

## THE CHALLENGE TO USAFRICOM FROM AFRICA'S COLONIAL PAST

BY

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USAWC CLASS OF 2010

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# REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

*Form Approved*  
*OMB No. 0704-0188*

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. **PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.**

<b>1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY)</b> 18-03-2010			<b>2. REPORT TYPE</b> Strategy Research Project		<b>3. DATES COVERED (From - To)</b>	
<b>4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE</b>  The Challenge to USAFRICOM from Africa's Colonial Past					<b>5a. CONTRACT NUMBER</b>	
					<b>5b. GRANT NUMBER</b>	
					<b>5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER</b>	
<b>6. AUTHOR(S)</b>  Colonel T.V. Johnson					<b>5d. PROJECT NUMBER</b>	
					<b>5e. TASK NUMBER</b>	
					<b>5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER</b>	
<b>7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b>  Professor Anthony Williams Department of National Security and Strategy					<b>8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER</b>	
<b>9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)</b> U.S. Army War College 122 Forbes Avenue Carlisle, PA 17013					<b>10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)</b>	
					<b>11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)</b>	
<b>12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT</b> Distribution A: Unlimited						
<b>13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES</b>						
<b>14. ABSTRACT</b> The intent of this paper is to show that long term colonialism in Africa has created a legacy of distrust that will hamper U.S. efforts to engage effectively on the continent. The paper will analyze the historical and current misdeeds and missteps on the continent by outside entities, and develop and propose strategies and recommended actions for U.S. AFRICOM to engage successfully in the region.						
<b>15. SUBJECT TERMS</b> Colonialism, Nationalism, Development, Security, Economic						
<b>16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:</b>			<b>17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT</b>	<b>18. NUMBER OF PAGES</b>	<b>19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON</b>	
<b>a. REPORT</b> UNCLASSIFIED	<b>b. ABSTRACT</b> UNCLASSIFIED	<b>c. THIS PAGE</b> UNCLASSIFIED	UNLIMITED	28	<b>19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code)</b>	

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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by

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## **ABSTRACT**

AUTHOR: Colonel T.V. Johnson  
TITLE: The Challenge to USAFRICOM from Africa's Colonial Past  
FORMAT: Strategy Research Project  
DATE: 18 March 2010      WORD COUNT: 6,240      PAGES: 28  
KEY TERMS: Colonialism, Nationalism, Development, Security, Economic  
CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

The intent of this paper is to show that long term colonialism in Africa has created a legacy of distrust that will hamper U.S. efforts to engage effectively on the continent. The paper will analyze the historical and current misdeeds and missteps on the continent by outside entities, and develop and propose strategies and recommended actions for U.S. AFRICOM to engage successfully in the region.

## THE CHALLENGE TO USAFRICOM FROM AFRICA'S COLONIAL PAST

The African continent is a study in both arrested development and derailed potential. As full of wealth and potential as it is of horror and tragedy, its many contradictions and contrasts boggle the mind. Sliced up like so much pie by the European powers that colonized it and harvested its vast riches for more than 100 years, today, America looks toward the continent as a place of hope, partnership and prosperity. However, no matter how distant the legacy of colonialism appears, it continues to loom as an obstacle to establishing U.S. credibility on the continent.

With vast, untapped, untamed swaths of newly acquired land, American focus in the 1800s was decidedly inward—participation in expensive colonial exploits far from home simply had no appeal to the developing nation that was the United States at that time. For many European countries, however, the quest to build national treasure through colonization and empire building was on. Seven nations—Britain, France, Portugal, Belgium, Germany, Italy and Spain colonized Africa in what Joseph Conrad termed as the vilest scramble for loot that ever disfigured the history of human conscience.<sup>1</sup>

According to a BBC Radio series entitled, *The Story of Africa*, European influence as it relates to colonization on the African continent was negligible until the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Prior to that, Europeans relegated themselves to trading activity primarily along the coast. Arab and African merchants managed the business of the slave trade and other goods from the interior of the continent.<sup>2</sup> The 1884-1885 Berlin Conference convened for the purpose of formalizing the rules for the partitioning of Africa—without the consent of the indigenous population. For the Africans who found

themselves subjected to European colonialism, their experiences varied depending on which country's rule affected them. Though colonialism lasted approximately 3 to 4 generations, it, coupled with the slave trade, had long lasting and profound impact upon the indigenous population of the continent.<sup>3</sup>

