THE AFRICAN DIMENSION IN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY IN THE POST-9/11 ERA

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The African continent has reemerged at the beginning of the 21st century as an arena of strategic importance and competition among the Great Powers. Especially in the case of the United States, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 have led U.S. policymakers to characterize the African continent as an increasingly important “second front” in a global war on terrorism that has become the signature foreign policy theme of the Bush administration. Washington is especially focused on North and East Africa, inclusive of the Horn of Africa, due to the geographic, cultural, and religious proximity of these regions to the Middle East (the perceived epicenter of global terrorist activity that stretches from the Arabian peninsula to Pakistan) and the recognition that these regions constitute potential breeding grounds for further anti-American terrorist acts. Simply put, the Bush administration's global war on terrorism has significant implications for U.S. foreign policy toward Africa.¹

The Policymaking Context

The terrorist attacks of 9/11 exerted a profound influence on the Bush administration's approach to national security as the White House announced a global war on terrorism that harkened back to the initial stages of the cold war. Among the various domestic initiatives undertaken include enactment of the Patriot Act.

Act, which provided new, aggressive powers to law enforcement agencies; creation of a Department of Homeland Security to oversee borders and coordinate domestic counterterrorism activities; reorganization of the military's global command structure to add a Northern Command that would be responsible for military activities in Canada, Mexico, and the U.S. (the first time a military officer had been appointed to such a post since World War II); and, after much pressure from the public and the Congress over the intelligence failures preceding the attacks of 9/11, creation of a new cabinet-level position, Director of National Intelligence, who would be responsible for coordinating the diverse intelligence activities of fifteen agencies.

The national security reforms enacted by the Bush administration nonetheless did little to alter the domestic constellation of forces that are involved in the making of U.S. foreign policy toward Africa, which are best treated as a series of three concentric circles: the inner White House circle of the president and his principal foreign policy advisors, most notably the national security advisor; a second circle that comprises the national security bureaucracies of the executive branch; and an outer circle that includes Congress and the larger African affairs constituency.\textsuperscript{2}

As concerns the inner White House circle, for example, the same factors that fostered presidential neglect during the cold war have largely remained constant during the post-9/11 era: 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 U.S. as compared with the former European colonial powers; a tendency to view Africa as the responsibility of those same European colonial powers, especially France; and the necessity of balancing domestic and foreign priorities, especially during a first term in office in which the primary goal of all presidents is to assure reelection, with electoral logic suggesting that Africa is not a priority for the

vast majority of the voting public. Even Bush's highly trumpeted visit to five African countries (Botswana, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, and Uganda) in July 2003 failed to reverse and in fact 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 short nature 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 policymakers and their peoples.

The U.S. Congress, which constitutes the outer circle of the policymaking process, also has historically neglected Africa relative to other regions of perceived greater interest due to a variety of factors that have remained constant during the cold war and 9/11 eras. 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 on the Africa subcommittees is also among the least desired congressional positions in both houses of Congress, and is therefore relegated to relatively junior representatives and senators. As a result, even highly motivated chairpersons of Africa subcommittees, who have held a limited number of hearings on Africa's place within the Bush administration's war on terrorism, face an uphill task in pushing African issues to the forefront of congressional debate. The likelihood of congressional activism in Africa is further hindered by the

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5 Seul
Mouammar
Kaddaf,
"La politique
de Tarzan,"
Jeune Afrique
l'Intelligent, no.
2218, juillet
13-19, 2003,
pp. 17-20; and
Francis Kpatindé,
"Un cow-boy
en Afrique,"
Jeune Afrique
l'Intelligent, no.
2217, juillet
6-12, 2003,
pp. 56-58.

4 See, for example, U.S.
House of
Representatives,
Africa and the
War on Global
Terrorism,
Hearing
Before the
Subcommittee
on Africa of the
Committee on
International
Relations,
House of
Representatives,
One Hundred
Seventh
Congress,
First Session,
November 15,
2001, p. 17.
small margins of Republican control of both houses of Congress in the aftermath of the November 2004 elections. Whereas the Republicans hold a majority of fifty-five seats in the Senate as opposed to forty-four seats for the Democrats and one for the Independents, they hold 231 seats in the House as opposed to 202 for the Democrats and one for the Independents. 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 midterm congressional elections of November 2006.

