

# **Ibadan Journal** *of the* **Social Sciences**

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## Africa and the US National Security Policy in a Changing Global Order

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*Developments in US policy towards Africa since 9/11, as shown by the establishment of the Africa Command, has been described as marked departures from what existed in the immediate post-Cold War era when Africa was 'neglected'. Africa has been de-marginalized in the US strategic and national security policy because it has become critical to the strategic interest of the US. This paper provides an alternative interpretation of the US national security policy as translated into activities in Africa in the post 9/11 period. It argues that Africa has never been marginalized nor neglected by the US in its foreign or security policy after the Cold War, although there has been a change in strategy. This becomes obvious when security is not separated from the economy in the analysis of the US national security policy agency towards Africa.*

**Key words:** United States, global security, post 9/11, Bretton Woods, AFRICOM, war on terror

### Introduction

It has become common for scholars to characterize developments in the US policy towards sub-Saharan Africa after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack as constituting a marked departure from what existed in the immediate post-Cold War era when Africa was 'neglected'. It is claimed that Africa has become critical to the strategic interest of the US and, as such, has been de-marginalized in the US strategic and national security policy. The de-marginalization is marked by the establishment of a unified military command for Africa, the Africa Command (AFRICOM). A flurry of activities by the Oval Office and the Pentagon in Africa occurred under George W. Bush in a manner that was unprecedented by any US President. These activities are in addition to the established presence of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in Africa. New initiatives have included a multiplicity of joint military training programmes and sales of arms. There are also new economic and humanitarian aids

programmes that target Africa. Such programmes include the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria-related activities, the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) and the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) (Herrling and Radelet, 2009).

Until the creation of AFRICOM, US-Africa military relations were conducted from three different commands that were primarily dedicated to other regions considered to be of more strategic importance to the US. The new strategic importance of Africa was said to have been informed by three factors. The first was the war on terror. According to the 2002 National Security Policy, the US is now threatened less by conquering states than by ailing ones. The war on terror has brought a renewed focus on Africa because Africa is home to conflict-ridden, fragile, failed or failing states. These states could become fertile grounds for terrorist activities. Fragile states have military and police forces that are incapable of effectively exercising authority within their borders. Thus, they create vast locations in

which terrorists can organize, train and launch attacks without being monitored. The situation becomes worse when the state collapses. Africa is also home to some states that are susceptible to being controlled by radical regimes that may be sympathetic to the goals and ideologies of terrorist organizations and be willing to host such organizations in their territories. There is therefore a need to strengthen Africa's fragile states, help build indigenous capability to secure borders and help build up law enforcement and intelligence infrastructure to deny havens for terrorists (see Swart, 2007; Schraeder, 2006).

The second factor accounting for Africa's growing significance relates to the US economic interests in Africa. The continent is a major supplier of oil to the United States. And with the recent discovery of significant oil deposits in Ghana, Chad, and Niger, in addition to Nigeria and Angola which have been the major source of oil in the continent, this position is getting even stronger. It is estimated that Africa will account for about 25 per cent of oil supplies to the US by 2015. Thus, the US needs to secure the flow of oil and other natural resources, including solid minerals (Klare and Volman, 2006; Volman, 2003; Volman, 2007 and Copson, 2007).

The third factor is the increasing interest and presence of emerging Asian powers, especially China in the exploitation of oil and other solid minerals in Africa. The change in the US policy towards Africa is viewed as part of a grand strategy to check China's growing influence in Africa (Lawson, 2007; Dempsey, 2006; Frynas and Paulo, 2007; Klare and Volman, 2006 and Volman, 2003).

These reasons are adduced for the transformation of the position of Africa in the US foreign and national security strategy under George W. Bush. It is generally assumed in the discourse that this change in the US policy towards Africa is not likely to be short-lived. Debates have focussed on the likely consequences of the US activities in Africa. The debate has largely proceeded without regard to the larger global context of the US policy and, perhaps more importantly, without a serious consideration for Africa's own initiatives in dealing with some of its

security challenges. When the US-Africa policy is related to the larger global context, such efforts are constrained by preoccupation with humanitarian intervention. But at a deeper level, it is viewed as another scramble for Africa's resources as it was in the colonial era, or as a Cold War between the US and China. Little attention is paid to Africa's interactions with global financial institutions whose policy prescriptions have contributed to the deplorable social conditions of life and weakening of public institutions; and how the availability of security technologies and warfare equipment to non-state actors has exacerbated the conflicts and security challenges of Africa. An assessment of the US-Africa policy must be located in the larger global security vision of the US, and the broader security challenges of an increasingly interdependent global system.

