of certain members of Congress or an ascendant African affairs interest group (such as the Christian coalition). US foreign policy towards Africa under the Bush Administration, even in the post-9/11 era, will demonstrate strong threads of continuity with its Democratic predecessor.

FOREIGN POLICY CHALLENGES AND RESPONSES

Every newly elected Administration attempts to set a new tone in US foreign policy towards 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 12 years of Republican control of the White House (1981–93). The inauguration in January 2001 of George W. Bush was no different. The differences between Democratic and Republican Administrations are significantly reduced, however, by the simple reality of bureaucratic influence in the policymaking 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 US foreign policy towards Africa under both Democratic and Republican Administrations has fostered a great deal of consistency in the assessment of how Africa's key problems, especially during the post–Cold War era. For example, regardless of whether one reviews the Senate confirmation hearings of Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Susan Rice (Clinton Administration) or Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Kansteiner (Bush Administration), one is struck by the significant degree of consensus on the problems that plague the African continent—although their prioritization will obviously differ depending on the broader foreign policy interests of the administration in question. In these and other confirmation hearings, five sets of foreign policy challenges are typically described as worthy of US attention:

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

REVERSING GRINDING POVERTY AND THE LACK OF SUSTAINABLE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

The US foreign policy solution for reversing grinding poverty and the lack of sustainable growth and development basically involves 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 US 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 US foreign aid commitments. According to one authoritative estimate, US 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 US$1.93bn in 1992 to US$933m in 2000, a 52% decrease in overall aid. Although the terrorist attacks of 9/11 have renewed debate on the potential dangers associated with a declining foreign aid budget, with Bush declaring his intention to increase the overall US foreign aid budget by at least 50%, Africa remains marginalized in a foreign aid hierarchy that continues to favour
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other regions of perceived greater concern, most notably South Asia and the Middle East. For example, whereas the African continent received US$1.2bn in aid in 2002, the proposed figure for 2003 dropped to under US$1bn as a result of foreign aid priorities in regions of greater concern.10

The Bush Administration has sought to build on Clinton Administration successes by strengthening and extending the free-trade legislation known as the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), ensuring high-level participation in business-oriented summits such as the Corporate Council for Africa’s biannual US-Africa Business Summit held in June 2002, and offering rhetoric in support 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 that is focused on promoting US national security and in any case remains predisposed to favour trade over aid. Like his post–Cold War predecessors, Powell in particular believes that foreign policy should serve as the facilitator of US 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’.11

The Bush Administration’s focus on promoting US-African trade ties not surprisingly has involved ensuring US access to and investment in Africa’s burgeoning oil sector. This emphasis 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 US economy) and the search for new markets outside of the Middle East in the post-9/11 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, but Cheney was the CEO of Halliburton (a major oil services corporation) and Rice was a senior manager with Chevron (the company even named an oil tanker after her). In this regard, specialists in US foreign policy towards Africa are well advised to focus on evolving US economic ties with such oil-rich African countries as Angola, Chad, Congo (Brazzaville; Republic of Congo), Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Nigeria.12

A final element of US economic policy under both the Clinton and Bush Administrations has been a rejection of Washington’s past support for Europe’s privileged economic role in its former colonies, in favor of a more aggressive approach to promoting US trade and investment (although 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 Secretary 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’.13 Such an approach not surprisingly has contributed to the intensification of economic competition between the US and the other northern industrialized democracies, most notably France, as they compete for economic influence in the highly lucrative petroleum, telecommunications and transport industries throughout Africa.

MITIGATING THE DELETERIOUS IMPACTS OF CORRUPTION AND AUTHORITARIANISM

The US foreign policy solution for dealing with the deleterious impacts of corruption and authoritarianism has been to offer both diplomatic and financial support for the process of democratization. Entering office at a time when democratization movements were multiplying throughout the African continent, the Clinton Administration 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.14 Although enlargement as an official doctrine proved to be short-lived, it nonetheless

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embodied the belief of both Clinton and Bush that democracy promotion serves as a worthy US foreign policy goal. As such, it has infused official administration statements, as when Powell denounced President Robert Mugabe’s continuation in office as an impediment to Zimbabwean democracy.