Colonialism wounded the African psyche, destroyed political institutions, destroyed social fabric, exacerbated ethnic rivalries and created artificial boundaries.<sup>4</sup> This colonial baggage is a major source of African distrust and caution when it comes to relations with the West. One could argue that America's own unique experience with British colonialism during the eighteenth century and its own violent quest for independence give it something very much in common with many of the African nations with which it desires to partner. Unfortunately, America's noble tradition of anti-colonialism is somewhat tainted by its participation in institutionalized slavery—something that many would argue is far more evil and insidious than colonialism itself. That U.S. role in the history of human enslavement is undoubtedly a source of mistrust and uncertainty among Africans today. Still, the U.S. image in Sub-Saharan Africa, ranks high. A Gallup poll surveyed people's opinions of the leadership of the United States in a period that covered 2006-2008.<sup>5</sup> People were polled in 143 countries in the Middle East/North Africa, Europe, Asia, The Americas and Sub-Saharan Africa. Not surprisingly, the Middle East/North Africa region, with its predominant Muslim population, gave U.S. leadership the lowest approval rating of all—15 percent. The world median was more than twice that percentage at 34 percent. The startling figure was the approval rating of U.S. leadership from respondents in Sub-Saharan Africa—72 percent, a figure any U.S. political leader would be hard-pressed to attain here at home.

Sub-Saharan Africa is arguably home to the poorest, most neglected and war-torn countries in Africa. Over the years, the U.S. funneled billions of dollars of aid to Sub-Saharan Africa and backed leaders there who seldom had the best interest of their people in mind. This type of “help” is analogous to placing a dirty bandage on a wound—it just makes things worse. One can only speculate why this region of the world still looks to the United States as a beacon of light in spite of so many American foibles on the continent. Though sometimes critical of the U.S., Wafula Okumu, a Kenyan researcher at South Africa's Institute for Security Studies, recognizes that America is still a symbol of hope. Okumu says that American values made America, and that if the U.S. could only teach its values to Africa, the result would be better than pumping money into the continent.<sup>6</sup>

State-sanctioned human enslavement in the western world ended when Brazil abolished the practice in 1888. The end of slavery however, did not mark the end of a need for African manpower. As European nations began to challenge each other militarily early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, thousands of Africans waged war on behalf of their European rulers. By and large, their service and sacrifice were rewarded with disenfranchisement and disillusionment when those conflicts were resolved. It is easy to see how large standing armies of armed Africans could begin to look like a threat to European interests on the continent. Indeed, the fact that they had spilled blood for virtually nothing in return was the catalyst for many Africans to challenge the validity of European rule on the continent.

In the years following World War I, political organizations sprang up, often regional in outlook and driven by a determination to have more control in the running of

the colonies. African nationalists began advocating the notion of sovereignty as an alternative to colonialism. Nationalists encouraged Africans to move beyond tribal identities and see themselves as members of the nation state. This proved difficult because of the Europeans' effective use of a divide and conquer strategy in their approach to colonialism—separation along tribal, ethnic and religious lines enabled the Europeans to play various groups of Africans against one another.

In East Africa, Jomo Kenyatta emerged as an immensely articulate and convinced anti-colonialist during the 1930s.<sup>7</sup> Imprisoned in the 1950s by the British for alleged ties to a radical anti-colonial group, Kenyatta emerged from captivity in 1961. In 1963, he became the Prime Minister of an autonomous Kenya under British rule. Following independence in 1964, he led Kenya until his death in 1978.

In his book, *Facing Mount Kenya*, Jomo Kenyatta wrote, "the African is conditioned, by the cultural and social institutions of centuries, to a freedom of which Europe has little conception, and it is not in his nature to accept serfdom forever.

