A Measured US Strategy for the New Africa

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Foreword by James L. Jones, Jr.

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Foreword

Turmoil in traditional geopolitical hotspots—Europe, Russia, the Levant, and Asia—has distracted the United States from the numerous opportunities and challenges across the Atlantic in Africa. Over the last decade, Africa has celebrated economic growth and new levels of political and economic engagement with the United States. But the continent faces many challenges to its continued economic development, security, and governance. In this latest *Atlantic Council Strategy Paper*, Atlantic Council Vice President and Africa Center Director Dr. J. Peter Pham persuasively argues that the United States needs to modernize its relations with a changing Africa to best engage a new range of actors and circumstances.

The impact of globalization on international politics has become increasingly clear, particularly in the Middle East, Europe, and the United States. But the vast changes across Africa have perhaps been less appreciated. Since the beginning of the millennium, Africa's rising prosperity has been remarkable and its societies reshaped by rising urbanization and new technologies. Yet its future is challenged by a dramatic increase in the youth population, uneven growth, and violent spoilers wishing to turn back the tide of modernization. Moreover, governance has failed to keep step with public needs and rapid change in too many countries; indeed, poor governance is one of the major impediments to economic growth and political development. Pham rightly points out that the failure of governance in key areas across the African continent poses one of the pre-eminent foreign policy challenges for the United States and its transatlantic allies.

Through hard lessons elsewhere in the world, the United States has learned that a modern foreign policy strategy must address security, good governance, and economic prosperity holistically. This paper correctly argues that the United States must engage Africa through a whole-of-society approach which transcends government-to-government relations and leverages the contributions of civil society and business. By doing so, the United States stands the best chance of not only advancing its interests—strategic and commercial—but also of promoting its values of rule of law, democracy, and good governance. If done successfully, Pham's model for a measured approach could serve as a template for a modernized American foreign policy in an era of disruptive change.

Pham's paper makes a valuable contribution not only to the Africa policy debate, but also to the question of how the United States can adapt its 20th century diplomatic toolkit for the challenges and opportunities of the coming decades.

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Executive Summary

Africa's story is increasingly one of rising geopolitical importance and burgeoning economic dynamism—the latter driven, in part, by political reform and improvements in governance. The continent is home to some of the fastest-growing economies in the world and vast natural resources. Fifty years after a majority of them achieved their independence, many African countries have become full-fledged democracies, with regular peaceful transfers of power between governing parties and their opposition. But, there are also very real security, humanitarian, and developmental challenges that remain to be confronted, and which the United States has a stake in helping to tackle, not least because it is in its own national interest to do so.

To complicate matters, some African countries are still grappling with the conception of "statehood," since, in many cases, the state was an imposition of European colonial powers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Taking into account Africa's differing geopolitical realities, as well as US objectives on the continent, this paper argues that a measured US strategy for Africa is based on the following principles:

- **Earned engagement:** The United States should shift away from trying to pick the "right" winners in political disputes internal to African countries, and toward engaging those who prove themselves to be good bets by their effectiveness and, consequently, the legitimacy they are accorded by their own people. This approach puts the onus squarely on Africans themselves to create governance structures that are appropriate to their circumstances and whose legitimacy they accept, without prejudice from the United States or other outside actors. Accordingly, the United States should refrain from conferring *de jure* recognition on states absent such effective sovereignty.

- **More realistic expectations:** For much of the history of US engagement in Africa, the United States has operated with overly optimistic notions of what African partners are capable of and willing to do. That must change. Recent global and domestic fiscal crises, combined with the bitter partisan divide, have created a political climate—within both the United States and partners like the European Union—in which major increases in foreign aid are unlikely to be politically viable. Moreover, as elsewhere, albeit with perhaps even more pronounced effect, governments themselves are becoming less influential inside Africa with respect to what they can do and more limited in their relative capacity, leaving ample scope for the private sector. Creative ways will have

to be found to encourage business to be more engaged with efforts to develop and modernize Africa's physical and legal infrastructure—helping to consolidate important security gains in the process.

- **Effective partners and partnerships**: It is imperative that the United States develop "special" relationships with key African partners (particularly those who have demonstrated mastery of their territory and capacity for true governance through "earned engagement"), as well as better coordinate strategy and operations on the continent with historical treaty allies like France and the United Kingdom. Given the current, almost universal, constraints on public finances, the private sector must also be engaged.

- **Flexible structures:** US diplomatic and foreign aid structures are inefficient and ill-adapted to meet today's realities, and should be reformed as much as possible to reflect political, security, and economic realities on the continent.

Today's US engagement with Africa has evolved significantly from those of past times, and future objectives must include achieving economic prosperity and development, security, and good governance for Africa's fifty-four nations. Not only because US citizens and businesses hope to join with their African counterparts in grasping the continent's burgeoning opportunities, but because these objectives are, indeed, in the United States' strategic interests. The United States needs to integrate the four principles espoused in this paper—earned engagement, more realistic expectations, effective partners and partnerships, and flexible structures—to manage the challenges, and overcome the threats to security, which would otherwise block the path to an incredibly promising future.

Introduction

Although the episodes have largely receded from the nation's historical consciousness, Africa played a formative role in the development of the nascent foreign policy of the early American republic. In 1777, Morocco's Sultan Mohammed III was the first foreign sovereign to recognize the independence of the thirteen former British colonies. The subsequent 1786 Treaty of Peace and Friendship—signed on behalf of the United States by two future presidents, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson—is still in force more than two centuries later (with additional security and commercial protocols dating from 1836), making the pact the United States' longest unbroken treaty relationship. In the immediate post-independence period, no overseas challenge had a more transformative impact on US political evolution than the threat from the "Barbary Pirates" of the semiautonomous Ottoman regencies of Tripoli, Tunis, and Algiers, which, as historian Michael Oren has noted, "prompted the former colonies to coalesce and pool their resources, to create naval strength and project it far from America's shores."[1] The first permanent overseas deployment of the US Navy was its West Africa Squadron, established by the Webster-Ashburton Treaty of 1842 and operative until the Civil War, wherein the United States committed to constantly maintaining at least eighty guns off Africa's Atlantic coast in conjunction with the British Royal Navy's efforts to suppress the slave trade.

Nevertheless, the years after that initial burst of engagement saw Africa largely disappear from the strategic calculus of US policymakers. The exception was the Cold War, when there were episodic alarms over Soviet attempts to secure footholds on the continent. The *zeitgeist* captured in the great realist international relations theorist Hans Morgenthau's *diktat* that "the United States has in Africa no specific political or military interests"[2] was echoed five decades later, both by the Bill Clinton administration's Pentagon strategy document for the continent, which declared there to be "very little traditional strategic interest in Africa" and that "America's security interests in Africa are very limited,"[3] and by then-candidate George W. Bush's assertion to an interviewer that "while Africa may be important, it doesn't fit into the national strategic interests as far as I can see them."[4] Yet, once in the White House, it was President Bush himself who, in 2007, directed the Defense Department to create a unified combatant command, the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM), covering the entire African continent (although primary responsibility for military relations with Egypt would remain with the Central Command). In the succeeding administration, a new Africa strategy document affirmed that "Africa is more important than ever to the security and prosperity of the international

community, and to the United States in particular" and President Barack Obama himself convened the first-ever US-Africa Leaders Summit in 2014, the largest gathering of African heads of state and government ever hosted by an American president.[5] Why the shift?