One of the guiding principles of US democracy promotion programmes is that democracy is best served by fostering a regularized political process 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 US policymakers are often prone to portray even significantly flawed election results, especially in countries closely allied to the US, as 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 US democracy promotion as placing too much faith in the election process, as well as favouring a ‘top-down’ approach to democratization that is too elite-centred.15

Democracy promotion, however, has never served as the principal foreign policy interest of the northern industrialized democracies, including the US. At best it has played a secondary role behind more self-interested foreign pursuits.16 Equally important, rhetoric has not always conformed with actual policies. Especially in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of 9/11, 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 US foreign policy objective would theoretically have precluded the stationing on Djiboutian soil of hundreds of US 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 one member of the US embassy in Tunis, ‘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’.17 The problem with such rationales, according to proponents of democracy promotion, is that the emerging antiterrorist consensus in US foreign policy will potentially further 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.

STEMMING THE MULTIPLICATION OF CIVIL CONFLICTS

As noted earlier in this essay, 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 in Rwanda. This statement clearly captured Bush’s strong aversion to US 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 UN-sponsored attempts at peacemaking on the African continent, and will continue to be extremely reluctant to authorize the involvement of US 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.

Indeed, the congressional furor during May 2001 over the US losing its seat on the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations Economic and Social Council prompted the passage of congressional legislation withholding US$244m in unpaid dues until the seat was reinstated.
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undue US 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'.8 According to what can be labelled the Powell Doctrine for Africa, African diplomats and military forces, not those of foreign powers (including the US), must take the lead in responding to African crises and conflicts. US 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.

US foreign policy has evolved particularly with regard to the potential threat posed by varying degrees of state failure 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).9 The test case of the post–Cold War era for how the US would respond to such states, of course, was US 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.

In the post-9/11 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 on failed states nor a willingness to commit US troops in such situations. The de facto policy has become reliance on the interventionist efforts of three sets of actors: African regional powers or regional organizations with direct stakes in the conflict, former colonial powers and UN-led peacekeeping forces.

CONTAINING AND ELIMINATING TRANSBORDER THREATS
The US approach to containing and eliminating transborder threats, most notably the deadly 1998 terrorist attacks against US embassies in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, and terrorist attacks in 2002 against tourist targets in Mombasa, Kenya, has followed a threefold approach. First and foremost, the US has sought to cultivate 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, harking back to the Nixon Administration’s strategy of relying on such powers to ensure stability within their regions. This world-view represents something 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 ability to maintain stability and their commitment to creating ‘responsive and accountable’ although not necessarily democratic governments.10

Critics of the Clinton Administration’s policy, which like Powell’s emphasizes the
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Powell during his Senate leadership with its predecessor of conflict resolution. Elsewhere, this means children, ending corruption, dialogue rather than from oil and diamonds, and to label the Powell those of foreign powers can. Crises can arise and conflict, cease of last resort, and in undealt with.

The potential threat posed by the Southern Hemispheric state authority to the hinterland areas (the state) and 'collapsed' the breakdown of central state power (post-Cold War era) for intervention in Somalia, the (by becoming involved remains) permitted to drift collapse of the Siad Barre regime to the realization that the real power in the conflict, former terrorist activities. This was an official policy on failed operations. The de facto policy sets of actors: African states in the conflict, former colonial powers, and the United States.

The threats, most notably Nairobi, Kenya and Dar es Salaam targets in Mombasa, etc., the US has sought to explained by Powell, the leading regional powers, southern Africa, forging a such powers to ensure the protection of a departure was often referred to in Eritrea, Meles and Kagame of Rwanda, to commit to a militarily fact that they control the administration due to the creating 'responsive aspects'.

Powell's emphasis the importance of maintaining stability over the normative goal of democracy promotion, argue that its shortcomings 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 (Democratic Republic of Congo). According to Powell, 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 neighbour, Congo-Kinshasa. A more effective long-term approach, according to Powell's world-view, 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 own regions. It is precisely for this reason, for example, that the Bush Administration has placed pressure on South Africa to play a more proactive role in resolving an intensifying political crisis in Zimbabwe.

A second element of US containment and elimination of transborder threats has involved an aggressive policy towards 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. The Bush Administration refused to drop US sanctions against Libya despite the fact that the Qadhafi 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 foreign policy conditions for the suspension of sanctions, which included the Qadhafi regime's formal admission of guilt and payment of compensation to the families of the deceased.21 According to Powell, the Bush Administration remained 'deeply concerned over human rights violations in Libya, Qadhafi's involvement in neighbouring civil wars, and Libya's ongoing programmes to produce weapons of mass destruction'.