He realizes that he must fight unceasingly for his own complete emancipation; for without this he is doomed to remain the prey of rival imperialisms, which in every successive year will drive their fangs more deeply into his vitality and strength."<sup>8</sup>

The context in which Kenyatta is quoted must be framed in the era of the African independence movement of the late 1950s and 1960s. The quote was certainly addressing Africans' desires to be free from European rule. Ironically, to this day, European-engineered tribal, ethnic and religious tensions remain sources of conflict or potential conflict in many countries in Africa.

The Pan-African movement that came into being at the close of the 19<sup>th</sup> century sought to unite Africans on the continent as well as people of African descent who had been scattered across the globe due to migration—whether forced or voluntary. The

idealism of this movement was no match for the harsh realities of colonialism and the history of slavery. The rise of nationalism fueled regional conflicts and rivalries. As a result, the movement of Pan-Africanism lost its momentum and never succeeded in uniting Africans throughout the world. The movement transformed itself into the Organization of African Unity in May of 1963. In July of 2002, the OAU was re-designated as the African Union.

In structure, the OAU began as a single entity, whereas the AU, integrated with the African Economic Community, consists of eight branches or organs. The senior organ is the Assembly, which is made up of the heads of state and government of the 53 member nations. The assembly determines common policies. The Executive Council coordinates and makes decisions on common policies; the Pan-African Parliament implements policies; the Court of Justice ensures compliance with the law; the Commission (the secretariat); the Permanent Representatives Committee assists the Executive Council; the Specialized Technical Committees assist the Executive Council in substantive matters; the Economic, Social and Cultural Council; the Peace and Security Council makes decisions on prevention, management and resolution of conflicts; and the Financial Institutions consisting of the African Central Bank, the African Monetary Fund, and the African Investment Bank.<sup>9</sup>

A primary goal of the African Union is continental unity—i.e., a United States of Africa. The African Union wants to achieve this goal by 2030, according to volume one of its 2004 strategic plan,<sup>10</sup> but the organization recognizes that to do so, Africa must undergo a significant transformation that addresses a number of external and internal issues. While polling data indicates that many Africans find favor with the concept of

continental unity, the reality of creating a single nation from the amalgamation of tribes, cultures, subcultures, social systems, religions and values in Africa is daunting, to say the least. Charismatic leadership capable of balancing nationalism and pan-Africanism could harness the energy of two movements that have worked against one another in the past. Where such leaders emerge, the U.S. must make every effort to engage with a genuine spirit of partnership and cooperation. The U.S. must also ensure its efforts are focused on those leaders who are committed to responsibility and accountability in government.

Increasing the African nations' capacity for security and stability is a significant focus of USAFRICOM. Military to military programs serve as the primary conduit by which to develop this capacity. Like U.S. government efforts, USAFRICOM must concentrate on building relationships with future African leaders. Intensive professional military development programs such as the Ethiopian Defense Command and Staff College in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia are important tools for forming meaningful relationships with rising African military leaders. U.S. Army War College Professors, Bernard F. Griffard and John F. Troxell wrote that USAFRICOM's continued leverage of the relationships developed on the continent between the various professional military education institutions and their counterparts in the United States would be an excellent vehicle to accomplish this.<sup>11</sup> AFRICOM can be of even greater benefit to fledgling democracies on the continent by expanding its professional military education opportunities beyond Ethiopia and those countries in close proximity to the Horn of Africa. A key goal of USAFRICOM should be the development of African military leaders in institutions modeled after service academies for entry-level personnel and

war colleges for senior members. Future plans should include educational facilities that bring military personnel from all over the continent together in order to focus on relationship building and professional military development. The long-term impact could be significant in creating a climate that will enable African countries to set jointly the security conditions necessary to facilitate accelerated economic growth through direct foreign investment. Such institutions could also have a unifying effect upon future leaders of African countries and move the continent closer to real and lasting peace and stability.