The net result of White House and congressional neglect of Africa is that U.S. foreign policy toward Africa, perhaps more so than that toward any other region of the world, remains largely delegated to the high-level bureaucrats and political appointees within the bureaucracies of the executive branch. Exceptions of course exist, such as the willingness of both the White House and the Congress to pressure Sudan’s government to seek a peaceful resolution of civil conflict in the southern portion of the country, but these are rare occurrences typically due to pressures from grass-roots constituencies that have the ear of the president and senior congressional leaders and that most importantly are considered crucial to reelection. (In the case of Sudan, for example, a wide array of Christian groups deemed essential to Republican victories in 2004 effectively lobbyed the White House to “do something” to stop what they perceived as a genocidal policy that a northern-based Islamic regime was carrying out against a southern-based, predominantly Christian population, including the practice of southern Christians being sold as slaves in northern Sudan.) In order to fully understand the U.S. approach to the global war on terrorism in Africa, 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

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counterparts within the increasingly important economic realm, most notably the Department of Commerce. To be sure, the Bush White House sets the overall parameters of policy of this global war, as was the case of its predecessors during the cold war. But the unique nature of the U.S. policymaking system ensures that specific policy initiatives often emerge from and are coordinated by the national security bureaucracies with little White House input. The net result of what can be referred to as “bureaucratic influence” in the policymaking process has been a series of State Department and especially Pentagon-inspired initiatives designed to integrate the African continent into the Bush administration’s global war on terrorism.

Regional Strategic Initiatives

The Bush administration entered office with a realist-oriented foreign policy that did not perceive the African continent as an important part of the overall international strategic landscape. This geopolitical vision was altered by the events of 9/11, as the Bush administration made anti-terrorism the centerpiece of U.S. foreign policy. The interventionist assumption behind Africa’s rising geopolitical stakes is the belief that many African countries are susceptible to and in turn will potentially become exporters of terrorism, either due to the existence of radical regimes that are sympathetic to the goals and ideologies of these organizations and therefore are willing to host them on their soil (e.g., Sudan’s willingness to host Osama bin Laden from 1991 to 1996), the inability of weak central governments to effectively monitor outlying regions where terrorist organizations can organize and thrive (e.g., the vast Sahelian hinterlands of Chad, Niger, Mali, and Mauritania), or the threat of state collapse and the loss of state control over the territory as a whole (e.g., Somalia since 1991).

Several regional security initiatives demonstrate Africa’s integration into the war on terrorism. The first involves the Pentagon’s establishment in Djibouti of the headquarters for the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA), which is charged with waging war on Al Qaeda and its supporters in the Greater Horn of Africa (Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan) and Yemen. Land operations are primarily conducted by over 1,000 U.S. Special Forces who are based at Camp Lemonier. Coastal patrols are undertaken by U.S. Combined Task Force 150 (CTF 150), which also includes naval contingents from other countries, such as Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom. The CJTF-HOA also coordinates with CIA paramilitary operations, including the launching of Predator drone aircraft against suspected terrorist targets. One such operation involved the use in November 2001 of Predator drone-launched missiles to attack and kill an alleged Al Qaeda leader and four other individuals traveling by car in Yemen.

Djibouti, which sits astride the Straits of Bab el Mandeb at the entrance of the Red Sea and across the Gulf of Aden from the Arabian Peninsula, is the geographical anchor of the CJTF-HOA. Djibouti’s leadership is courted, as witnessed by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld’s visit to Djibouti in December 2002. The country enjoys the distinction of hosting the only formal U.S. military base on African soil and is one of only three African countries to be designated by the Bush administration as a “front-line state in the war on terrorism.” The country also hosts Radio Sawaa, Washington’s post-9/11 Arabic-language program that is beamed to all Middle Eastern countries and Sudan, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, as part of the State Department’s aggressive Public Diplomacy Program for the Middle East. U.S. appreciation for Djibouti’s willingness to stand “shoulder to shoulder with the United States” is demonstrated by a substantial foreign aid program for a country of
less than 400,000 people (more than $9 million proposed for 2006), making it one of the highest per capita recipients of U.S. aid in Africa. Not surprisingly, the growing U.S. military presence initially fueled minor tensions with France, due to Djibouti’s special status as host to France’s largest permanent military force on the African continent and the continued perception among French policymakers of Djibouti constituting part of France’s chasse gardee.\(^{11}\)

A second regional security program also launched by the Pentagon is the Pan-Sahelian Initiative (PSI), which includes four Sahelian countries (Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger) at the intersection of North and West Africa. This program was launched in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 to ensure that the four partner countries were capable of controlling the vast, largely uninhabited portions of the Sahel that fall under their individual jurisdictions, such that the region did not become a safe haven for terrorist groups fleeing direct U.S. military intervention in Afghanistan in 2002 and later in Iraq in 2003. Indeed, it was commonplace in the aftermath of U.S. military intervention in Afghanistan for Pentagon officers to make exaggerated claims that the Sahelian region was a “new Afghanistan” with “well-financed bands of Islamic militants recruiting, training and arming themselves.”\(^{12}\) The PSI sought to counter these efforts by dispatching teams of U.S. Special Forces to carry out on-the-ground training with local troops and providing basic equipment, such as pickup trucks and Global Positioning System (GPS) equipment, for tracking hostile forces. Although limited in scope (training was carried out at the company level) and financing (the entire program cost $6.25 million), the program was credited with achieving several successes, most notably the capture of some leaders of the Algerian-based Groupe Salafiste pour la Predication et le Combat (GSPC).