US foreign policy towards the Sudanese regime of Omar Hassan al-Bashir, despite the fact that it had taken certain steps to marginalize the Islamist forces of Omar Hassan al-Turabi, further demonstrated the Bush Administration's 'get tough' policy. Whereas the Clinton Administration had 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 18-year-old civil war, the longest running in Africa. Powell noted in congressional testimony on 7 March 2001, for example, that there exists 'perhaps no greater tragedy in the face of the earth today'.

The principal driving force in US foreign policy towards 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 grass-roots 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 US policy stance.24 In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks of 9/11, 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 US approach to containing and eliminating transborder threats involves a series of interconnected antiterrorist efforts. At the heart of these
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Efforts are significantly expanded construction budget for upgrading the security of embassies at risk, as well as expediting the building of new embassies, such as the US$42m facility in Tunis, that now houses once geographically dispersed buildings within one walled compound. The so-called 'hardening' of US diplomatic targets, which includes the construction during 2003 of new diplomatic facilities in Nigeria and South Africa, is complemented by a series of antiterrorist diplomatic initiatives, such as a US$100m counterterrorism package for East Africa, designed to promote regional cooperation against a variety of terrorist threats in conjunction with US intelligence and law-enforcement agencies, most notably the CIA and the FBI.

HALTING THE SPREAD OF HIV/AIDS

The centrepiece of the US foreign policy approach to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS has been funding for HIV/AIDS programmes in the US (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) in targeted African countries (such as Uganda, the continental leader in HIV/AIDS prevention) and in the international system (including the UN Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis). Although the Clinton Administration had supported low levels of funding for a variety of HIV/AIDS programmes throughout the 1990s, a 'tipping point' was reached in the second half of 1998, in the aftermath of Clinton's 12-day presidential visit to Africa, 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 US sanctions: 'parallel imports' (purchasing patented pharmaceuticals from an inexpensive source in a third country); and '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 US approach to the HIV/AIDS pandemic was strengthened at the beginning of the Bush Administration by a White House commitment to provide US$200m to the United Nation's Global Fund. Although some applauded this new direction, with others criticizing the US$200m as an extremely paltry amount that 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 after 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 US federal aid to overseas entities that provide, or counsel in favour of, abortion services, an action that has had severe implications for the family planning programmes 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, especially malaria and tuberculosis, during his week-long tour of four African countries (Kenya, Mali, South Africa and Uganda) in May 2001. The more realistic underpinnings of the trip were nonetheless demonstrated by the fact that conflicts in neighbouring countries and what Africans could do to resolve them with US support served as an important component of private discussions with host country leaders. Among the regional hotspots that dominated the bilateral talks were Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone with President Alpha Oumar Konaré of Mali; Angola, Congo-Kinshasa and Zimbabwe with President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa; Congo-Kinshasa and Sudan with President Daniel arap Moi of Kenya; and Congo-Kinshasa and Sudan with President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda. Realism also pervaded high-level discussions that focused on
strengthening US-African trade relationships via AGOA, an area of common national self-interest regardless of whether Powell was dealing with a democratic South Africa under Mbeki’s leadership or an undemocratic Kenya under Moi.

To its credit, the Bush Administration has made the necessity of fighting HIV/AIDS an important component of official administration rhetoric, promising to provide US$10bn in ‘emergency’ funds to fight HIV/AIDS in Africa as part of a US$15bn global effort that would be spread over five years. Sceptics nonetheless point out that, despite its ‘emergency’ label, the Bush Administration’s budget envisioned no new funds for 2003.27 “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”, explain Salih Booker, William Minter and Ann-Louise Colgan, three scholars associated with Africa Action. “Also the New York Times noted that the increase in AIDS funds comes partly by cutting nearly US$500m from international child health programs”.28 For these and other activists concerned about the spread of HIV/AIDS in Africa, the Bush Administration remains insufficiently committed to fighting for budgetary allotments.