The AU sees globalization as an external force that has left African countries economically marginalized. Its strategic plan cites that while Asian and Latin American countries have bettered their economic situations and become players in the global economy, African countries have experienced a great degree of difficulty in even remotely achieving similar success. The numbers cited in the AU's vision and mission taken from its latest strategic plan, dated May of 2004, painted a bleak picture—Africa's more than 800 million inhabitants represent 13 percent of the world's population, yet Africa accounts for a mere 1 percent of direct foreign investment, 1 percent of global gross domestic product and about 2 percent of world trade.<sup>12</sup> While there has been some economic growth on the continent since the AU's figures, it remains marginal. According to the president of the African Development Bank, Donald Kaberuka, Africa's gross domestic product is likely to grow by between 5.5 and 6 percent in 2010.<sup>13</sup> Slow, steady growth for a historically robust economy like that of the U.S. keeps the economic outlook healthy and optimistic. For many African nations whose economies have been strained for decades, slow, steady growth is akin to life support for a very ill patient.

Kaberuka says that the continent needs to get to a GDP of 7 percent by 2011—as a minimum. The fact remains that Africa is home to the greatest number of poor countries and what the AU defines as least developed countries. The fragile economic situation of the continent is compounded by famine brought on by drought, flood, pests and intentional crop destruction. Sadly, many of the people on this gigantic continent, full of riches, have historically found themselves dependent upon external entities for the most basic of human needs. For nations that cannot provide security, shelter, potable water and food to its people, modernization and development in the Western sense must seem like the stuff of fairy tales and legends.

The AU's strategic plan advocates placing Africans at the center of their own affairs, home-grown development that is open to the world and heavy African investment in social services primarily targeted at the youth on the continent. It encourages Africans to live by the words of self-development and self-reliance. The New Partnership for African Development is an organization of the AU that seeks to turn the grand ideas of the AU's strategic plan into action. NEPAD was designed to address economic recovery of Africa by developing initiatives to accelerate sustained growth, eradicate poverty and end the continent's marginalization as it relates to globalization. In essence, it provides substance and reality to the lofty goals of the AU's strategic plan.

In *NEPAD: Toward Africa's Development or Another False Start?*, Ian Taylor sums up NEPAD as a deal: African leaders will hold each other accountable and will practice good governance and in return, the West will commit itself to aiding Africa's renaissance and development.<sup>14</sup> Taylor takes a critical view of NEPAD and insists that good governance will not necessarily attract foreign investment, as some of the

countries on the continent attracting the most business are those with profitable mineral reserves, not necessarily those that are practicing democracy and accountability associated with good governance. He notes that private investors base their decisions on the market and the bottom line, not on political considerations or directions from their governments. He writes that in the end, NEPAD's level of success will depend on one's perspective. Taylor notes that the organization's success may be confined to its effect of countering donor fatigue and its efforts to secure more resources for the continent's elites. He contends that if judged by its ability to raise Africa's profile in the world—albeit temporarily—then NEPAD has succeeded. However, if judged as a far-reaching solution designed to reset the entire continent and its relationships within the global community, Taylor assesses that NEPAD seems an unlikely source to promote Africa's regeneration in the foreseeable future.<sup>15</sup>

In his paper entitled, *The United States of Africa: the Challenges*<sup>16</sup>, Economist Demba Moussa Dembele, the director of the Forum for African Alternatives, Dakar, Senegal, further illustrates the impact of globalization upon Africa. According to him, the enormous amount of money leaving the continent via capital flight has been fueled by trade and financial liberalization. He argues that the privatization of state-owned enterprises and public services has resulted in a massive transfer of the national assets to western multinational corporations. Citing a 2005 Christian Aid study as source, Dembele writes that trade liberalization alone has cost the Sub-Saharan region of Africa more than \$270 billion over a 20-year period. He maintains that Ghana is an illustration of these costs, as it lost an estimated \$10 billion. He makes such a loss of money analogous to the entire country not working for 18 months.

While he names Great Britain as being the biggest profiteer from African wealth, Dembele charges that the U.S. is strengthening the U.S. military presence in Africa through more aggressive policies to enlist support from African countries for its 'war on terror'. Dembele makes the claim that U.S. interests on the continent have much less to do with global security than the development of energy-related resources. He postulates that American strategy will further divide African countries and is a direct threat to the unity of the continent.