This paper provides an alternative interpretation of the US national security policy as it relates to activities in Africa in the post 9/11 period, within the context of global security challenges. It argues that Africa has never been marginalized nor neglected by the US in its post-Cold War foreign or security policy, although there has been a change in strategy. This becomes obvious when security is not separated from economy in the analysis of the US national security policy towards Africa. If the US national policy is not about hard power alone, then the US engagement with Africa should not be solely defined by nor confined to military activities or aid. The US has related to Africa in the post-Cold War era through the Bretton Woods institutions under the debt burden when economic policy -making was dominated by these institutions in many African countries.

What was new about the US policy under George W. Bush was the increase in direct military activities leading to the establishment of AFRICOM. In this situation, military activities increased as a result of the war on terror and the categorization of African oil as being in the strategic interest of the US. The increase in direct military activities in Africa is unsustainable. It was provoked by an overreaction to the event of 9/11 in which Africa became incorporated as a 'front' in a global war on

terrorism. America's security policy towards Africa under George W. Bush reflects a conception of power that is rooted in American global dominance when the world is increasingly becoming multi-polar in many respects.

### **De-marginalization or Another Scramble**

Two perspectives of the implication of the recent American initiatives in Africa, post 9/11, will be teased out in the discourse. The first is a positive assessment that views Africa as a beneficiary of this change. The objective of the US in this regard is to garner allies and partners in Africa to eliminate the conditions that are conducive for the thriving of terrorists. The US is viewed as committed to improving governance, contributing to poverty eradication, building schools and infrastructure, providing medical services, resolving conflicts and building security capabilities of the African states, in what Emerson (2008) describes as the 'battle for Africa's Hearts and Minds'. The US is committed to better position its allies in Africa to be able to deal with any threat that may develop. Similarly, AFRICOM's mission is to "promote US strategic objectives by working with African States and regional organizations to help strengthen stability and security in the region through improved security capability, military professionalization and accountable governance," a move from 'fighting and winning wars' to addressing threats at their inception. (Swart, 2007:10). Some even argued that America has elevated development to be on par with defence and diplomacy as its three key foundational pillars of National Security Strategy (Herrling and Radelet, 2009). It reflects a determination to join compassion with resources, not only by increasing aids to Africa but also by increasing political and economic cooperation to address shared interests in trade, investment, and to deal with common threats (Woods, 2008).

This perspective emphasizes US's expansion of foreign assistance to Africa and innovations in the way aid is delivered. Efforts along this line, highlighted by Herrling and Radelet (2009), include the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief

(PEPFAR), a \$15 billion fund to combat HIV/AIDS in Africa and the Caribbean, the five-year \$1.265 billion President's Malaria Initiative Fund and US's spearheading of the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI) that cancelled 100 per cent of the debts of some poor countries in the world. They describe the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) as a revolutionary initiative in promoting aid effectiveness. Thus, all the Obama administration is expected to do is to "build on a strong foundation of successful US-Africa collaboration and continue to invest in this increasingly important regional relationship" (Woods, 2008:1).

The second perspective is critical of the US policy towards Africa. Recent US activities in Africa are viewed as an attempt at militarising the continent. The goal is to maintain and extend access to energy supplies and other raw materials and natural resources for which the US is in competition with China and other rising economic powers. According to this view, the humanitarian dimensions of Bush's policy will pale into insignificance in the actual activities of AFRICOM. The goal of the Pentagon is to build up African surrogates who can act on behalf of the US as a viable alternative to direct military involvement when such cases arise. Thus, military assistance is likely to be directed to strengthen countries that are willing to act on behalf of the US in its bid to enhance its political and economic influence, thereby counteracting the growing influence of China on the continent. There are several references to the emergence of a 'second scramble' for Africa. Indeed, Schraeder (2006:1) announces that the 'African continent has re-emerged at the beginning of the 21st century as an arena of strategic importance and competition among the Great Powers.' Thus, Bush's policy might not be dissimilar to what obtained during the Cold War.