At the end of the Cold War, all but a handful of the continent's states were ruled by one-party—if not one-man—regimes. Up to 1990, aside from the internal politics of the apartheid regime in South Africa, exactly one African leader—Somalia's Aden Abdulle Osman Daar back in 1967—had ever left office through electoral defeat, and only three—Léopold Sédar Senghor of Senegal, Ahmadou Ahidjo of Cameroon, and Julius Nyerere of Tanzania—had retired voluntarily.[6] In contrast, by the turn of the century, virtually every African state had opened up at least some space for political competition—Eritrea is the sole exception and, not surprisingly, in 2015 accounted for the second-largest group (after Syria) of migrants risking their lives to reach Europe, despite being a microstate with a population estimated at less than six million. Many African states have subsequently become full-fledged democracies, with regular peaceful transfers of power between governing parties and their opposition, with some countries experiencing such transitions multiple times in recent years.

Africa's economic progress over that same period has been even more impressive. Today, the continent is home to some of fastest-growing economies in the world, including no fewer than six of the World Bank's short list of thirteen highest compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) countries from 2014-2017, with Ethiopia posting the highest CAGR globally at 9.7 percent.[7] Demand from abroad, especially emerging markets like China and India, for its primary commodities has boosted prices and, in turn, motivated new investment in exploration and extraction. *Inter alia*, Africa holds 95 percent of the world's reserves of platinum group metals, 90 percent of its chromite ore reserves, and 80 percent of its phosphate rock reserves, as well as more than half of its cobalt and one-third of its bauxite. Its proven petroleum reserves have increased by 40 percent in the last decade, in contrast to the downward trends observed almost everywhere else. Moreover, African agriculture is growing in importance as demand for food by the developing world's rising, and increasingly affluent, populations surges, even as local resources elsewhere diminish (Africa contains more than half of the world's unused arable land). Admittedly, the starting points for some African countries are relatively low and, in some of them, much of the boom has been driven by potentially fickle demand for their commodities. Nonetheless, a significant proportion of the growth is due to deeper, long-term trends, including demographics (e.g., by 2050, one in four workers in the world will be an African; some of the world's fastest-growing urbanization rates mean lower basic infrastructure costs and concentrated consumer markets) and technology (e.g., the rapid expansion of mobile telephony, and Internet usage growth rates five times global averages over the last decade). Where African countries used to be written off as "risky" bets or thought of only as sources for raw natural resources, robust GDP-growth rates—coupled with improved regulatory and commercial environments—have made the continent an increasingly attractive place to do business.

World's twenty fastest-growing economies

Annual average real GDP growth, %

2011–2015		2016–2020*	
Turkmenistan	10.6	Bhutan	9.2
Mongolia	10.3	**Libya**	**8.1**
Ethiopia	**10.1**	Myanmar	7.8
Uzbekistan	8.1	India	7.7
Panama	7.9	**Côte d'Ivoire**	**7.7**
China	7.9	**Ethiopia**	**7.3**
Laos	7.8	Laos	7.3
Democratic Republic of the Congo	**7.8**	**Tanzania**	**6.9**
Ghana	7.7	**Senegal**	**6.9**
Myanmar	7.4	Bangladesh	6.9
Cambodia	7.2	Cambodia	6.8
Mozambique	7.1	Philippines	6.8
Rwanda	7.0	**Rwanda**	**6.7**
Tajikistan	7.0	**Djibouti**	**6.7**
Ireland	7.0	**Kenya**	**6.3**
Tanzania	**6.9**	**Ghana**	**6.3**
India	6.7	Vietnam	6.2
Bangladesh	6.4	China	6.1
Zimbabwe	**6.4**	**Niger**	**6.1**
Côte d'Ivoire	**6.3**	**Mozambique**	**6.0**

Source: World Bank   *Forecast

Although the story of Africa is increasingly one of economic dynamism—driven, in part, by political reform and improvements in governance—there are very real security, humanitarian, and developmental challenges that remain to be confronted, and which the United States has a stake in helping to tackle, not least because it is in its own national interest to do so.

The potential for Africa's poorly governed spaces to be exploited to provide facilitating environments, recruits, and eventual targets for terrorists and other nonstate actors has long been recognized. As the 2002 *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* noted,

US President Barack Obama and former President George W. Bush attend a memorial for the victims of the 1998 US Embassy bombing in Dar es Salaam July 2, 2013. Behind them are some survivors of the attack. *REUTERS/Jason Reed.*

"Weak states...can pose as great a danger to our national interests as strong states. Poverty does not make poor people into terrorists and murderers. Yet poverty, weak institutions, and corruption can make weak states vulnerable to terrorist networks and drug cartels within their borders."[8] With the possible exception of the wider Middle East (including Afghanistan and Pakistan), nowhere did this analysis seem more applicable than Africa, where, as the document went on to acknowledge, regional conflicts arising from a variety of causes—including poor governance, external aggression, competing claims, internal revolt, and ethnic and religious tensions—all "lead to the same ends: failed states, humanitarian disasters, and ungoverned areas that can become safe havens for terrorists."

The 1998 attacks by al-Qaeda on the US embassies in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and Nairobi, Kenya—as well as the countless attacks that have followed, most of them targeting Africans—focused attention on the deadly reality of the terrorist threat in Africa, as did the "rebranding" of Algerian Islamist terrorist organization GSPC (*Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat*, Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat) as "the Organization for Jihad in the Land of the Islamic Maghreb" ("Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb," AQIM). So have the ongoing activities of various militant Islamist movements in the territory of the former Somali Democratic Republic,

including al-Shabaab, another al-Qaeda-linked group, which has carried out deadly attacks across the East Africa region. Despite some success in turning the tide against both groups, the fight is far from over. This is underscored by an AQIM splinter group's attack on Algeria's In Amenas gas plant in January 2013 that left at least thirty-nine foreign hostages dead, as well as al-Shabaab's attacks on Nairobi's Westgate Mall in September 2013 and Garissa University College in April 2015, which left more than sixty-seven and 148 dead, respectively—to say nothing of the September 2012 attack on the US diplomatic compound in Benghazi, Libya, that took the lives of US Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens and three other American diplomatic and intelligence officials. Jihadist terrorists continue to demonstrate their destructive capabilities across the African continent. Given how many of these groups increasingly interact with each other, terrorism will likely remain one of the top security challenges in Africa for the foreseeable future.

Closely related to terrorism is the danger posed by the lack of effective sovereignty that bedevils some African governments. In Mali, for example, ethnic Tuareg fighters trying to carve out a separate homeland in the country's north unwitting precipitated, in 2012, the overthrow of the constitutional government and the takeover of more than half the nation's territory by AQIM and aligned Islamist movements (both these setbacks were reversed following a French-led military intervention in 2013). In Nigeria, militants from the extremist Boko Haram sect, which subsequently aligned itself with the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) in 2015, seized control of a remote area along the country's northeastern border and used that enclave to launch not only assaults against government forces in Nigeria, but also cross-border raids into Niger, Chad, and Cameroon. As these examples demonstrate, the challenge emanates from insurgents seeking, however unrealistically, to overthrow established regimes or carve out new polities. In other cases, the threat is criminal in nature, whether in the form of piracy and other brigandage, or in that of trafficking, human or material. The Somali piracy threat has been heavily diminished—the waters off the Somali coast witnessed just two attacks in 2015 and three attacks in 2014, a considerable decrease from the seventy-five and 237 actual and attempted seizures of merchant ships recorded in 2012 and 2011, respectively—due to the ramped-up presence of armed guards on ships, international naval patrols, and, perhaps more marginally, the influence of the government reestablished in Mogadishu thanks to the efforts of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), which has been heavily backed by the United States and the international community. On the other hand, attacks on commercial shipping have been on the uptick in the Gulf of Guinea. Moreover, West Africa has seen an explosion in drug trafficking, both as transshipments toward Europe and other destinations and, even more worrisome, for local consumption. Former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan and former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo recently teamed up to produce a report that estimated the scale of the cocaine trade through West Africa alone amounted to more than $1.25 billion per annum—a sum that dwarfs the combined state budgets of several countries

in the subregion—and warned that it "undermines institutions, threatens public health, and damages development efforts."[9]

As detailed above, US objectives in Africa should focus on promoting economic prosperity and development, strengthening security and stability, and encouraging good governance—as ends in themselves and because doing so is in the national interest. Taking these priorities into account, this paper argues that a measured US strategy for Africa includes the following elements: earned engagement, more realistic expectations, effective partners and partnerships, and flexible structures.