In an interview with National Public Radio, Zambian-born economist Dambisa Moyo talks about growing up in what she calls the yes-we-can period of Africa. She observes that Africa has gone from a time of Pan-African confidence and dignity to one of fatalism and destitution. Interestingly, she names Africa's image problem as a reason for the current lack of Western investment. Moyo says that when Africa comes to mind, most people think of war, disease, corruption and poverty where the Chinese see opportunity. She credits China with doing tremendously well when it comes to African investment and notes that the Chinese approach to economic relationships with African countries has been markedly different than the way the West has done business with Africa in the post-colonial era.

Moyo's perception is that the West is missing out on a chance to get in on the ground floor with regard to African investment as Chinese influence and economic strength on the continent grow. She suggests that billions of dollars in aid have left Africa no better off than it was fifty years ago. In fact, Moyo believes that aid has only worsened the situation. Moyo is a very vocal critic of the current African aid model because, she says, it's based on pity that Africa doesn't need. She calls for stemming

the tide of aid to Africa and claims that China and India were poorer than many African nations just 30 years ago. However, it's not China, India or European countries that she mentions as having expertise in the areas of delivering growth and reducing poverty in Africa—she states that America knows how to do it.

Like Africa, the United States has an image problem. The February 2007 announcement of the creation of United States Africa Command sparked widespread protests across the continent clearly illustrated the nature of the problem the U.S. faces when it comes to establishing credibility there. The high esteem in which Sub-Saharan Africans seemed to hold the U.S. according to polling data seemed to crumble under the announcement of AFRICOM. Wafula Okumu says Africans, on hearing U.S. officials couch AFRICOM in humanitarian terms, remember that colonialism was preceded by philanthropic missionaries who came to fulfill God's will of rescuing Africa from the clutches of barbarism. Okumu maintains that Africa's colonial history was characterized by brutal military occupations, exploitation of its natural resources, and suppression of its people. He says that after decades of independence, these countries are now jealously guarding their sovereignty, and are highly suspicious of foreigners, even those with good intentions. Okumu says that Africans recall all the occasions that America destabilized their continent, through its support for corrupt regimes, and the perception that a lack of U.S. action contributed to tragedies such as the genocide in Rwanda and the war in Liberia. He says there is still ill feeling for the US.<sup>17</sup>

AFRICOM's strategic communication efforts should relentlessly challenge sources of inaccurate information that serve to undermine its mission. Effective outreach to African media—even those organizations and representatives that have

expressed opposition to AFRICOM-- can build relationships that can result in more accurate reporting on American military involvement on the continent. The mere act of including media in AFRICOM activities represents a transparency that is likely to be embraced as a breath of fresh air among African media.

What Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mike Mullen said about strategic communication in Afghanistan is applicable to the U.S. approach to Africa. In an article he penned for Joint Forces Quarterly magazine, <sup>18</sup> he states that America's biggest problem with communicating is a lack of credibility because the nation hasn't done enough in building trust and relationships. Admiral Mullen advocates letting actions speak for themselves and that the goal should be one of credibility, not one of being liked. The good that the U.S. does around the globe is often unfairly overshadowed by historical perspectives that can become greatly exacerbated by political and diplomatic missteps made under the microscope of world opinion. Such events have served to lessen the luster of the American image and American ideals.

Successful engagement with countries on the continent of Africa will require U.S. foreign policy that goes beyond a one-size-fits-all or cookie cutter approach. In order to realize success, America must achieve and maintain credibility among African nations, and that begins with understanding—or making a genuine attempt to understand the separate and distinct culture and history of each of the 53 nations on the continent.

Save for a few close allies in Europe, many claim that the U.S. has pretty much exhausted the bank of international goodwill. By making some hefty deposits in the form of conflict prevention, we stand a chance of breeding fewer enemies while establishing friendships and relationships that advance our interests in ways that

demonstrate true global leadership. Through stepped up security cooperation efforts, the U.S. must demonstrate that peace and prosperity are undeniably better alternatives to fighting. That demonstration must go beyond building a school here and there. It must have longevity and lasting benefit to the people. Large numbers of culturally savvy warriors engaged in the training and development of future military leaders of other nations could be a form of quiet, “uniformed diplomacy” that could pay dividends in heading off future conflicts before they start.