Military-based intervention may complicate the ongoing conflicts, or generate new ones. The over-militarization of US intervention in Africa may distract African countries from building democratic societies and promoting economic development. As foreign aid is increasingly linked to the introduction of new and draconian antiterrorism measures, lesser

premium is placed on the eradication of poverty and other development goals (Emerson, 2008: 59).

Both perspectives have focussed and emphasized separate dimensions of US-Africa policy. One focuses on US humanitarian and aid interventions and the other on military activities, especially the role of AFRICOM. Both fail to relate with the experience of Africa in the immediate post Cold War period, especially the activities of the US-dominated international financial institutions (IFIs) and their roles in Africa in the immediate post Cold War period under the debts overhang. State fragility is taken as given. No effort is made to engage the historical processes and the external forces that have led to its occurrence. The discounting of these forces can be addressed when the roles of the IFIs, especially the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), are viewed as critical factors in deepening economic crisis and fuelling political and social instability. While the critical perspective makes reference to the sordid experience of Africa during the Cold War, reference is hardly made to activities of the IFIs in the immediate post Cold War period. Yet, these institutions were the chief means of interaction between Africa and the US in the immediate post Cold War period. Their activities are implicated in the upheavals that engulfed Africa in the 1990s and beyond. They have had significant effects on the trajectory of development, especially state fragility, in the continent since the end of the Cold War.

#### **The International Financial Institutions (IFIs), Africa's Economies and Security Challenges**

It is difficult to disentangle the political and economic objectives of states in international relations. Political might is often linked to financial might and a debtor's capacity to project military power hinges on the support of its creditors. The economy and national budgets constrain the construction and execution of grand strategy. Thus, power in international relations is not just about coercion or leverage, but also about fostering dependence to consolidate an economic area or enhance influence (Kirshner, 1998). In this sense, the African continent has been dependent on the

objectives of the great powers. This was clearly visible when Africa became the arena of proxy wars between the United States and the former Soviet Union during the Cold War. In the immediate post-Cold War era, it was largely subject to the machinations of the IFIs, institutions that became the major instruments of USA's engagement with Africa. These institutions were construed as economic and financial institutions, and not political; but their influence and activities in Africa largely dictated political developments on the continent. The activities of these institutions have had remarkable effects on the socio-political conditions including the fragility of states, in spite of the introduction of political conditionality in the late 1980s.

For most of the 1980s and 1990s, the defining feature of development in the continent was economic liberalization and state retrenchment. These were initiatives driven first by the development prescription of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Those institutions did not relent in their exhortation to African states in crisis "to plunge into, and persevere in, market reforms that were certain to make most people worse off for sometime" (Prezeworski, 1992:45). These involved the withdrawal of the state from the economy through cuts in subsidies on social services, across-the-board privatization and commercialization of public enterprises.

The adverse effects these had on living conditions of the people provoked the upheavals that eventually engulfed many states. African leaders were urged to become "tougher with bureaucrats and social actors who were undermining public policies, more discipline, more probes, more policing" (Bangura, 1994:787). Such prescriptions failed to appreciate that people who live and/or work under poor and difficult conditions will sometimes struggle to improve their circumstances in ways that defy established patterns and institutions. In the end, Africa's economic performance fell short of suggested expectations on the basis of market reforms. Many African states lost significant capacity for service delivery and social protection during this period. State legitimacy was eroded even as the

struggle over the shrinking resources of the state intensified. Ethnic and other divisions in society deepened, leading to outbreaks of intergroup violence and civil wars in some states, and pressures for political liberalization and democratization in others.

There arose a proliferation of civil society organizations, and many dictators were forced to conduct multiparty elections (Osaghae, 2007; Carmody, 1998; Adekanye, 1995 and Gibbon et al., 1992). Some successfully retained power as elected civilian heads of state while others were removed from office through the ballot box.