Pentagon officials who were pleased with PSI's success nonetheless perceived the Sahel as but the core of a potentially larger threat that incorporates the entire Sahara region. As a result, $500 million ($100 million a year over five years) was budgeted beginning in 2005 to support an expanded Trans-Saharan Counter Terrorism Initiative (TSCCTI) that will enlarge the PSI to include Algeria and Senegal, with three additional countries (Nigeria, Morocco, and Tunisia) serving as observer countries. The addition of Senegal is deemed logical due to the country's geographical location and status as the Bush administration's "most important francophone partner" in Sub-Saharan Africa.\(^13\) The Bush administration remains especially appreciative of President Abdoulaye Wade's early and firm support for U.S. counter-terrorism measures in the aftermath of 9/11, including Senegal's hosting of a meeting in Dakar in October 2001 to express solidarity with the U.S. and to prompt his African counterparts to ratify the 1999 Algiers Convention Against Terrorism, even though this meeting achieved few if any concrete diplomatic results. Algeria nonetheless is perceived as the anchor of an expanded TSCCTI, due to its geographical location at the crossroads of the Sahara and its status as a country that is successfully emerging from a "decade of terrorist violence."\(^14\)

Pentagon planners often state that the U.S. has much to learn from Algeria as concerns the war on terrorism, ranging from how Algerian insurgents defeated French military forces during the 1960s to how the current Algerian government has defeated Islamic insurgent forces during the 1990s. The official launching of the TSCCTI took place in June 2005 with the holding of Exercise Flintlock 2005, in which U.S. Special Forces will take part in training exercises at the battalion level with their counterparts from TSCCTI countries.

A third and final regional security program is the East Africa Counter-Terrorism Initiative (EACTI), which is inclusive of

\(^{13}\) "Bush Administration Foreign Aid Request for 2006," pp. 294-95.

\(^{14}\) Ibid., pp. 443.
Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. This program, launched in 2003 with over $100 million in funding, is principally driven by the State Department. The ECTI funds a variety of law enforcement and border control programs in East Africa that are designed to disrupt longstanding Al Qaeda networks within the region and to prevent a repeat of Al Qaeda's August 1998 attacks against U.S. embassies in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi, and November 2002 attacks against Israeli targets in Mombasa. One such program is the Safe Skies for Africa (SSFA) initiative, which promotes improvements in aviation safety, security, and air navigation. This program provides funding for an East African Aviation Security Advisor who is based in Nairobi and who is responsible for developing civil aviation security programs for the region. Kenya serves as the anchor of ECTI counter-terrorism programs. The country's leadership provided strong support to the U.S. during the cold war, and the same has been true of the post-9/11 era. It supported the U.S. war in Iraq in 2003 as an official coalition partner and, like Djibouti, is designated by the Bush administration as a "front-line state in the war on terrorism."

Together these regional security programs provide useful insights into the evolving nature of U.S. foreign policy toward Africa. First, these programs serve as the core of an evolving foreign policy approach that divides Africa into at least four spheres of variable foreign policy interest: (1) those regions (North and East Africa) destined to receive priority attention due to their proximity to the Middle East, the perceived epicenter of the global war on terrorism; (2) regional powers, typically Nigeria and South Africa but also including Algeria, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Senegal, that are perceived as crucial to the maintenance of regional stability and therefore as "regional anchors" of counter-terrorism efforts; (3) countries deemed important to U.S. economic interests, most notably oil-producing countries in the

15 Ibid., pp. 268-69.
Gulf of Guinea region (discussed below); and (4) the remainder of Sub-Saharan Africa which remains relegated to the backburner of U.S. foreign policy. Not surprisingly, U.S. foreign policy is increasingly focusing on those countries in which core foreign policy interests intersect, as in the case of Algeria, a regional power with oil resources that is considered crucial to combating perceived terrorist threats in North Africa.