William L. Nash (MG, USA-Ret.) said in a Washington Post interview, “I guess I would have to begin by saying that if you've ever been shot at you too would probably be interested in preventing a reoccurrence. But I also look at it in a much larger sense that as the United States that [sic] can use our influence to prevent civil strife, it advances the interests and the prosperity of the United States, making the world less of a threat. The purpose of the Armed Forces is to defend the U.S. -- an active conflict prevention strategy may well be the best way to achieve those goals.”<sup>19</sup>

United States Africa Command, the latest American geographic combatant command—is devoted solely to Africa. It is one of the Defense Department's six regional headquarters. Africa Command is the result of an internal reorganization of the U.S. military command structure, creating one administrative headquarters that is responsible to the Secretary of Defense for U.S. military relations with 53 African countries.<sup>20</sup> The command’s mission is “in concert with other U.S. government agencies and international partners,” to conduct “sustained security engagement through military-to-military programs, military-sponsored activities, and other military operations as directed to promote a stable and secure African environment in support of U.S. foreign policy.”<sup>21</sup>

Based on the negative perception of a large U.S. military presence on African soil, one could easily argue the merits of keeping AFRICOM based in Europe.

However, in my opinion this distance hinders America's ability-- through AFRICOM—to break down the misperceptions of U.S. intent there. As discussions on the subject of AFRICOM's permanent location continue with partner nations in AFRICA, U.S. negotiators must not lose sight of the importance of the human element. If America does not expose Africans to Americans on a larger scale, there is little hope of changing the way America is viewed on the continent. This point of view may seem to fly in the face of the mantra “put an African face on all we do,” but I would suggest that there must be a balance between being visible in American actions, yet subdued in American presence. The messages coming out of the command seem to focus on achieving such harmony. According to Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for African Affairs, Theresa Whelan, the command's aim is to encourage and support African leadership and initiative – not to compete with it or discourage it. She says that US security is enhanced when African nations themselves endeavor to address and resolve emerging security issues successfully before they become so serious that they require considerable international resources and intervention to resolve. Whelan counters those who have voiced suspicions regarding U.S. intentions in Africa. It is African leaders, she says, who will continue to decide what's best for the continent's security.<sup>22</sup>

US AFRICOM's key role in conflict prevention is that of security cooperation. The Department of Defense defines security cooperation as, all Department of Defense interactions with foreign defense establishments to build defense relationships that promote specific US security interests, develop allied and friendly military capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations, and provide US forces with peacetime and contingency access to a host nation.<sup>23</sup>

No other U.S. agency is as well-suited as the Department of Defense when it comes to being able to put sheer numbers of personnel and materiel ashore anywhere on the globe. The US military is accustomed to austere conditions and to serving away from home for long periods of time. It is the most professional armed force in the world, yet only one leg of the proverbial three-legged stool of American power—Economics, Diplomacy and the Military. A true and effective strategy for conflict prevention must harness all three legs.

The concept of security cooperation is relatively new. During the Cold War, the bi-polar construct of east versus west placed many African nations into alignment with either the United States or the former Soviet Union. Non-aligned countries were courted by both superpowers. The fall of the Berlin Wall marked the beginning of the end of the Cold War, the Soviet Union and the relative clarity of world alignment. African nations that had been heavily subsidized by either the Soviet Union or the United States suddenly found themselves strategically irrelevant. The sudden power vacuum greatly contributed to instability on the continent. At a three-day conference on "US Intelligence and the End of the Cold War," held jointly between the CIA's Center for the Study of Intelligence and the Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas, 18-20 November 1999, future U.S. Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates made these remarks on November 19:

By 1987 CIA was warning policymakers of the deepening crisis in the Soviet Union and the growing likelihood of the collapse of the old order... I sent a memo to President Bush on July 18, 1989, based on...reporting from CIA. It said, the odds are growing that in the next year or two, there will be popular unrest, political turmoil, and/or official violence [that may add up to] significant political instability.<sup>24</sup>