Differing African Geopolitical Realities

With a few notable exceptions—including Egypt, with its millennial memories stretching back to the dawn of human civilization; Ethiopia, which, thanks to the Emperor Menelik II's defeat of an invading Italian army at the Battle of Adwa in 1896, was the only African country to preserve its independence during the great scramble for the continent; and Morocco, with its royal dynasty whose presence in the country harks back to the thirteenth century and whose suzerainty dates to the seventeenth century—in most of Africa, the state is the result of European colonialism. Consequently, the challenge for most African states since independence has been how to refashion what French political scientist Bertrand Badie has called the "imported state" into a stable arrangement that will also be accepted by its citizens as legitimate, as well as sufficiently performing the basic functions of modern Westphalian statehood, including control over national territory, oversight of natural resources, effective and rational collection of revenue, maintenance of adequate national infrastructure, and capacity to govern and maintain law and order, including respect for citizens' basic human rights.[10] As the late British Africanist Patrick Chabal, the premier biographer of the Luso-African revolutionary Amílcar Cabral, once observed:

> Once the nationalists had gained independence and captured the state, they faced the difficult prospect of building on foundations which were rarely as solid as they would have wished them to be. Few African countries were "natural" nation-states, that is geographically, ecologically, ethnically, culturally, economically, socially or politically homogenous, cohesive or even coherent. Most are amalgams or patchworks, with predictable consequences for the nation-builders. Some were hardly plausible candidates for nationhood. In almost all cases, therefore, the task of constructing an African nation-state was difficult, on balance more difficult (though in different ways) than it had been in Europe, Asia or Latin America.[11]

Thus, even as the end of colonial rule meant the international community's recognition of their *juridical* statehood, African states immediately faced the task of establishing *effective* sovereignty.[12] More than half a century after most of them became independent, the varying degrees to which they have succeeded or failed in this enterprise define the geopolitical realities of the African continent.
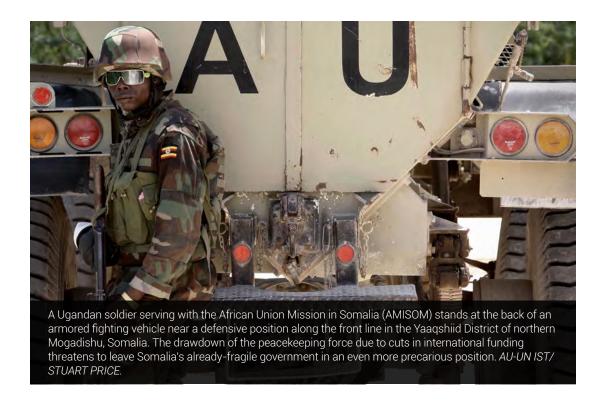
Pre-Westphalian Africa

Perhaps alone among the regions of the world, Africa is still characterized by large areas that could be described as *pre-Westphalian*, where central governments face a continuing struggle to establish even a modicum of dominion over national territory. The most extreme example is Somalia. It has been more than a quarter of a century since strongman Muhammad Siyad Barre packed himself inside the last functioning tank belonging to his once-puissant military and ignominiously fled Mogadishu in early 1991, leaving behind a capital in ruins and caught in the throes of uncontrolled street violence. In that time, Somalia has been the prime example of what political scientist Robert Rotberg has termed a "collapsed state": a "rare and extreme version of the failed state" that is "a geographical expression, a black hole into which a failed polity has fallen," where "there is dark energy, but the forces of entropy have overwhelmed the radiance that hitherto provided some semblance of order and other vital political goods to the inhabitants (no longer the citizens) embraced by language or ethnic affinities or borders."[13] The country has stubbornly resisted no fewer than fifteen attempts to reconstitute a central government, and the sixteenth such undertaking, the internationally backed Federal Republic of Somalia after more than four years in office, just barely manages to control the capital and parts of the southeastern littoral. Even that much is only thanks to the presence of more than twenty-two thousand troops—predominantly Ugandan, Burundian, Djiboutian, Kenyan, and Ethiopian—who make up the United Nations-authorized African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).[14] The precariousness of the Somali regime is understood by the advances made by al-Shabaab in 2016, as AMISOM troop-contributing countries withdrew or repositioned their forces in response to either their own needs for the units or cuts in international funding for the peacekeeping deployment.

If Somalia is a case in which the nation-state has ceased to exist, Africa's newest country, South Sudan, is one where it could be said to be stillborn. Having been allowed to secede from Sudan in July 2011 following a referendum earlier in the year—the plebiscite itself was the product of an internationally brokered peace agreement ending decades of civil war—South Sudan was just two years old when its political elites fell out with one another and plunged the country into a new conflict that continues unabated, displacing almost one-fifth of the population of 12 million.

In other places, where the state is more than a mere legal fiction, its writ is nevertheless often not quite uniform across national territory, with fairly significant areas beyond the core where a pre-Westphalian order may be said to prevail. Even though the French-led Opération Serval ousted a coalition of ethnic Tuareg separatists and militant groups aligned with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb in early 2013, permitting the holding of elections that restored constitutional order, the resulting government of Mali still has difficulty asserting its control over the northern half of the country, an area roughly the size of Poland. The fifteen-thousand-strong UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) has become the most

A Ugandan soldier serving with the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) stands at the back of an armored fighting vehicle near a defensive position along the front line in the Yaaqshiid District of northern Mogadishu, Somalia. The drawdown of the peacekeeping force due to cuts in international funding threatens to leave Somalia's already-fragile government in an even more precarious position. *AU-UN IST/ STUART PRICE.*

dangerous peacekeeping deployment in the world, reduced largely to garrison duty in a few towns across the sparsely populated area.[15]

Similarly, former BBC correspondent in Abuja, Andrew Walker, who worked for nearly a decade as a journalist in Nigeria, summarized his account of the problems that beset that West African state that allowed Boko Haram to thrive in the following manner:

> This, it could be said, is the "new normal". In a way this is the real connection between Nigeria and the Islamic State; northern Nigeria, like parts of Iraq and Syria, is a geographical space where the idea, the commonly agreed rules of the modern nation state, formed in the post-War period by the European colonial powers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, no longer apply.[16]

Westphalian Africa

Where the nation-state has been established in Africa—or, at least, taken root—there is considerable variation in the experience. In some places, strong states with considerable governance capacity have been established. Rwanda, for example, has made tremendous

strides in the two decades since the 1994 genocide not only cost the lives of a significant portion of the country's population, but also produced dramatic economic dislocation. The process of rebuilding the country's social and political institutions, as well as its infrastructure, has been, by most accounts, transformative to the extent that the World Bank ranks the small, landlocked country as the second-easiest place in Sub-Saharan Africa to do business (after Mauritius).[17] But, for every such example of progress that can be invoked, too many countries still fall under political scientist Pierre Englebert's damning *j'accuse*:

> Most of them…have not brought about or facilitated much economic or human development for their populations since independence. Often, they have caused their people much havoc, misery, uncertainty, and fear. With some exceptions, African states have been, mildly or acutely, the enemies of Africans. Parasitic or predatory, they suck resources out of their societies. At the same time, weak and dysfunctional, many of them are unable or unwilling to sustainably provide the rule of law, safety, and basic property rights that have, since Hobbes, justified the very existence of states in the modern world.[18]

The tragic story of how Africa has fallen prey to what Ghanaian-born economist George Ayittey memorably termed its "vampire elites" is all too well known, and the subject of a sadly vast literature, to which some of the most distinguished and creative scholars of Africa have contributed.[19] What is more rarely considered is why, if they have so manifestly failed to carry out even the most basic of their responsibilities, Africa's states have nonetheless endured. The African continent is actually quite exceptional for having retained essentially unchanged borders fixed in the late nineteenth century, a feat that international society has repeated nowhere else— not even in Latin America, where the international juridical principle of *uti possidetis* originated in the affirmation of the boundaries inherited by the states newly independent from the Spanish empire.[20] This dogged persistence is all the more remarkable when one considers not only the contrived and artificial nature of the African state, but the surreal expectation that the continent's post-independence leaders would somehow forge out of heterogeneous groups of peoples and cultures polities that were not only stable, but would also be accepted by their citizens as legitimate, and thus would, hopefully, be sufficiently empowered by them to exercise the minimal functions of statehood.

Yet, despite their poor initial prospects, African states have evinced a striking resilience that continually confounds those who expect the imminent demise of the less functional ones. Part of the explanation may be found in the international community's recognition of the "juridical statehood" of the former colonial possessions, and how that sovereignty on the international level enabled regimes to resist domestic challenges to their rule. Perversely, there are also advantages to be had by potential regime challengers, if they maintain the legal cover of failed, but nonetheless "sovereign," states for "shadow" transactions that they could arbitrage to their

profit.[21] During the Liberian civil wars between 1989 and 2003, for example, the various warlords were "not constrained by the traditional requirements of a state actor and, consequently, enjoyed the advantages of a global market while the *de jure* governments in Monrovia were saddled with its disadvantages, including accountability for past sovereign debt."[22]

These explanations do not, however, address why those who are marginalized by the African state and not in a position to exploit its weaknesses do not challenge the state itself, but instead generally limit themselves to taking issue with its representatives. As Englebert notes, "even the few separatist insurgencies among Africa's rebellions also reproduce the postcolonial state to the extent that they usually call for the independence of their region on the grounds of a past colonial existence,"[23] citing the examples of Eritrea, Somaliland, and the Western Sahara.[24]

Even a state that cannot perform its functions nevertheless retains "a residual of command," in that the institutions and officers of the failed state continue to carry some authority. That is to say, what endures in these African states is legal command, the capacity to control, dominate, extract, or dictate through invocation of "the law"—the very state functions that depend most on Westphalian sovereignty, rather than domestic institutional effectiveness. Thus, for example, the case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo whose president, Joseph Kabila, has, as Englebert has documented more recently, "turned the democratically elected government into an increasingly authoritarian and repressive regime and is apparently intent on staying in power beyond the limits set by his own constitution.[25]

Westphalia-Plus Africa

Even given the persistence of African states with differing results in terms of legitimacy, institutional strength, governance capacity, and overall effectiveness, other entities are emerging that hold increasing geopolitical and economic relevance, both as complements to and substitutes for the Westphalian state. In Africa, this is happening at the supranational and subnational levels—within governments and, parallel to them, in the private sector, whether civil society or business.

If the African Union's lofty ambitions of binding the continent's diverse countries and peoples together in a "United States of Africa" are still a long way from fulfillment, regional blocs are nonetheless boosting economic links and, more and more, political ties between African states. For example, the East African Community (Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda) was established as a customs union in 2005, and became a common market five years later, when barriers to the free movement of people and capital were abolished. The grouping's long-term objectives are a common monetary union and a political federation. But, in the meantime, their heads of state meet bimonthly to ease nontariff barriers to increased commercial integration.[26]

One set of issues which African countries face that requires of them joint action above and beyond the nation-state are those related to the continent's particular vulnerability to climate

change and climate variability—a rather ironic twist that, given that it is the region of the world arguably least responsible for carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions that cause global warming, Africa nonetheless stands to be the most severely impacted by the phenomenon—manifested in compounded stress on water resources in some regions and reduced crop productivity with concomitant adverse effects on livelihoods and food security in others, among other potential consequences.

Although often overlooked, subnational governmental entities are the primary means through which African states manage—or fail to manage—the immense linguistic, religious, and tribal diversity found within their inherited colonial frontiers. They are vehicles for the empowerment or exclusion of local subgroups and communities: they can unite, or divide; they can distribute resources for the benefit of the broader community, or extract resources for the enrichment of a few. Overall, decentralization is a significant trend across the continent: most African countries now hold subnational elections, often at multiple levels (local or municipal, district, and regional); nearly half of African countries reference local governance in the national constitution; and a significant majority of African states have some form of intergovernmental transfer of resources from the national to the regional and local level. Quantitatively, the number of municipalities and local governments, as well as the territory they govern, has expanded considerably. Qualitatively, central governments are increasingly ceding a greater amount of autonomy and a larger set of responsibilities to local institutions, including tasks involving education, health, water and sanitation, urban planning, and transportation.

Moreover, Africa is the second-fastest urbanizing continent, behind only Asia. By 2030, the number of Africans living in rural and urban settings will be roughly equal; just two decades later, more than 60 percent of Africans will live in cities.[27] To put this rapid transformation in comparative context, it took Europe more than a century, from 1800 to 1910, to move from 15 percent of the population living in cities to 40 percent; Africa made the same transition in half the time, between 1950 and 2010.[28] Currently, three African cities—Lagos, Cairo, and Kinshasa—are considered "megacities," having more than ten million inhabitants. In the not-too-distant future, they will be joined by several others—among them, Johannesburg, Nairobi, Dar es Salaam, Khartoum, and Casablanca.[29]

This urbanizing trend offers a number of tantalizing opportunities, including the agglomeration effects of economies of scale, the promise of new leap frogging technologies, and the energy of vibrant, youthful populations. At the same time, new challenges arise, such as the massive demographic, economic, and political shifts that alter longstanding balances within African societies and polities.[30] Moreover, if the growth of cities is not correlated to poverty reduction, as has been the historical case in other regions, Africa's breakneck urbanization could well presage new concerns about security and stability.