Today, over 20 African states have become democracies, up from about three in the 1980s, although elections remain problematic in many states, including Nigeria and Kenya. The rapid move from dictatorship to electoral democracy witnessed a slow pace in rebuilding state institutions and growing the economy. In global politics, the poor performance of sub-Saharan African states in key indices of development in the past two decades has ensured that they remain marginalized in economic and strategic terms. For instance, as at 2004, no country in sub-Saharan Africa has been able to achieve the status of a high-income country. In 2002, sub-Saharan Africa accounted for 6.88 per cent of the world's population but accounted for less than 3 per cent of the world's GDP. According to the Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2002), while East Asia was able to reduce poverty between the mid-1970s and 1990, social conditions in sub-Saharan Africa worsened during the same period. Africa entered the new millennium 5 per cent poorer than it was in 1990. The report also observed that, in sub-Saharan Africa, only South Africa has less than 10 per cent incidence of child malnutrition, while in 6 countries within the continent, more than 40 per cent of their population is malnourished. The report states further that 40 of 44 sub-Sahara African countries, with 93 per cent of the region's peoples, grew too slowly. Half are poorer than in 1990. These include 11 of the world's 20 poorest countries. Since the report noted that the poorest countries in the world have suffered most from conflict, it is not surprising that Africa has

produced a substantial size of the world's fragile states.

Market reforms have been carried out without the intension of making more effective states. Rolling back the state was misconceived in practice as weakening the state in order to extend and preserve markets in Africa. The particular ways adjustment measures affect individuals, institutions and organizations, and the responses to such adjustments have had implications for state fragility.

Economic adjustments in Africa involved life and death issues like poverty, personal security, distributive equity and justice. Hence they were resisted in many states and had to be pursued with speed backed by repression. Those who were worse off adopted a variety of ways to cope with them. Some of these coping strategies, in Klitgaard's (1989) view, reflected in the organizational failure of the state in Africa because the erosion of incentives to the public service led to or deepened brain-drain, moonlighting, demoralization and corruption. They led to institutional failures (Bangura, 1994). Elites were able to skim development resources and define policies in a way that protects their own interests leading to a high-inequality and the deepening of poverty. Thus adjustment policies became politically unsustainable.

The brazenly asymmetrical distribution of the gains and burdens of SAP intensified conflicts in Africa, worsening the crisis of state legitimacy and capacity. The inability of governments to effectively provide social control, once authoritarian regimes were abolished, led to an increase in civil violence as political contenders utilized force, fear, and coercion to gain control of governments. The various conflicts and instability in Somalia, Rwanda, Eastern Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo), Sierra Leone, and the Sudan represent these failures. These, for many Africans, meant violence, civilian deaths, the spread of disease, the exploitation of natural resources, and the displacement of millions of people (largely women and children).

The elements of failing or failed states that became important after the attacks of 9/11 in the US have been a central feature of these African societies



since the early 1990s. In such societies, the lack of state capacity to secure borders, provide security, and regulate economic markets is matched by a corresponding, if not worse, incapacity to provide basic necessities of life, food, clothing and shelter. This made the people prone to violence, criminality, illegal exploitation of natural resources (such as diamonds), and the movement of large numbers of people away from their homes.

SAP has been perceived as a frame of Western exploitation of African natural and human resources in collaboration with the African elites and middlemen, who extract their 'share' of the spoils from Western companies. This is buttressed by capital flight which enables these African elites to protect themselves after they have been removed from power. The IMF and the World Bank, as promoters and supervisors of SAP, have received scathing criticisms from within the continent. Some scholars have argued that SAP, promoted by the World Bank and the IMF, was a contrivance to secure the continuous exploitation of Africa through the effective control of the leadership, economic and social policies, and ideological orientations in these countries. The Bretton Woods projects were portrayed as institutions used to promote policies that would ensure the repayment of the external debts owed by poor countries, securing the effective control of these countries through a system of peonage like one between a tenant and landlord/money lender, and to firmly integrate these countries into the orbit of exploitative imperialism.