The heart of the Bush administration’s new regional security initiatives is the reemergence of a “globalist” logic reminiscent of the cold war, that identifies international influences as the primary cause of instability and conflict in individual African countries, subsequently ushering in a new era of “containment” and “rollback” policies (as opposed to a “regionalist” logic that primarily focuses on the internal shortcomings of African regimes, and therefore the need to promote reformist policies, including support for the protection of human rights, the promotion of socio-economic development, and the adoption of democratic practices)\(^\text{16}\). The core elements of this globalist logic, as was the case during the cold war, are threefold: (1) a tendency to view Africa as a battlefield for proxy wars between the U.S. and foreign-sponsored terrorist elements; (2) a perception of African allies as the means for solving non-African problems (in this case, international terrorism); and (3) the evolution of U.S. relationships with these regimes according to their relative importance within the global war on terrorism.

Not surprisingly, such logic is also fostering the most egregious shortcomings associated with the cold war\(^\text{17}\). When the normative goal of promoting democracy clashes with the strategic goal of containing terrorist threats, the latter almost certainly wins, thereby more closely associating the U.S. with some of the worst abusers of human rights in North and East Africa, such as the Egyptian regime of Hosni Mubarak. The U.S. also runs the risk of becoming mired in internal African conflicts that have


little if anything to do with the global war on terrorism, as local leaders denounce domestic opponents as “terrorist threats” and the U.S. government turns a blind eye as U.S.-supplied weapons become the means for extinguishing those “threats.” This phenomenon is already occurring in the Pan-Saharan region, where the U.S. has been prone to accept characterizations of domestic insurgencies, especially those influenced by Islamic principles, as terrorist groups. In short, an overriding preoccupation with terrorist threats is leading Washington once again to overlook the authoritarian excesses of African regimes in favor of their willingness to support U.S. national security objectives (i.e., the war on terrorism).

It is important to understand, however, that the above-noted regional security programs neither originated from nor are coordinated at the level of the White House. They instead constitute bureaucratically inspired responses to the global war on terrorism, fashioned according to the established organizational missions of the three core bureaucracies (State Department, Pentagon, and the CIA) that were historically created to deal with different aspects of the foreign policy relationship. There is no doubt, for example, that the Pentagon has served as the primary driving force in the creation and expansion of most of the current regional security initiatives in Africa (including the CTF-HOA, the PSI, and the TSCCT). Not surprisingly, the Pentagon’s approach emphasizes the military dimension, including U.S. military training for local militaries, the provision of military aid, and the sale and transfer of U.S. weapons.

One of the dilemmas associated with what essentially constitutes bureaucratic influence in the policymaking process is that U.S. policies toward Africa tend to become fragmented and interpreted differently, often leading to a less than harmonious relationship marked by bureaucratic politics, depending on which bureaucracy is taking the lead in a particular African

18 ICO, "Islamic Terrorism in the Sahel: Fact or Fiction?"
country. Tensions have emerged within the Pentagon between the U.S. Central Command (which is responsible for the Middle East and the Horn of Africa) and the U.S. European Command (which is responsible for Europe and most of the remainder of Africa)\(^\text{19}\) over funding levels for the CJTF-HOA (administered by the Central Command) and the PSI and TSCTI (administered by the European Command). Funding levels aside, this bureaucratic division has hindered the effective coordination of counter-terrorism policies, leading policy analysts from across the political spectrum to argue for the creation of an integrated U.S. African Command that would be responsible for the African continent as a whole\(^\text{20}\). Further difficulties arise when coordination is sought with other bureaucratic entities that do not adopt the same geographical divisions as the Pentagon. The State Department’s ability to provide effective input into the TSCTI is hindered, for example, due to the enduring bureaucratic split between its bureaus of Near Eastern Affairs (which is responsible for the Middle East and North Africa) and African Affairs (which is responsible for the remainder of Sub-Saharan Africa). In short, the U.S. needs to rethink its organizational structure if it is going to play an effective, long-term role in countering terrorism on the African continent.

**Military Dimension Of The War On Terrorism**

The Bush administration entered office with a strong aversion to direct U.S. military involvement in either peacekeeping or peacemaking operations on the African continent, often derisively referred to during the 2000 presidential campaign as ill-conceived exercises in nation building. It is 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. Even in the post-9/11 era, in which policymakers have recognized that weak and failed African states run the risk of becoming breeding grounds for terrorist activities, the Bush administration remains reluctant to authorize the involvement of U.S. troops, preferring instead to rely on the interventionist efforts of three sets of actors: United Nations-led peacekeeping forces, as in the case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, although this option is limited due to distrust among administration neoconservatives and the Republican-controlled Congress for UN-sponsored solutions; former colonial powers, as in the case of French intervention in Cote d’Ivoire or British intervention in Sierra Leone; and African regional powers or regional organizations with direct stakes in the conflict, as in the case of Nigerian-led intervention in Liberia.