To describe Dr Gates' comments as accurate is an understatement. He was spot-on in his assessment and eerily prophetic. Even though his comments described instability in the former Soviet empire, the ripple effects of the Soviet collapse reached the shores of Africa with devastating consequences. Almost overnight, Africa seemed to lose its strategic importance. America declared victory in the Cold War and what was left of the Soviet Union tried in vain to hold itself together. By scaling back in countries on the continent that had been targets of significant diplomatic, economic and military-to-military engagement, hindsight suggests that America, and the former Soviet Union unwittingly contributed to the terrorist threat the world faces today. Failed states and ungoverned spaces provided fertile ground for seeds of disillusionment to blossom into violent extremism. Paul Wolfowitz, former World Bank president and former US deputy defense secretary cites the roles U.S. and the Soviet Union played in supporting their various allies in the Cold War. As a result of the actions of outside entities, Wolfowitz says the reluctance of Africans to openly welcome foreign militaries to the continent is understandable.<sup>25</sup>

Haskell Ward is one of the first master's graduates from the UCLA Center for African Studies. In a lecture he delivered at the university, he said that in the strategic arena, particularly during the post-independence of the 1950s and 60s, American political relations with countries on the continent were a great disappointment to Africans. In fact, Ward maintains that in 50 years of post independent U.S. engagement with Africa, the United States government never undertook any official assessment of what its national interests really were in Africa. It was during the immediate post-independence period of high expectations and good relations that Ward says the U.S.

should have studied how its interests intersected and/or converged with those of the Europeans. More importantly, he says that the U.S. never seriously considered how these interests might diverge. Ward maintains that the missed opportunity was a chance to show the people on the continent that Americans are not Europeans. He illustrates the ripple effects of the Soviet collapse through his position that once the U.S. policy of Soviet containment was no longer relevant, America had no policy interest in Africa that was separate from those of its European allies.<sup>26</sup> In essence, America won the Cold War in the African theater, but failed to seize the opportunity presented by victory. The nation's leaders rushed to obtain a "peace dividend" by trimming the military and giving us terms like downsizing and rightsizing. Imagine how different our world might be had we increased military-to-military professional development and relationship building along with equal efforts in diplomacy and economic aid after the Cold War. Failure to engage during the rosy period that followed the independence movement and a policy of ambivalence following the Cold War, has resulted in the U.S. playing catch up when it comes to relationship building in Africa.

The world still needs a global leader, and as a hegemonic power, the United States, by default, is it whether we like it or not. All eyes look to America when the chips are down, yet many voices are quick to condemn when she sometimes steps on the toes of those with whom she shares the global dance floor. America's leadership must again become tangible and visible if it is to regain influence around the world.

In her chapter six essay in *To Lead the World—American Strategy After the Bush Doctrine*, Harvard University professor Samantha Power lists ten premises regarding American influence around the globe. Among them are:

- Some anti-Americanism is incurable.
- The very virulence of anti-Americanism reflects a disappointment in the United States but a residual appreciation for U.S. values. While China today offers internationalist mercantilist leadership, more is expected of the United States.
- Positive attitudes toward the United States will in the long term strengthen the U.S. ability to diminish the local support and sanctuary for terrorists that is the *sine qua non* of their global reach.
- American deeds matter more than American words.

Ms. Power's premises support the notion that while America will always have its detractors, American leadership in military, diplomatic and economic global engagement can restore American influence, promote goodwill, deny safe havens to terrorists and head off future conflicts.<sup>27</sup>

Anchoring a floating hospital like the USNS Mercy and sending its medical personnel ashore to a coastal African country whose inhabitants would otherwise perhaps never receive any sort of medical care, sends a vastly different message than parking an aircraft carrier off someone's shoreline. Some might argue that such a use of medical assets cannot possibly make a difference. It certainly makes a difference for those who are fortunate enough to receive care. There is also strategic significance in gestures that can be interpreted in any culture as an example of the U.S. living up to its ideals.

America's armed forces are the envy of the world. Respected by friend and foe alike, our prowess in battle is unparalleled. Yet, any barroom bully can hold their own in

a slugfest. What makes us different is our degree of professionalism and our values. The American civil-military relationship is also unique and can serve as a powerful model for military leaders who are trying to grasp the concept. Americans in uniform have lots to share with their counterparts in other countries. Military aid in the form of professional military development is an integral part of security cooperation. Nations with strong, professional and respected military forces balanced by civilian authority are much less vulnerable to upheaval and instability. Where there is security and stability, the seeds of democratic ideas have a chance to flourish.