Under SAP, several African countries fell from middle-income to low-income status, net capital transfer from South to North was around US\$150 billion between 1985 and 1990. The policies the IMF and the World Bank imposed on Africa was therefore described as designs to satisfy western productive requirements (Onimode, 1992:101-102). The IFIs became so fixated to structural adjustment that they were quite willing to trade off political conditionality for submission to economic programming. For instance, while many countries severed ties with Somalia under Siad Barre, following the July 9, 1992 massacre, the World Bank continued to engage the

dictator, providing the country with over \$100 million loans. The World Bank had always preferred imposing SAP via their collusion with dictators in Africa to encouraging discussions and consensus building before its introduction (Ake, 1992).

In the late 1990s, the IMF and the World Bank increasingly admitted that SAP had had negative consequences in Africa and had begun to show more interests in global poverty and institutional capacity building, but had refused to shift their ground on adjustment conditionality. Neither did they alter their 'basic anti-interventionist thrust' (Mosley, 1992: 99). The World Bank rationalized and attributed the failure of SAP to the long drawn nature of the economic and financial crisis, the failure to implement SAP in the spirit and letter, the 'stop-go' approach to its implementation and the unforeseen decline in the price of Africa's key export. The pressures on governments by these institutions in the 1980s and 1990s trumped donor accountability above accountability of government to its citizens.

Thus, the dismal performance of many states in sub-Saharan Africa in achieving reasonable growth in the 1990s under structural adjustment programmes gradually weakened the influence and control of the IFIs over policies in Africa. The reduction in influence and power of the IFIs is furthered by the increasing presence of the rising Asian powers, especially China and India, in Africa in the last decade. The capacity of the institutions to represent narrow western ideologies has also waned in proportion to the rising clout of the Asian powers within the organizations themselves. The activities of the institutions promoting them have become suspect. The way aid is delivered and market ideas are promoted suggest that the western powers behind these institutions have not shed their exploitative objectives of perpetuating dependency. This perception forms the basis of the response to US foreign and national security policy towards Africa after 9/11, and is likely to be strengthened by the issues arising from the current economic meltdown that began to manifest in late 2008. Evidence from Africa's reactions to the series of American military training initiatives in Africa, shows that African

military officials prefer logistical support like the US support to the African Union for its work in Darfur to its increasing military presence in Africa (Barnes, 2005:16). The activities preceding the establishment of AFRICOM suggest an attempt to define security for African states, just as SAP was imposed against Africa's Lagos plan of Action to deal with economic recession in the 1980s. Indeed, the US was the only country that voted against the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa's alternative programme as a 'basis for dialogue' over economic reforms in the 1980s (Browne, 1992 as cited by Carmody, 1998:39).

Consistent with the 1980s, the US policy towards Africa under George W. Bush fails to appreciate the external factors of state fragility. This is reflected in the kind of assistance and empowerment that the US offers the continent. Its approach holds little, if any, chance of addressing state fragility in the interest of the impoverished citizens of Africa or of global peace, prosperity, and security.

#### **US Military Initiatives in Africa and Global Transformations, Post September 11**

US military initiatives in Africa commenced in 2002 when it set up a military base in Djibouti. This, of course, was preceded by the failed attempt at humanitarian intervention in Somalia in 1997. According to information provided by writers on US military activities in Africa since 2002, the US has contracted military organizations to provide services in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Cote d'Ivoire and has established numerous free standing programs that supply arms and secure cooperation locations in Uganda, Kenya, and Algeria. It has signed agreements with Gabon, Ghana, Morocco, Namibia, Senegal and Zambia. It has carried out special programs, including training in anti-terrorism in Botswana; signed cooperation agreement to enable US military enhancements and training in Botswana and South Africa. It has also carried out counter-terrorism initiatives in the Sahel region; carried out training and provided weapons in Mali, Mauritania, Chad, Niger, Senegal, Nigeria, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco. It established the East Africa Terrorism

Initiative (EACTI), to carry out military training for security and control of people along the coasts of the Eastern African countries of Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. In 2007, the Bush administration announced the establishment of an Africa Command (AFRICOM) (see Frynas and Paula, 2007; Klare and Volman, 2006; Barnes, 2005 and Volman, 2003).