Three military programs demonstrate the Bush administration’s desire to strengthen the capacity of especially African militaries (as opposed to UN or European military forces) to bear the brunt of counter-terrorism activities. The first, International Military Education and Training (IMET), sends foreign soldiers, especially officers, to the U.S. for military training and to introduce them to American culture. The expectation, of course, is that military personnel who have spent time in the U.S. will not only be better able to coordinate with their U.S. military counterparts on the battlefield, but that they will return to their home countries with a more positive, long-term image of the United States. Especially during the cold war, when regime change in Africa typically occurred as a result of military coups d’état, the IMET program was designed to ensure that the soldiers who assumed the reins of power would be pro-American and
therefore willing to support the U.S. in its ideological competition with the Soviet Union.

The IMET program has emerged as an important tool in the Bush administration’s war on terrorism. Forty-one countries in Sub-Saharan Africa received IMET aid in 2005, and forty-five are slated to receive such aid in 2006. (Unless otherwise noted, all foreign aid figures are drawn from the White House’s foreign aid request for 2006, which offers a unique insight into Bush administration priorities in Africa.)21 The larger Middle East, inclusive of North Africa, is especially noted as a priority region, not least of all due to the expectation that some of the military officers of today will emerge as the political leaders of tomorrow. Every country in North Africa receives IMET assistance except for Libya, and levels of IMET assistance have significantly increased in the post-9/11 era. Morocco and Tunisia have especially benefited, receiving $1.875 million each in 2005, with the same amount being requested for both in 2006. Although at first glance these may not appear to be large sums of money, the potential impact of the IMET program becomes clearer when one determines the actual number of military students funded. In Tunisia, the IMET program during three years (2004 to 2006) will have trained 255 military officers in the U.S. (roughly eighty-five each year). When examined over the lifespan of this program, it is impressive to note that the vast majority of Tunisian military officers have spent some time in the U.S., with President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali himself having participated in the IMET program prior to taking the reins of power in 1987. Tunisia is not unique, but indicative of the long-term impacts of a carefully crafted program that has been expanded in the post-9/11 era.

A second military program that has been expanded in the post-9/11 era is Foreign Military Financing (FMF). This program is designed to ensure that governments friendly to the U.S. are able to procure U.S. military equipment and training such that

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they are able to “strengthen and modernize their self-defense capabilities, safeguard their borders and territorial waters, meet their legitimate indigenous security needs, increase their interoperability with U.S. forces and support coalition efforts in the war on terrorism.”\(^{22}\) The vast majority (84 percent or nearly $3.9 billion) of FMF is devoted to the Middle East. Of the thirteen countries from the African continent that are expected to receive FMF in 2006, three are from North Africa (Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco) and five are from East Africa (Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda)\(^{23}\). Egypt, along with two other countries (Israel and Jordan), receive the lion’s share of FMF devoted to the Middle East. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the two leading recipients are Kenya ($7 million) and Djibouti ($4 million), indicative of the leading roles of these two countries as regional anchors for U.S. counter-terrorism efforts in the Greater Horn of Africa.

A final military program falls under the rubric of the recently launched Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI), for which the Bush administration has requested $114 million in global funding for 2006. The African component of this program (with a requested funding level of $37 million) is the African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) program, which in turn replaced the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI). The primary difference between ACRI (created by the Clinton administration in 1996) and ACOTA (created by the Bush administration in 2002) is that the latter focuses on training for offensive military operations, including the ability of African troops to conduct operations in hostile environments in the Greater Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA initiative), East Africa (EACTI initiative), and the Pan-Saharan region (PSI and TSCTI initiatives). Whereas Mali and Niger have served as the primary PSI recipients of ACOTA training, EACTI countries include Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda.

\(^{22}\) Ibid.

\(^{23}\) The remaining countries are Botswana, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, and Uganda.
The net result of these military programs, which are primarily driven by the Pentagon’s vision of the military necessities associated with the war on terrorism, is the growing militarization of U.S. foreign policy toward Africa that harkens back to the cold war. The current period is nonetheless unique, however, due to the Pentagon’s determination to create what General James L. Jones (head of the U.S. European Command) refers to as a “family of bases” that will enable the U.S. military to undertake a more proactive, aggressive, and direct military approach on the African continent as part of the doctrine of preemption that characterizes U.S. military strategy in the post-9/11 era. Two types of military facilities are being pursued “forward operating sites” inclusive of logistical facilities (airstrip or port) and weapons stockpiles to be maintained by a small permanent crew of U.S. military technicians (but no combat units); and bare bones “cooperative security locations” only for use in crisis situations that will be maintained by military contractors and host-country personnel24. In both cases, generous military assistance programs are considered critical to “greasing the wheels” with African leaders who previously may have been reluctant to accept such basing arrangements. The primary risk of such a policy approach, of course, is that these military bases and the U.S. military largesse which fuels them will potentially be used by authoritarian regimes to silence domestic dissent and to undertake military actions against domestic insurgencies that have little if anything to do with the war on terrorism.