Just as globalization is giving many countries that were previously isolated a stake in the economic success of entities beyond its borders, security has increasingly become a shared task among nations, as all share the risk of terrorism, which knows no border. Vigilant security cooperation among members of the global community not only develops more professional militaries, it builds strong bonds and is the very incarnation of Power's premise that positive attitudes about the U.S. strengthen our ability to defend against terrorists.

Building relationships based on partnership, not paternalism as articulated by President Barack Obama in a July 11, 2009 speech from Accra, Ghana, is the key. That speech, entitled *A New Moment of Promise*, outlined his administration's plans for American policy in Africa to reflect a fresh approach toward the 53 countries there. The common ground of global interdependence forms the bedrock of America's shared responsibility for the development of a stable and prosperous Africa.

America has a responsibility to work with you as a partner to advance this vision, not just with words, but with support that strengthens African capacity. When there's genocide in Darfur or terrorist in Somalia, these

are not simply African problems—they are global security challenges and they demand a global response.

And that's why we stand ready to partner through diplomacy and technical assistance and logistical support, and we will stand behind efforts to hold war criminals accountable. And let me be clear: Our Africa Command is focused not on establishing a foothold in the continent, but on confronting these common challenges to advance the security of America, Africa and the world.<sup>28</sup>

The president pledged to focus on four areas that he deemed critical to the future of Africa and the entire developing world: democracy, opportunity, health and the peaceful resolution of conflict. Of AFRICOM, he iterated that the command is not focused on establishing a foothold on the continent, but on confronting common challenges in order to advance the security of America, Africa and the world. Consistent with the goals of the AU, President Obama said in his speech that America must start from the simple premise that Africa's future is up to Africans. He clearly acknowledges the role that the West has played in the past plunder of the continent, but also holds Africans accountable for the future.<sup>29</sup> The president's new direction for Africa seems to be based on an incredibly simple principle—one of respect. The U.S. must jealously guard its intentions on the continent against misinterpretation. Okumu's paper entitled, *Clinton's Second Safari*, illustrates how then President Bill Clinton's well-intentioned visit to Tanzania was perceived—as an American invasion.

As usual, President Clinton flew in his luxurious Air Force One equipped with a jacuzzi and sauna. The landing of Air Force One at Arusha's Kilimanjaro International Airport was preceded by two other Boeing 707's, one that served as a state of the art hospital and the other that ferried the president's advance people. An hour before Clinton's landing, the flight corridor over Arusha was closed to all other users. The take-over of Tanzania was about to be completed.

The American invasion of Tanzania had started immediately when Nelson Mandela, the facilitator in the Burundi Peace Talks, innocently asked President Clinton to be a witness in the signing ceremony of the final

peace accords. When Clinton accepted the invitation, the Tanzanians were ecstatic. Little did they know that they were about to temporarily lose their sovereignty.<sup>30</sup>

It's been said that American deeds matter much more than American words when it comes to how the world views the U.S. However, it would be hard for most non-military persons to envision a foreign organization called a combatant command as something that was coming to their homeland during peacetime to help. US AFRICOM is unlike any other U.S. combatant command. Perhaps its designation should reflect those differences. Just as an aircraft carrier and a hospital ship send different messages, so do the names of organizations. The notional United States African Security Cooperation Command may have elicited a different response than United States Africa Command, which, to many may create the vision of battle-hardened Marines planting the stars and stripes atop Mount Kilimanjaro. America, blunders and missteps aside, is still admired in many African countries. AFRICOM has an opportunity to leverage that admiration. It is only a matter of time before the command moves its headquarters from Europe to Africa. When that happens, the U.S. must harness all elements of national power to make the host nation the envy of the African continent. In the meantime, AFRICOM would be better postured for success if it were to be no longer officially known as a combatant command. AFRICOM must have the funding necessary for the significant expansion of professional military development opportunities. It must also continue partnering with the AU and asking the right people the right questions, even when the "American way" seems like the only way. Including Africans in all U. S. efforts to bring peace and prosperity to the continent gets back to that important, yet incredibly simple principle—respect.

## Endnotes

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