The US has moved more swiftly on military involvement in Africa since September 11 than it has on development interventions. While the diverse military programmes spread across the continent have been consolidated in AFRICOM, development interventions remain immersed in a larger global programme. The only development programme that the US tailored for Africa is the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) that began during President Clinton's administration. This programme extends duty-free US market access to about 98 per cent of exports from 40 qualified sub-Saharan African countries. Even with the concern about the long-standing problem of aid ineffectiveness, the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) has been slow in providing support because of its cumbersome process of approval. As at October 2008, only about \$311 million of the \$6 billion committed in 2003 had been disbursed (Herrling and Radelet, 2009:16-17). The table below shows the general progress of the MCA.

In general, an aggressive military agenda now trumps the development agenda. This conclusion is informed by the actual financial commitments to development aid and the inability to address aid failure as they relate to the activities of donors.

Therefore, US activities in Africa is undermined by a legacy of leadership without moral authority. In the current scheme, an aggressive security agenda is more visible than a development agenda. This is obvious in actual financial commitments to US activities on the continent. Thus, instead of US intervention being perceived as a reviving drink, there is suspicion that it constitutes a poisoned chalice. This suspicion is further fuelled by US unilateral intervention in Iraq during the George W. Bush's administration. The US media often portray

Africa in a very negative light (Schraeder and Endless, 1998:32), as if there is a design to portray a dying continent to justify an undertaker intervention or re-colonization. That the US announces that African oil is of strategic interest requiring direct military commitment because it is now a major source of oil supply to the US portrays the self-interested nature of US intervention.

Table 1. Compacts, in Signing Order (as of the end of fiscal year 2008)

	Compact with	Grant Amount (in millions)	Entry Into Force on
1	Madagascar	\$109.8	July 27, 2005
2	Honduras	\$215.0	September 29, 2005
3	Cape Verde	\$110.0	October 17, 2005
4	Nicaragua	\$175.1	May 26, 2006
5	Georgia	\$295.3	April 7, 2006
6	Benin	\$307.3	October 6, 2006
7	Vanuatu	\$65.7	April 28, 2006
8	Armenia	\$235.7	September 29, 2006
9	Ghana	\$547.0	February 16, 2007
10	Mali	\$460.8	September 17, 2007
11	El Salvador	\$461.0	September 20, 2007
12	Mozambique	\$506.9	September 22, 2008
13	Lesotho	\$362.6	September 17, 2008
14	Morocco	\$697.5	September 15, 2008
15	Mongolia	\$284.9	September 17, 2008
16	Tanzania	\$698.0	September 15, 2008
17	Burkina Faso	\$480.9	Entry into Force projected for 4th quarter of fiscal year 2009
18	Namibia	\$304.5	Entry into Force projected for 4th quarter of fiscal year 2009

Source: MCC Annual Report 2008

For Africans, improving capacity for cross border control, intelligence gathering and anti-terrorism military training cannot be separated from the generalized security problems arising from the widespread of failing institutions that beset many states in Africa. The thrust of recent American military engagement in Africa, in spite of the rhetoric of development and humanitarian intervention, does

not show a deep appreciation of the security challenges in Africa. The phase zero operation in the continent represents a version of the doctrine of preemption, given the relative weakness of Africa's militaries and the instability and crisis that characterize some states in the continent.

Furthermore, the endeavours to exercise more military influence and control in Africa than was the case in the immediate post Cold War era is also informed by an interpretation of current realities as throwbacks to the Cold War.

The US policy portrays Africa as a helpless continent that is incapable of dealing with its own problems and is eternally vulnerable to games of the major powers. But this is far from the reality. Africa has acquired a measure of experience from its dealings with great powers that can be put to use at critical moments. Besides, the major powers in the twenty-first century are more diversified in orientation than it was during the partitioning and the Cold War era.