TOWARDS A NEW COLD WAR?
The most recent turning point in US foreign policy towards Africa resulted from the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and their aftermath. These attacks exerted a profound influence on US 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 harked back to the initial stages of the Cold War, when President Truman in 1947 pledged to aid countries threatened by Communism. If current US foreign policy towards Africa follows in the footsteps of its Cold War predecessor, we are potentially at the beginning of a renewed period of US 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 US retrenchment as valuable resources are diverted to the geopolitical centre 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 9/11 are prompting US policymakers to de facto divide Africa into at least two spheres of variable US foreign policy interest: those regions (North and East Africa) destined to receive a greater degree of US attention due to their proximity to the Middle East, the perceived epicentre 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 US foreign policy. It is striking to note, for example, that the microstate and former French colony of Djibouti has emerged as the site for the Defense Department’s Combined Joint Task Force, the primary responsibility of which is to maintain surveillance over the movement of potential terrorist groups in neighbouring Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen.29 In the aftermath of hosting several high-ranking official US visitors, most notably Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Djibouti also agreed to station on its territory hundreds of US Special Forces, whose function is to carry out military operations against terrorist groups within the region. 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.

Two sets of interests—security and economic—have both dominated and historically competed for pre-eminence in US foreign policy towards Africa. From a broad

The Bush Administration’s response to the terrorist attacks of 9/11 nonetheless signifies the continued importance of national security interests in US foreign policy towards Africa. In North Africa, Tunis boasts a State Department office for assessing regional threats, a Pentagon regional training centre for US Special Forces destined for combat in the Arab world, and a Foreign Service Institute for teaching the Arabic language to numerous US government personnel who are preparing to work in Arabic-speaking countries. Tunisia is not unique, but rather indicative of the strengthening of US security ties with North and East African countries deemed important to the Bush Administration’s war on terrorism.

The fact that US foreign policy towards 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 the Cold War era (1947–1989). Two themes aptly demonstrate how US policymakers perceived Africa’s role in the various strategies of containment applied to Africa during the Cold War era. First, policymakers 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 US policymakers as a means for preventing the further advances of Soviet Communism, and therefore US 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 strategic location and partnership in a global telecommunications surveillance network directed against the Soviet Union. When the security relationship between the US and Ethiopia was shattered during the 1970s, the US turned to Siad Barre primarily because access to bases in Somalia could enhance the US military capability to counter any Soviet threats to Middle Eastern oil fields. Similarly, Washington policymakers viewed Mobutu Sese Seko and a host of Afrikaner governments positively because the Democratic Republic of Congo (Congo-Kinshasa; former Zaire) and South Africa could serve as regional bulwarks against Communism. An overriding preoccupation with anti-Communism led Washington to overlook the authoritarian excesses of these regimes in favour of their willingness to support US containment policies in Africa. Africanists not surprisingly remain concerned that this trend is repeating itself under the guise of the Bush Administration’s war on terrorism.

The second major outcome of Washington’s containment policies during the Cold War was the emergence of the African continent as a battlefield for proxy wars as both the US and the former 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 situation. Soviet involvement, as well as merely the threat of Soviet involvement, was enough to capture White House attention, 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 amounts of Soviet involvement, was enough to warrant White House-authorized covert assassination attempts, as well as military operations involving limited US troops and transport aircraft. During the 1975–76 Angolan civil war, Soviet-Cuban involvement led to a tacit US–South African–Congolese alliance in which Washington supported the direct involvement of Congolese and, more onerous
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as been in the forefront 1947, and 1989–2001, Washington's pursuit of not only the ideological and its Communist allies, I approach to US foreign

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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 US 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 US-Soviet involvement. Not surprisingly, African leaders have sought with varying degrees of success to enlist the Bush Administration in internal conflicts by portraying their enemies as terrorist threats to the international community.

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, D.C.;
- The provision of economic and military aid to anti-Communist client states, such as the Ethiopian regime of 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 US-Somali ties contingent on the Stad 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 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 see in US assistance to the 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 US combat troops to Congo-Kinshasa.

The provision of economic and military aid—the most extensively utilized tool of intervention during the Cold War that has also emerged as one of the preferred anti-terrorist tools of the Bush Administration—merits special attention. Two conclusions with important implications for the Bush Administration's war on terrorism 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 US, towards Africa during the last decade of the Cold War. First, our analysis confirmed widely held presumptions that US-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 was the Carter Administration's negotiation of military access agreements with Egypt, Kenya, Somalia and Sudan at the end of the 1970s. These 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. If past is prologue, one can expect a rising national security focus in Bush Administration foreign aid priorities towards Africa to the detriment of programmes designed to enhance socioeconomic development.