Global Interests

Once, with the exception of the fierce Cold War-era competition between the United States and the Soviet Union, the international relations of African states were predominated by their continuing links to the former colonial powers. Nowadays, both global powers—including China, India, and Russia—and major regional players—including Turkey, the Gulf Arab states, and, recently, Israel—have become heavily engaged in the continent, attracted by its natural resources, economic potential, and increasing geopolitical heft.[31]

For example, the return to Africa of China, which had largely withdrawn its once-promising links as it went through the throes of the Cultural Revolution, is an apt case study. Under Jiang Zemin, China launched a national strategy of "going out" (*zouchuqu zhanlue*) to secure access to stable supplies of raw materials and natural resources needed to sustain the country's rapid economic development—and to forestall any social instability. Chinese firms were actively encouraged to explore investment opportunities abroad and open up new markets by establishing either joint ventures or wholly Chinese-owned subsidiaries in various countries. This policy was reaffirmed under Jiang's successor, Hu Jintao. In the midst of the global economic downturn in 2009, his administration used its vast foreign exchange reserves, the largest in the world, to accelerate overseas expansion by Chinese companies, particularly in Africa. Trade boomed between African countries and China, with some 12.5 percent of all African exports going to China. In 2009, China overtook the United States as the continent's largest trading partner, with an annual bilateral volume of trade exceeding $200 billion, although that has shrunk with the subsequent slowdown of the Chinese economy.[32]

Paralleling China's growing commercial links across Africa are its expanding political and security interests. If Africa's abundant natural resources are critical for maintaining China's "peaceful rise" (*heping jueqi*) in the world, then certainly African states, which together constitute the largest regional bloc in many international organizations, are just as integral to Beijing's long-term grand strategy of promoting its version of "democracy in international relations" (*guoji guanzi minzhuhua*)—that is, a more multipolar political and economic global order. China currently has diplomatic relations with fifty-one of Africa's fifty-four states.[33] Moreover, after having long taken a dim view of international peacekeeping missions, China has become increasingly involved in international peacekeeping, to the point that the number of People's Liberation Army (PLA) personnel currently participating in UN stability-and-security operations is roughly equal to the combined total of the other four permanent members of the UN Security Council. Roughly four-fifths of the Chinese personnel are assigned to missions on the African continent, where they have garnered not insignificant tactical, operational, and strategic advantages from their experiences. In addition, since January 2009, vessels of China's People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) have been operating almost continuously in the Gulf of Aden and other waters off Somalia, as part of a multinational naval effort to counter Somali piracy. By all

accounts, the PLAN has cooperated with other forces in antipiracy operations, including the United States-led Combined Task Force 151 and the European Union Naval Force Somalia's Operation Atalanta. However, it is also true that the continuous deployment—as of mid-2016, the twenty-third Chinese task force was on station—has the double advantage of providing the Chinese military with an opportunity to develop a long-range expeditionary capability, while at the same time advancing a number of wider Chinese interests off the East African littoral.[34] In turn, the naval deployment has provided the pretext for the announcement, in November 2015, of the establishment of China's first overseas military installation anywhere, a "logistics facility" in the strategically-located Horn of Africa country of Djibouti, a development that has to be interpreted in the context of the increasingly assertive foreign policy posture of current Chinese leader Xi Jinping.[35]

Elements of a Measured Strategy

I f "Africa is more important than ever to the security and prosperity of the international community, and to the United States in particular," as President Obama affirmed in his administration's 2012 policy guidance on Sub-Saharan Africa—a perspective, it is worth noting, that is the subject of rare agreement between the 2016 platforms of both the Democratic and Republican Parties—then the United States must engage the states and peoples of the continent, as well as the aspirations they nurture and the challenges they face, as that document acknowledged: [36]

> The United States will partner with…African countries to pursue the following interdependent and mutually reinforcing objectives: (1) strengthen democratic institutions; (2) spur economic growth, trade, and investment; (3) advance peace and security; and (4) promote opportunity and development. Across all objectives, we will: deepen our engagement with Africa's young leaders; seek to empower marginalized populations and women; address the unique needs of fragile and post-conflict states; and work closely with the U.N. and other multilateral actors to achieve our objectives on the continent. [37]

But if these have been generally accepted as the broad pillars of American policy, how do they translate into strategic terms? Such an inquiry represents a break with the past when, with the exception of the Cold War period, when strategists worried about attempts by the Soviets and their allies to secure a foothold on the continent, US interests in Africa had historically been framed almost exclusively in terms of preoccupation with the humanitarian consequences of poverty, war, and natural disaster, rather than classical strategic considerations. Moral impulses, however, rarely had the staying power to sustain anything beyond episodic attention. It is worth recalling that, in 1995, barely one year after the Rwandan genocide, some Pentagon planners argued in an official position paper that the United States should hold itself aloof from engagement on the African continent, for lack of what they deemed to be "traditional strategic interest." [38]

If the desired end state is an Africa where African peoples and institutions can secure for themselves a viable market economy, rule of law, democratic institutions, and robust development—and, thus, are stakeholders in a stable international system—the short-term goal must to be to give priority to assuring populations basic security and essential services in

A lone giraffe against the backdrop of the Nairobi city skyline. Nairobi, which is set to join the ranks of Africa's megacities, is increasingly a global-level hub for technology innovation, attracting international tech giants such as Google, IBM, Intel, Microsoft, and Nokia to set up shop in the Kenyan capital and contribute what is now more than 8 percent of the country's gross domestic product. *Photo by WL Davies/ Getty Images.*

order to establish or maintain order in the continent's states and regions. Of course, this twenty-first-century US "grand strategy" for an Africa at peace and integrated into the global community will necessarily be characterized by a holistic approach that embraces a broader notion of human security writ large—encompassing social, economic, and political development. Often, this must also transcend national and other artificial boundaries, as well as claims of sovereignty that do not conform with geopolitical reality. This strategy's elements would include: earned engagement, more realistic expectations, effective partners and partnerships, and flexible structures.

Earned Engagement

As the authors of the first *Atlantic Council Strategy Paper* affirmed succinctly, "An interstate system that is not malleable enough to adjust when power shifts will likely be torn asunder by its very brittleness."[39] The work of Pierre Englebert has shown the perverse effect across much of Africa of international recognition preceding any demonstration of effective sovereignty, rather than coming as a consequence of it. He explains that even a state that cannot perform its functions nevertheless retains "a residual of command," in that "the institutions and officers

of the failed state continue to carry some authority."[40] That is to say, in the majority of African states, where regime legitimacy is tenuous at best, and the means of violence readily available, international recognition still confers something of value: "Because the state is defined by its legality rather than its effectiveness, this power of command survives its failure or the erosion of its effective capacity."[41] Thus, Englebert describes the situation in the rather ironically named Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where he has carried out extensive field research:

> In the DRC, the national hierarchy of command includes ministers, secretaries-general, directors, division chiefs, and bureau chiefs. It continues at the provincial and urban levels with chiefs of provincial divisions, provincial bureau chiefs, section and cell chiefs, chiefs of urban services, chiefs of sections and cells, and chiefs of subsections and subcells. Communal administrations add layers. In Lubumbashi, for example, city officials include mayors, burgmeisters, chiefs of neighborhoods (*quartiers*), chiefs of cells, and street chiefs. Each *street* thus has a chief who is in some measure an agent of the state. Of course, there are also innumerable people in nonchiefly positions at all these levels, who carry authority over regular citizens, including clerks, advisers, assistants, secretaries, and more. In each case, the major function of these administrative layers is command, the ordering around of people.[42]

In contrast, although nonsovereign actors can regulate activities in areas they control, they face the constraint that they need to retain effective control in order to command anything, and hence cannot distribute and devolve power to their supporters the way a sovereign state can. Furthermore, the state's prerogative of legal command assures those in formal positions of authority that they can trade on their offices:

> Not only does sovereignty maintain the state's exchange value, but it does so, like an overvalued currency, at an artificially high level, unwarranted by the state's weakness. Without sovereignty, the largely incapable institutions of weak states would be mostly devoid of command and thus broadly worthless in terms of personal power and private appropriation. As a result, they would likely confront institutional competition. But sovereignty shields them from such competition and confers upon them monopoly rents, offering those associated with them benefits above and beyond their social utility. State agents are thereby able to extract a sovereign surplus from their fellow citizens.[43]