The list of African countries (Cameroon, Gabon, Ghana, Mali, Namibia, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, South Africa, and Uganda) currently under Pentagon review as potential sites for new U.S. military facilities also demonstrates the growing nexus between the Bush administration’s war on terrorism and the more classic U.S. national security objective of ensuring access to diverse sources of foreign oil25. Three of these coun-


tries comprise part of the Gulf of Guinea region, which in the eyes of U.S. policymakers stretches along the coast from Nigeria to Angola, inclusive of Equatorial Guinea and São Tomé and Príncipe (with some policymakers also including Chad in this arrangement, due to the fact that Chadian oil is exported to the coast via a pipeline through Cameroon). Oil is the principal reason for Washington’s interest in this region, which is expected to provide as much as 25 percent of U.S. oil needs by 2015.

The growing U.S. strategic interest in African oil is demonstrated by a fledgling series of Pentagon initiatives that can be referred to as the Gulf of Guinea initiative, the primary goal of which is to gradually build up an effective regional security program capable of ensuring the safe transport of the region’s oil resources to the United States. This initiative includes the revival of annual cooperative naval exercises that began in 1975 under the auspices of a program known as the West African Training Cruise (WATC). In January 2005, for example, the U.S. Sixth Fleet undertook a Gulf of Guinea naval deployment that included 1,400 U.S. Sailors and Marines and participants and observers from Benin, Cameroon, Gabon, Ghana, Nigeria, Togo, and São Tomé and Príncipe, which in turn built on a Gulf of Guinea Maritime Security Conference that was held in Naples, Italy, in October 2004. This Gulf of Guinea deployment is buttressed by a more general foreign aid initiative, the Africa Coastal/Border Security Program (ACBSP), both of which undoubtedly will be expanded as imports of Gulf of Guinea oil continue to rise in the future.

The primary risk posed by expanding U.S. ties with Africa’s oil-rich countries is the potential blurring of the strategic goals of counter-terrorism and ensuring access to oil. When one adds to this mix that the majority of Africa’s petroleum-producing countries constitute dictatorships in which oil wealth controlled by the few leads to resentment, unrest, and in the extreme insurgencies by the many determined to enjoy their fair share.

of these profits, the mix can be explosive. Even in the case of oil-rich Nigeria, which has made a transition to a more democratic form of governance and which receives significant amounts of U.S. military assistance, the regime of President Olusegun Obasanjo, “continues to rely on brute force to resist demands by the Ogonis and other ethnic minorities of the Niger Delta region for a larger share of the nation’s oil wealth – most of which is derived from wells in the Delta.”

 Simply put, how will policymakers respond when an oil-producing, authoritarian ally in the Gulf of Guinea region seeks U.S. military support (or at least a U.S. blessing) to suppress a domestic insurgency born out of economic disenfranchisement but denounced by the regime in power as a “terrorist threat”? If history is our guide, the lines between counter-terrorism and access to oil will be blurred by administration officials who will choose oil over democracy, and who will be tempted to label the insurgency a terrorist group. Indeed, according to many policy analysts, the lines are already becoming blurred, and will only become more so as the U.S. finds itself increasingly dependent on African sources of oil in the decades to come. “From the Pentagon’s perspective, the protection of oil and the war against terrorism often amount to one and the same thing,” explains Michael Klare28. “Thus, when asked whether the United States was prepared to help defend Nigeria’s oil fields against ethnic violence,” General Charles Wald, deputy commander of the U.S. European Command, responded: “Wherever there’s evil, we want to go there and fight it.”29

Strategic Imperatives Of An Evolving Foreign Aid Program

Africa’s incorporation into the Bush administration’s war on terrorism is also demonstrated by the strategic imperatives
imbedded in the evolving u.s. foreign aid program (apart from the already discussed regional security initiatives and military assistance programs). One shift in the foreign aid budget concerns the expansion of security-related programs in North and East Africa that are included under the awkwardly titled budget item, Nonproliferation, Anti-terrorism, Demining, and Related (nadr) programs, which received $351 million and $399 million for global activities in 2004 and 2005, and for which the Bush administration sought $440 million in 2006. Several programs serve as the core of nadr counter-terrorism initiatives.