Our statistical analysis also demonstrated the existence of a negative relationship between US aid levels and the per capita GNP of African recipients (that is, higher aid levels were enjoyed by countries with a lower per capita GNP). This finding is reflective of the fact that US aid was consistently provided to African regimes which
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had 'consistently worse economic growth rates' than those enjoyed by other African countries. For example, one of the largest recipients of US aid in 1989 was the regime of Mobutu Sese Seko, an authoritarian leader who in 1965 assumed power in a military coup d'etat, 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. As the foreign policy relationships cultivated with other authoritarian African allies, such as Egypt, Liberia, Somalia and Sudan, which were among the top recipients of US foreign aid during the 1980s, preoccupations with anti-Communism led US policymakers to overlook increasing economic deterioration and government repression as long as African leaders supported US containment policies.

TOWARDS THE FUTURE

The African continent and US foreign policy towards Africa are at important turning points, as both African and American leaders grapple with decisions designed to promote their respective foreign policy interests. African leaders are confronted with the reality that even the best of intentions are often not enough as they grapple with a variety of political-military and socioeconomic challenges. American leaders are similarly confronted with the reality that attempts at promoting US foreign policy interests in Africa require an enormous amount of political will and the understanding of an extremely diverse African mosaic that historically has not constituted a priority concern within the global hierarchy of US foreign policy.

Even the best of American intentions, which attempt to draw on America's benevolent 'Uncle Sam' mythology in the active pursuit of foreign policy goals, 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 US policies towards 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, were designed to reverse this perception, and indeed are indicative of rising US interest, such high-level attention is typically fleeting and therefore has been unable to convince the majority of Africans that the US is seriously interested in African problems. Even in the case of Clinton’s visits to Africa, although many African leaders and policymakers appreciated Clinton’s warm rhetoric and sincere interest in African affairs, they were highly critical of the fact that rhetoric often was not followed by the implementation of concrete policies.

Observers of US-Africa policies are particularly critical of the impact of US Cold War policies on the African continent. The Cold War tendency to perceive Africa as a tool for solving non-African problems (that is, 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 US and the Soviet Union became involved in regional conflicts, often exerted a negative impact on the African countries that became unwitting or unwitting participants in this East-West chess game. To be sure, US foreign policy towards Africa achieved notable successes during the Cold War era, as demonstrated by the generally positive fashion in which adult Africans fondly remember their Peace Corps teachers and the educational opportunities that were opened up to tens of thousands of Africans due to a vast array of cultural exchange programmes. It is the broad strokes of policy which matter, however, and in this regard the broad strokes, at 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 US foreign policy look with trepidation upon the Bush Administration’s ever-widening global war against terrorism. Specifically, the emerging antiterrorist consensus in US foreign policy appears to
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be fostering a return to a strategic approach to Africa reminiscent of the Cold War era in which national security interests overshadowed the normative goals of promoting democracy and fostering economic development. Although many observers hoped that the Cold War's end would usher in a new era in US foreign policy towards Africa, the emergence of what some are now calling a 'second Cold War' (albeit in this case against international terrorism) makes it highly likely that Africa will once again be viewed by US policymakers through a strategic prism that will have little (if anything) to do with the reality confronted by most African countries. Indeed, as a result of the events of 9/11, the motto attributed to the initial months of the Bush Administration's foreign policy towards Africa — 'Forget the rhetoric and boost the geopolitics' — could be replaced by an even more negative variant — 'Forget democracy and development and boost anti-terrorism' — with severe implications for an entire generation of African citizens.

NOTES


6. 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 has traditionally been to carry the ideological battle against the former Soviet Union and Communism to the African continent in efforts that range 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 more US trade and investment throughout the African continent.


8. Quoted in ibid., 4.


11. 'Statement of Secretary of State-Designate Colin L. Powell Prepared for the Confirmation Hearing of the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Scheduled for 10:30 AM, January 17, 2001,' 12.

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127-48.

13. Copy of speech provided by the US Embassy in Libreville, Gabon.


17. Personal interview.


26. Ibid., 19-20.


28. Ibid., 196.


33. Clough, *Free at Last?*, 71.

34. Ibid., 76-100.