The US incorporation of Africa into its grand strategy is a part of its faltering steps in trying to come to terms with the challenge of securing America in a rapidly changing global order. While it is not the result of the growing significance of African states in world affairs, it reflects a hegemonic world view of American power and leadership that may not sit well with the direction of change in the global security order. The current global economic crisis that began in 2008 and the role of states, both in precipitating the crisis and in addressing it, have shown that the idea of unipolar world is receding and the world is transiting into a situation where power is diversified and the exercise of power changes from context to context (Nye, 2009:12). Indeed, it is gradually being admitted that the current structure of international institutions no longer reflect the present constellation of global power (Schlesinger, 2008:110). The United States must engage a world in which power is diffused, and military superiority does not guarantee domination. But given its interpretation of security challenges and the nature of contemporary conflicts in Africa, in terms of economic failures, the incursion of non-state

actors into the running and use of armed forces, the traditional preserve of states, intervention through the regional and sub-regional institutions and the UN system will serve its security needs better than the bilateral approach in the long run. In any case, the current approach of the US will involve spreading its resources too thinly. It will also have to deal with obstructions by other powers, as it experienced with China, over Sudan. In that sense, the US must relate to how Africans have defined security challenges on the continent, and the evolving ways and frameworks for dealing with security challenges from within the continent.

### **African Initiatives and US Policy**

Many scholars admit that governance in Africa has overtime been affected by colonialism, the Cold War ideological rivalries of the super powers, the machinations of international financial institutions in the immediate post Cold War era and the vagaries of contemporary globalization (Joseph, 1987; Fatton, 1992; Allen, 1995; Diamond, 1997; Bayart, 1999; Amuwo, 2008 and Osaghae, 2007). One of the effects of the arbitrary character of colonial demarcation of Africa in the post Cold War era, especially the distribution of particular ethno-linguistic groups across several national borders, has been the externalization of intra-state conflicts into several countries. Thus, inter-ethnic conflicts in a single country often threaten the stability of an entire sub-region as played out in West Africa and the Great Lakes Region.

African leaders, who for several years have maintained the principle of state sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of countries under the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), have come to terms with the reality of the contemporary challenge of improving governance and the need to collectively organize security and defence under the African Union (AU) established in 2001. The founding of the AU in Sirte was preceded by the intervention of sub-regional organs like the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), with some successes in the civil wars that

ravaged their regions. After decades of turbulence, there is now a regional consensus to develop both military and non-military mechanisms to deal with governance, economic growth and development and 'common security threats, which undermine the maintenance and promotion of peace, security, and stability on the continent'. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the Framework for Common African Defence and Security policy represent these efforts to come to terms with developmental slide, and to ensure mutual support for progress across the continent under the umbrella of the AU. The protocol relating to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council was adopted in July 2002 with a provision for an African Standby Force. The Peace and Security Council is to deploy the Force to peacekeeping missions, and intervene pursuant to the provisions of the AU Constitutive Act. These developments occurred when the UN, overburdened by intractable problems, was embracing the 'Brahimi principle' named after the Algerian diplomat who in 2000 authored a report proposing that regional organizations take primary responsibility for the problems in their own backyards (UN, 2003).

While the US policy recognizes these developments, it has not considered them critical enough to its engagement with Africa. The reason is that the US, being largely driven by realism in international relations, prefers bilateralism which allows it more flexibility in dealing with African states

### **The New Global Environment as Opportunity for Positive US-Africa Relations**

In this age of globalization, it must be recognized that national security is no longer the preserve of the national state alone. Globalization has unleashed on individual states, supranational and transnational structures, outside of the control of national governments, with implications for the character of international relations as expressed in the transnational processes of regionalization, civil society activism, banking transactions involving the

transfer of sums larger than most national budgets, transfer of weapons by terrorists, and cyber crime. Globalization has created a 'risk society' with new structures and mentalities, as well as associated security technologies that affect the nature of governance. The "territorial state has lost its traditional monopoly on armed force....the material equipment for warfare is widely available to private bodies as are the means of financing warfare" (Hobsbawm, 2007). The adversities of these developments are more readily felt in weak or fragile states, but the developed states are also not immune from them. Thus, global security, from the perspective of fragile or failing states, poses challenges beyond a weakened capacity to police borders. Today, many states house within their seamless borders citizens who are connected or exposed to epistemic communities, knowledge networks that include security technologies and management practices from self protection to the hiring of private armies (Bisev, 2004: 285). These call for a rethink of the security situation worldwide.