Counter-Terrorism Financing (ctf) assists countries whose financial systems are considerd vulnerable to terrorist financing. This program was a direct outgrowth of Washington’s freezing of assets of presumed terrorist-related financial networks, such as the Somali-based al-Ittihad al-Islami (aiai) and the Barakaat remittance company, in the immediate post-9/11 era. A second program, Counter-Terrorism Engagement, provides aid to support specific counter-terrorism initiatives of allied countries. An example is u.s. funding to support Algeria’s opening of a counter-terrorism center in Algiers. Finally, the Terrorist Interdiction Program (tip) provides countries with the computer software to monitor the potential movement of terrorists across borders through the installation and maintenance of the Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System (pisces) at sea, air, and land points of entry. Participating countries in Africa which have installed the pisces technology include Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Morocco, Tanzania, and Uganda.

The most lavishly funded nadr counter-terrorism program is Anti-Terrorist Assistance (ata), which received $96 million and $118 million for global activities in 2004 and 2005, and for which the Bush administration sought $134 million in 2006. ata is devoted to expanding “the skills and abilities of foreign
law enforcement officials who have primary responsibility in their nations for taking decisive action against international terrorists and networks that seek to target U.S. citizens, businesses and other interests." Both in-country and U.S.-based programs focus on very specific forms of training, including "detection and rendering safe explosive devices, post-blast investigation techniques, VIP protection, senior leadership crisis management, hostage negotiations, and a variety of other courses." Kenyan security forces have been an important beneficiary of the ATAC program. A total of $14 million was spent in 2004 and 2005 to support the training of the Kenyan Anti-terror Police Unit, and another $3 million was requested for 2006.

The NADR program also provides funding for a number of other security initiatives related to the war on terrorism. The Small Arms/Light Weapons Destruction (SALW) program funds the destruction of surplus and illicit stocks of military weaponry, most notably Man-Portable Air Defense Systems (MANPADS). The importance of this program, which has funded the destruction/disabling of over 10,500 MANPADS since 2003, became evident in the aftermath of Al Qaeda's failed attempt to shoot down an Israeli airliner taking off from an airport in Mombasa with a surface-to-air missile. A second program, Export Control and Related Border Security Assistance (ERBS), seeks to prevent the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), their missile delivery systems, and advanced conventional weapons through the strengthening of border controls. Three of the four African countries proposed to receive such aid in 2006 are from North or East Africa, including Kenya, Tanzania, and Libya. A final NADR program, the Non-Proliferation of WMD Expertise (NPWME), "redirects" WMD knowledge to alternative employment activities for scientists of participating countries, most notably Libya, that are in the process of dismantling their WMD programs. A joint U.S.-United Kingdom study has determined
that as many as 250 key personnel and 1,500 support personnel from Libya will require some form of financial support. The Nonproliferation Disarmament Fund (NDF) provided $500,000 for start-up activities in 2004 and $2.5 million for training purposes in 2005, with the Bush administration requesting an additional $1 million in NPWME funds for 2006.

NADR programs in general have not generated a great deal of criticism for a variety of reasons, most notably that they are perceived as fulfilling important technical roles, such as the retraining of Libyan scientists under the NPWME program, that ultimately will make the U.S. safer. If anything, critics typically argue that these programs are underfunded, especially when one considers their often expansive objectives, such as the destruction of illicit small arms and light weapons under the SALW program. Of greater controversy is the role of Economic Support Funds (ESF) in the foreign aid hierarchy. Although technically falling under the category of economic assistance, ESF aid historically has been targeted toward countries that are considered to be strategically important. Not surprisingly, six of the fourteen African countries targeted for bilateral ESF aid in 2006 are from North or East Africa (Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Morocco, and Sudan), and these six are slated to receive the lion’s share (85 percent or $568 million) of that devoted to the African continent.

The ESF program has become the home of the Middle East Peace Initiative (MEPI), the official mandate of which is to promote reform in the wider Middle East, including North Africa. One of the administration's often-stated arguments in favor of fostering especially political reform in the Arab world is that authoritarian Arab regimes, especially those closely tied to the U.S., breed anti-American sentiment, as witnessed by the fact that most of the attackers on 9/11 hailed from two of the most authoritarian and pro-American regimes in the Middle East.
(Egypt and Saudi Arabia). MEPI’s budget has expanded from $29 million in 2002 (its first year of operation) to $74.4 million in 2005, although this latter figure demonstrates a decrease from $100 million provided in 2003 and $89 million provided in 2004. The budget request for 2006 is $120 million, $25 million of which is reserved for the creation of a Middle East Foundation (along the lines of existing Asia and Eurasia Foundations) that will assume control away from the State Department over the day-to-day running of the program. MEPI is typically heralded by local U.S. Embassies as proof of the Bush administration’s commitment to democratization in the Arab world.