Englebert rounds out his clear, but sober, analysis with what he calls his "rational policy fantasies."[44] Recalling both the colonial origins of African states and that it is "our recognition

US Marines and Ghanaian soldiers conduct training during a 2014 iteration of Exercise Western Accord, a partnership between the United States and the Economic Community of West African States, designed to increase interoperability between military forces and ensure the common ability to conduct peace operations through Western Africa. *Photo by US Army Africa/Sgt. William Gore.*

of states limits what policies are possible," he suggests a logical conclusion to the evidence his research has amassed: [45]

> Wipe away this sovereignty bias with a blanket removal of Africa's postcolonial states. Considering them to be the contemporary manifestation of colonialism, one could simply refuse to recognize them. This is not to imply that one could not trade with their producers, arrange air links with them, or develop other forms of economic interactions, but there would be no diplomatic recognition... While African rulers would certainly attack such a policy as a disregard for their people's sovereignty, it is really only their own prerogatives as sovereign rulers that would be affected. [46]

Similarly, several years ago, during the height of the flailing counterinsurgency effort in Somalia, when the terrorist group al-Shabaab controlled most of the southern and central parts of the country while the country's government seemed capable of only siphoning off international assistance—one audit found 96 percent of bilateral aid was unaccounted for—Bronwyn Bruton and this report's author argued for a policy of "earned engagement" toward Somalia:

> The United States should remember first and foremost that most of the conflicts that have wreaked havoc on Somalia for the last few decades have been magnified by the attempts of outsiders—from the well-intentioned humanitarians of the 1990s to the brutal foreign jihadists more recently—to determine their outcome by endorsing and funding one side. Such efforts have stoked the fires of Somali resentment, and worse, have incentivized winner-take-all competition over resources (namely, foreign aid). Instead, the United States could engage Somali leaders instrumentally, agnostic in regard to the identity of the potential winners and losers. The various Somali actors—governmental entities, regional authorities, clans, and civil society organizations—would be accorded equal access to international resources, but only to the extent that they prove themselves capable of meeting defined benchmarks and of absorbing the assistance that would be provided them for relief and development...The leaders engaged under this proposal would, in effect, earn aid by proving their legitimacy with constituents. The aid they receive and distribute would, in turn, reinforce those bonds.[47]

By shifting away from trying to pick the "right" winners, and toward rewarding those who prove themselves to be good bets by their effectiveness and, consequently, the legitimacy they are accorded by their own people, an "earned engagement" approach has the advantage of drawing upon African traditions of bottom-up governance. It puts the onus squarely on Africans themselves to create governance structures that suit them, without prejudice from the United States or other outside actors. Because the policy is agnostic, and would not seek to enshrine one set of leaders over any other, engagement would be far less likely to trigger the kind of winner-take-all response that Englebert and others have documented.

Moreover, according formal recognition absent effective sovereignty can be inimical to the best interests of Africans as well as US security, as the case of Somalia illustrates. While the United States, for example, never formally severed relations with Somalia after the Siyad Barre regime collapsed in 1991, it has also never officially recognized any of the fifteen transitional governments that followed. This policy, followed by both Democratic and Republican administrations, was confirmed by the Obama administration as recently as 2010, when, in a brief filed with the US Supreme Court, then Solicitor-General Elena Kagan and the Legal Advisor of the State Department acknowledged that "since the fall of that government, the United States has not recognized any entity as the government of Somalia."[48] The result was greater legal and diplomatic leeway for US actions against threats emanating from Somalia, including terrorists and pirates. In January 2013, shortly before she left office, then-Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton reversed course and recognized the government of Hassan Sheikh Mohamud that had been installed in Mogadishu a few months earlier after a dubious process that included the open buying and selling of seats in the parliament that "elected" the president.[49] While

the switch changed the context governing US actions in Somalia, it is hard to make the case that the Somali regime, which at the time of writing has already overstayed its mandate, is much more effective or legitimate than its predecessors. Diplomatic recognition constrains the freedom of operation for US forces combating terrorists and other threats in the territory of the former Somali state, but, given the weakness of the current regime and its lack of broad legitimacy, brings little, if any, strategic advantage in exchange for those limitations.

One of the more contradictory episodes in recent history was when, during the long struggle to contain the threat posed by the collapse of the Somali state, the international community largely preferred to back successive "national" governments with virtually no effective capacity, while spurning effective local polities like the self-proclaimed Republic of Somaliland and the Puntland State, which had achieved relatively high levels of success in their state-building projects and provided their peoples—and, by extension, neighboring states—with security, while repressing both terrorist insurgents and criminal activities like piracy.[50]

A more open, dynamic approach to such actors applies at every level, from regional blocs to nation-states, to subnational entities like provinces or cities, as well as traditional social structures whose enduring relevance is especially marked in Africa.

More Realistic Expectations

If a pragmatic strategic approach to Africa means a broader conceptualization of those to be engaged, it also entails a more modest expectation of what outside powers like the United States should anticipate from them in terms of performance. In another paper in this series, political scientist Stephen Krasner makes the case for "good enough governance"—that is, objectives that are realistically achievable because they enhance, or at least do not threaten, the core interests of elites in the countries involved: security, including tolerance, if not full inclusion, of potentially dissenting groups; provision of some public services; and economic change, or at least job creation.[51]

For much of the history of US engagement in Africa, the United States has operated with overly optimistic notions of what Americans and their African partners, whether unilaterally or together, are capable of and/or willing to do. This overly optimistic outlook on the potential of our partnerships has been detrimental to assessing challenges—and opportunities—on the continent with clear eyes.

Achieving security is a precondition for development; without noteworthy progress on the latter, the former is, at best, illusory. Hence, as the Pentagon has formally recognized, "stability operations" are now a "core U.S. military mission" that ought to "be given priority comparable to combat operations." These operations are defined as "military and civilian activities conducted across the spectrum from peace to conflict to establish or maintain order in States

Ethiopian Airlines planes on the runway at Bole International Airport in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Ethiopian Airlines, which provided the first jet service on the African continent in 1962, nowadays has a fleet of eighty-two jets with more than fifty additional ones on order to meet the demand of its decade-long 25 percent annual growth. *Alan Wilson/Creative Commons.*

and regions," with the short-term goal of providing the local populace with security, essential services, and meeting its humanitarian needs, and the long-term objective of helping to "develop indigenous capacity for securing essential services, a viable market economy, rule of law, democratic institutions, and a robust civil society."[52]

Translated into other terms, the security objectives of Americans and Africans cannot ultimately be achieved and sustained unless, alongside the investment in building security, there is an investment in developing the infrastructure, legal and physical, that will facilitate the emergence of both effective governance and markets that encourage the growth of prosperity. However, recent global and domestic fiscal crises since 2008, combined with the bitter partisan divide, have created a political climate, within both the United States and in partners like the European Union, where major increases in foreign aid are unlikely to be politically viable. Moreover, as elsewhere, albeit with perhaps even more pronounced effect, governments are becoming less influential inside Africa with respect to what they can accomplish and more limited in their relative capacity, leaving ample scope for subnational entities as well as the private sector. Creative ways will have to be found to encourage business to be more engaged with efforts to develop and modernize Africa's physical and legal infrastructure—helping to consolidate important security gains in the process.