The governance of the security sector in states must focus attention on the difficulties of deeply uneven spread of economic prosperity. Poverty means frustration and anger for many in fragile or failing states. The global interdependence of national economies has put the linkage between security and economy in bold relief. The current economic meltdown reveals that in a closely integrated world, instability and insecurity in a country can pose a problem to global security in general and the security of particular states in a new way, as experienced in the September 11 attack. The security challenges posed by non-state actors are tied to discontent among a population and the source ascribed to that discontent. Addressing the increasingly wide inequality within and between nations is critical to any attempt at improving global security. This has informed the attempts to redefine security in terms of human conditions. The 'responsibility to protect', endorsed by the world's leaders sitting at the 2005 World Summit in the UN General Assembly is underwritten by a commitment to improving human

conditions more broadly as expressed in the Millennium Development Goals. But in spite of this, the US is too slow in appreciating its stake in the economic security of all states arising from interdependency and common humanity.

The place of Africa in US national security policy cannot be divorced from Africa's position in global politics in general. The changing global order provides opportunities that African states can seize. The security of Africa depends on the extent to which African states take advantage of the opportunities offered by the changing global economic and political order to develop their economies and societies. As the George W. Bush administration recognized, the security and stability of Africa is relevant to global security. But Africa can only effectively play its role in the promotion of global security if major African countries develop viable and strong economies that are able to spread progress to other parts of the region. Such economies must be innovative, create infrastructure, provide services, promote competition, protect property, and offer justice. The United States will have to support initiatives in these direction to enable Africa promote American and global security. This goes beyond the current military programme or developmental aid. It requires honest commitment to promoting and supporting economic initiatives that will spread progress to the African continent.

### **Conclusion**

US foreign and security policies after September 11 amount to a mere shift in the mode of engagement with Africa. The series of intervention shows an attempt to increase military penetration of Africa to shore up American influence and control. This move was necessitated by the waning confidence of African states in the Bretton Woods institutions on the continent due to the failures of structural adjustment policies on the one hand and the increasing influence of Asia (especially China and India) in the operations of these institutions, on the other hand. The series of interventions are aimed at using African military to achieve US national objectives, especially in the war

on terror. The engagement with China and India provides opportunities for Africa to push its own human security challenges in the global political arena by drawing on lessons learnt from over four decades of interaction with major powers and institutions.

Africa has demonstrated some measure of collective effort in dealing with its own limitations. This is evident in the transition from the principle of noninterference, to collective intervention, the rejection of coups, the embrace of the concept of human security, and the push for the African standby force. The current global economic meltdown has shown the need for a new approach to security in the context of global interdependence. It also underscores the need to review America's approach to terrorism in Africa. Africa's role in global security is linked to its capacity to grow its economy, strengthen the states, and evolve a capable and effective military.

African leaders must reduce the intensity of competition for political power within their countries and subordinate local politics to the demands of global real politics. The US can help these objectives if it allows the view expressed by Barack Obama at the New Economic School in Moscow on July 7, 2009, that "The days when empires could treat sovereign states as pieces on a chess board are over...given our interdependence ...progress must be shared" to reflect in its Africa policy. The adverse consequences of the vulnerability of fragile or failed states to global security can be more inexpensively addressed if the major powers work towards global economic security by advancing progress and wealth in a more inclusive manner. In place of its reactive focus on intervention in conflict situations, America must adopt proactive investments in the promotion of prosperity on the continent. These may require more concrete measures such as promoting the access of African agricultural produce to US markets, encouraging private sector investments, strengthening anti-corruption and anti-money laundering activities to discourage capital flight from the continent. Above all, the US must review its role in the distribution of

weapons across the continents which has fuelled Africa's conflicts and contributed to their protraction.

The lesson from the George W. Bush era is the recognition that a world in which half the population lives below poverty level is an insecure and unstable world. Such a world requires costly policing and expensive military and intelligence operations. The Obama administration must demonstrate that it realises that in this age of interdependence, a world with less poverty, requiring less expensive policing, can be created by sharing progress. This point is emphasized by Yunus (2009:12): "while the past few decades may have benefited a few at the expense of many others, in the long run, only policies that allow all the peoples of the world to share in the progress will produce long-term security for anyone."

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