The primary shortcoming of the MEPI program is that it follows the tradition of ESP aid in general, namely the provision of assistance to strategically located, typically authoritarian allies for programs that their elites desire and that in reality do not question their hold over power. “The projects it [MEPI] has funded to date are a scattering of well-intentioned but soft-edged initiatives favoring economic and educational issues, which Arab governments much prefer to the thornier questions of political reform,” explains Thomas Carothers. These sentiments are echoed by the Brookings Institution, which concludes that “MEPI has chosen to nibble at the margins of the reform problem by funding a wide variety of uncontroversial programs and largely working within the boundaries set by Arab governments.” Even the Bush administration has ironically reinforced these perceptions by lauding MEPI’s role in promoting trade and economic liberalization, including the signing of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with the United States (as in the case of the FTA signed with Morocco in March 2004), movement toward a Middle East Free Trade Area (MEFTA), and supporting the specific program initiatives of the Group of Eight’s (G-8’s) Broader Middle East and North Africa (BMENA) that was launched at the 2004 Sea Island summit held in the United States. Indeed, official rhetoric

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notwithstanding, the MEPI program fails to address the fundamental issue of political reform, preferring instead to channel resources to important regional allies.

The case of Tunisia is particularly enlightening. Boasting an authoritarian dictatorship that is nonetheless perceived in Washington as a “strong U.S. ally in the Arab world” and a “valuable partner in the war on terrorism,” Tunisia has been actively courted by the Bush administration. The capital, Tunis, is home to a rising number of U.S. facilities commensurate with its increasingly close relationship with Washington, including a new $42 million U.S. Embassy, 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, a Foreign Service Institute for teaching Arabic to U.S. government personnel who are preparing to work in Arabic-speaking countries, and a regional MEPI office for promoting and coordinating all MEPI activities in North Africa (the only other such regional office is in the United Arab Emirates).

The “soft-edged” nature of MEPI programs is clearly demonstrated by categories of programs funded by the U.S. Embassy in Tunis, such as the “Commercial Law Development Program,” “Judicial and Legal Reform,” and “U.S. Business Internships for Young Arab Women.” Indeed, any question as to whether democracy promotion or national security objectives dominate the U.S.-Tunisian relationship was best demonstrated by Secretary of State Colin Powell’s response to a question while on an official visit to Tunis in December 2003. When asked about President Ben Ali’s use of repression to silence dissent and ensure his unchallenged control over the Tunisian political scene since assuming power via extraordinary means in 1987, Powell’s response was that this was “a matter between him [Ben Ali] and the Tunisian people.” Two months later in February 2004, Ben Ali’s strong support for U.S. counter-terrorism initiatives was rewarded with

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35 “U.S.-Tunisian Cooperation.” Handout provided by the U.S. Embassy, Tunis, Tunisia.

a highly coveted head-of-state visit to Washington, including a White House visit with President Bush (his first, and one that had been denied him by all previous U.S. administrations), amid a rising chorus of criticism by human rights activists.\(^{37}\)

The debate over MBI constitutes part of a larger policy debate over the Bush administration’s foreign aid priorities in Africa. To its credit, the Bush administration has made the necessity of fighting HIV/AIDS an important theme of U.S. foreign policy toward Africa, with its Global HIV/AIDS Initiative (GHAI) constituting 75 percent of the administration’s 2006 foreign aid request for Sub-Saharan Africa. Critics correctly note, however, that actual funding for GHAI has fallen far short of the original $10 billion that President Bush in 2003 promised would be spent over a five-year period, and that even if fully funded, the promised figure remains woefully inadequate to effectively respond to the HIV/AIDS pandemic.\(^{38}\) Of even greater disappointment has been the administration’s track record in implementing its highly touted Millennium Challenge Account (MCA), designed to reward countries undertaking reforms that, for example, foster reduced levels of corruption and greater levels of national investment in education and health care. Although announced in 2002 and funded by Congress in 2004, the MCA has deemed only eight African countries eligible for funding, and only one country (Mozambique) has been granted funding (although funds have yet to be disbursed). In short, promised foreign aid programs outside of the war on terror remain significantly underfunded, with remaining resources being increasingly targeted toward counter-terrorism and other national security objectives at the expense of development. This is especially true for those regions of the African continent most closely tied to the Bush administration’s war on terrorism. In the case of North Africa, for example, 71 percent of the Bush administration’s 2006 foreign aid request is for pure security assistance.