Effective Partners and Partnerships

Given the realities of the world today, not least among them the nature of the Africa that is emerging, an effective strategy toward the continent, its nations, and its people will necessarily involve a significant amount of coalition building on an ongoing basis—domestically and internationally, as well as with governments at all levels, civil society, and the private sector.

At the level of statecraft, this means privileged relationships with key African state partners, and in particular those who have proven themselves to be good bets (as laid out in "earned engagement"). In fact, the 2010 version of the US *National Security Strategy* emphasized the need to "embrace effective partnerships" in Africa and, indeed, a growing number of African countries—Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Senegal, and Uganda are among those that stand out—have improved the professionalism of their armed forces, and subsequently taken the lead in regional peacekeeping and other security efforts.[53] Since 2005, more than 248,000 African troops have benefited from training provided through various US training and equipment programs.

In confronting the range of security threats it encounters in Africa, the United States is well served by the establishment of a regional military structure with responsibility for the continent as a whole, but the US Africa Command (AFRICOM) itself remains severely under-resourced and, in any event, is unlikely to acquire the fixed assets of other combatant commands in the near future. Hence, it is imperative that the United States develop "special" relationships with key African partners, as well as better coordinate strategy and operations with treaty allies like France and the United Kingdom, which have maintained their own security ties with their former colonies. Then-AFRICOM Commander General Carter Ham acknowledged the necessity of such an approach in 2012, when he noted that, "due to the vast challenges and opportunities on the continent, as well as current fiscal realities, we have prioritized regions in Africa to better focus our exercises, operations, and security cooperation activities."[54] Currently, only three African countries—Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia (the latter added only in July 2015)—enjoy the status of "major non-NATO ally." With reforms and increased capacity, there is no reason why other African regional powers, such as Nigeria, Ethiopia, and Kenya, could not achieve some sort of advanced status, even if not necessarily at the "major non-NATO ally" level quite yet. In the meantime, as illustrated by the US-Morocco Framework for Cooperation Agreement—signed in 2014 and aimed at developing Moroccan training experts, as well as jointly training civilian security and counterterrorism forces with other partners in the Maghreb and Sahel regions—there is considerable potential in "triangulation."[55] The United States should also focus on key partnerships in Africa with its historical European treaty allies, strengthening strategic and operational coordinating. The recent experience of US, British, and French cooperation in providing complementary assistance to Nigeria, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon for the regional fight against Boko Haram is a good example of what can be done.

Flexible Structures

If the security architecture is coming together, the allocation of geographical responsibility is inconsistent across the whole of the US government, with the State Department, the Pentagon, and various agencies adopting different administrative divisions, some of which spectacularly fail to conform to political, security, and economic realities on the continent. The US diplomatic framework remains singularly ill-adapted, with its allocation of jurisdiction for the five North African countries—Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt—to the State Department's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, rather than its Bureau of African Affairs. While Egypt's placement is understandable, given its importance as a lynchpin of the Middle East balance of power, and should not be changed,[56] the reality is that, on most political, security, and economic issues, the other four Maghrebi nations have more to do with Africa than with the Middle East— threats to security, trade, and even flows of migrants move along a north-south axis, reaching from the Mediterranean across the Sahara.[57]

Likewise, the United States has responded generously time and again to the humanitarian crises, both manmade and natural, which seem to afflict Africa at a disproportionate rate. However, US foreign-aid structures are, at best, inefficient in their advancement of the nation's foreign policy objectives, and not always linked to the trade and private investment which are literally changing the landscape of Africa. Even some of the best-intentioned efforts, like the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)—an initiative launched in 2003 by President George W. Bush to address the global HIV/AIDS epidemic, primarily in Africa, and subsequently expanded under the Obama administration into something of a cornerstone of US global health efforts—while lifesaving for the more than eight million people currently supplied with anti-retroviral treatments, and obviously popular abroad, are simply unsustainable over the long term unless there is greater ownership of the program by African governments and civil society. More than half of the countries that have qualified for the Millennium Challenge Corporation's system of funding based on positive performance on key indicators have been in Africa, but there are also legitimate concerns that the program has increasingly become something of an entitlement, such as when the Obama administration signed a $540 million compact with Senegal at a time when then-President Abdoulaye Wade had effectively handed control over nearly half of the national budget to his son who was subsequently tried, convicted, and jailed for corruption after the democratically-elected government of current President Macky Sall came to office in 2012.

Given constraints imposed by current US fiscal realities, as well as the tremendous need for infrastructure on the African continent, it must be understood that advancing US economic interests in Africa will, and must be, driven primarily by the private sector. That would mesh well with the entrepreneurial dynamism that characterizes much of African business these days. Since the original passage in 2000 of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which substantially lowered commercial barriers with the United States and allowed Sub-

Saharan African countries to qualify for various trade benefits, bilateral trade has boomed. This has fostered African countries' integration into the world trading system, while creating more than one million African jobs as well as an estimated 120,000 export-related jobs in the United States. While China overtook America as Africa's largest bilateral trading partner in 2009, AGOA continues to generate considerable goodwill for the United States. In 2015, Congress reauthorized AGOA for another ten years, but it will fall to the new US administration to transform the program from what amounts to a unilateral concession that primarily benefits the energy sector to a sustainable program that encourages African integration as well as lays the basis for more expansive trade between the United States and African countries.

To its credit, the Obama administration has given business its due within its African engagements. The 2014 US-Africa Leaders Summit included a US-Africa Business Forum, co-hosted by the Department of Commerce and Bloomberg Philanthropies, which brought together African heads of state and the chief executives of some of the United States' leading firms, as well as some of their African counterparts. A second edition of the US-Africa Business Forum was convened at the margins of the seventy-first United Nations General Assembly in September 2016, and focused on seven sectors, including: finance and capital investment, infrastructure, power and energy, agriculture, consumer goods, and information communication technology. Addressing the forum, President Obama put it bluntly: "This is a US-Africa business forum. This is not charity. All of you should be wanting to make money, and create great products and great services, and be profitable, and do right by your investors. But the good news is, in Africa, right now, if you are doing well, you can also be doing a lot of good. And if we keep that in mind, if we do more to buy from each other and sell from each other, if we do more to bring down barriers to doing business, if we do more to strengthen infrastructure and innovation and governance, I know we're going to be able to move our societies and economies forward. And that will be good not just for Africa, but it will be good for the United States and good for the world."[58]

Implementing the Strategy for the New Africa

mplementing this strategy for more robust and effective US engagement with the states and people of Africa—focusing on the outlined objectives of prosperity, security, and good governance—will require not just better coordination and integration of institutions and resources already existent within the United States' diplomatic and national security toolkit, but careful investment in the cultivation of new ones that can contribute to a truly holistic approach to relations with a dynamic and increasingly important region of the globe.

While Africa has hardly registered in the 2016 US presidential campaign—Africa did not come up at all during the three debates between Hillary Rodham Clinton and Donald J. Trump—President Trump will, nonetheless, face a global landscape in which—for a variety of military, political, and economic reasons—Africa is destined to figure far more prominently than it has for earlier chief executives. In that regard, clear early signaling from the White House about the strategic importance of Africa for US interests is critical, in order to align the efforts of the existing governmental stakeholders, even as new instruments are brought online.

A key first step would be to organize the National Security Council directorates so that the responsibility for Africa aligns with the Department of Defense's combatant command areas of responsibility. Of the differing divisions used across the US government, these are, with respect to Africa, the ones most closely conforming with Africans' own regional organizations, as well as the broader pattern of social, economic, political, and security linkages across that part of the world. Eventually, legislative authorization will need to be sought to reorganize other departments and agencies accordingly.[59]

While reorganization of lines of responsibility can be accomplished with minimal resources, more significant investment needs to be dedicated to increasing the US diplomatic presence across the continent, both in terms of additional staffing at existing missions and creation of new ones, as well as to funding new initiatives. For example, it is nothing short of mind-boggling that in Nigeria, Africa's most populous country and its largest economy, there is no US diplomatic presence north of the capital of Abuja, which is located in that country's geographical center. The northern part of the West African country, home to more than ninety million people (most of whom are Muslim) who would by themselves constitute Africa's third most-populous country, and part of the geopolitically sensitive Sahel—to say nothing of Boko

Haram's activities there in recent years—has been entirely bereft of US representation ever since the consulate in Kaduna was closed in 1991, except on those occasions when, with appropriate security assured, ad hoc forays from the embassy are authorized.[60] Likewise, while the Young Africa Leaders Initiative (YALI) engages the next generation of African leaders, and YALI's ultra-selective capstone Mandela Washington Fellowship is regularly showcased as a signature achievement of the Obama administration's engagement with Africa, even if expanded (the program currently hosts up to one thousand young leaders in its Mandela Washington Fellowship) the programs reach only a very small number of people. Additional resources will be required for more ambitious educational and cultural exchanges, not only with youth, but also with business and civil-society representatives.

With Africa's increased economic importance and the role played by the private sector, there is room for expanding the number and scope of public-private commissions and other convenings of the different stakeholders who have a role to play in this aspect of US relations with Africa. The Obama administration created a President's Advisory Council on Doing Business in Africa, which works through the Secretary of Commerce, and a Trade Advisory Committee on Africa, which provides counsel to the US Trade Representative. Other fora can be established in the Trump administration to share information, coordinate engagement, and address issues arising from US policy. These groups would benefit from a concerted effort to integrate the voices and contributions of constituents whose perspectives are often neglected in Africa policy discussions, including women,[61] religious leaders, artists and other representatives of the world of culture, and members of the African diaspora.

Significant resources must continue to be found to sustain continuing US military operations in Africa, not only against hostile actors, but for the longer-term objective of building the capacity of US partners on the continent. One cannot underestimate the importance of consistency and continuity of US military-to-military engagement as part of an overall strategy toward Africa. AFRICOM, the geographic command responsible for implementing whatever military operations (including counterterrorism operations) are eventually deemed necessary on the African continent, whether by assisting African partners or taking direct action, has been hampered since its establishment by less-than-adequate resources—and that was before sequestration kicked in and fiscal austerity became *de rigueur*—to carry out its ordinary assigned mission. On top of that, extraordinary challenges have arisen in recent years within its area of responsibility, from the presence of the so-called Islamic State in Libya to other concerns.

With respect to intelligence, time and again, the mistake has been to underestimate—if not to discount entirely—the threats faced in Africa. Part of this is attributable to an analytical bias to

limit future possibilities to extrapolations from the past, a hermeneutical choice that ignores the dynamic potential exhibited by many terrorist organizations—a danger underscored by the experience of the last decade during which, *inter alia*, "conventional wisdom" of the intelligence and policy communities were spectacularly wrong about the nature of al-Shabaab, AQIM, and Boko Haram. Another part of the explanation is even more basic: the sheer lack of resources for Africa-related intelligence and analysis across the whole of the US government. Given the geopolitical, economic, and security stakes, the failure to invest more in institutions, personnel, training, and strategic focus is incredibly shortsighted. This deficit needs to be addressed in the next administration.

Conclusion

I n its 2015 National Security Strategy, the Obama administration rightly acknowledged the changing dynamic in America's relationship with Africa: "For decades, American engagement with Africa was defined by aid to help Africans reduce insecurity, famine, and disease. In contrast, the partnerships we are forging today, and will expand in the coming years, aim to build upon the aspirations of Africans."[62] Today's US engagement with Africa has evolved significantly from those of past times, and future objectives must include achieving economic prosperity and development, security, and good governance for Africa's fifty-four nations—not only because US citizens and businesses hope to join with their African counterparts in grasping the continent's burgeoning opportunities, but because it is indeed in the United States' strategic interests in an increasingly important geopolitical and geoeconomic region. In the new Trump administration, the United States will need to integrate the four pillars espoused in this paper—earned engagement, more realistic expectations, effective partners and partnerships, and flexible structures—to manage the challenges and overcome the threats to security, which would otherwise block the path to an incredibly promising future.

Endnotes

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7. In addition to Ethiopia, the other high-scoring African countries are the Democratic Republic of the Congo (8.62 percent), Côte d'Ivoire (7.8 percent), Mozambique (7.3 percent), Tanzania (7.15 percent), and Rwanda (7.12 percent). See Elena Holodny, "The 13 Fastest-Growing Economies in the World," *Business Insider*, June 12, 2015, http://www.businessinsider.com/world-bank-fast-growing-global-economies-2015-6.

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17. World Bank Group, *Doing Business 2016: Measuring Regulatory Quality and Efficiency—Regional Profile 2016: Sub-Saharan Africa* (Washington, DC: World Bank Group, 2016), p. 7.

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19. George B.N. Ayittey, *Africa in Chaos* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998), p. 278.

20. J. Peter Pham, **"**African Constitutionalism: Forging New Models for Multi-ethnic Governance and Self-Determination," *Africa: Mapping New Boundaries in International Law* (Oxford, UK: Hart Publishing, 2008), pp. 183-203.

21. William Reno, *Warlord Politics in African States* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1999).

22. J. Peter Pham, *Liberia: Portrait of a Failed State* (New York: Reed Press, 2004), p. 124.

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32. See J. Peter Pham and Aubrey Hruby, *Embracing Impact: How Africa Can Overcome the Emerging Market Downturn* (Washington DC: Atlantic Council, 2016). While China's foreign direct investment (FDI) flows to Africa have risen dramatically over the course of the last decade, the continent's largest sources of FDI remain the United States and France, followed by the United Kingdom, with China a distant fourth; see Amadou Sy, Amy Copley, and Fenohasina Maret Rakotondrazaka, "The U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit: A Focus on Foreign Direct Investment," *Brookings*, July 11, 2014, https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2014/07/11/the-u-s-africa-leaders-summit-a-focus-on-foreign-direct-investment/.

33. The sole exceptions are Burkina Faso, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Swaziland, which have diplomatic relations with Taiwan as the "Republic of China."

34. See J. Peter Pham, "Pirates and Dragon Boats: Assessing the Chinese Navy's Recent East African Deployments," *Journal of the Middle East and Africa* vol. 4, no. 1, 2013, pp. 87-108.

35. Not only does Djibouti notably offer access to the Bab al-Mandeb, one of the world's busiest maritime transit routes for energy, but its location makes it a launchpad for potential operations in the western Indian Ocean, the Arabian Peninsula, and most of eastern and central Africa. Certainly all of these areas can be easily surveilled by a Chinese Shaanxi Y-8 patrol plane taking off from the base in Obock, Djibouti without refueling.

36. Democratic National Convention, *2016 Democratic Party Platform*, https://www.demconvention.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Democratic-Party-Platform-7.21.16-no-lines.pdf; Republican National Convention, *Republican Platform 2016*, https://prod-static-ngop-pbl.s3.amazonaws.com/media/documents/DRAFT_12_FINAL%5b1%5d-ben_1468872234.pdf.

37. White House, *U.S. Strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa.*

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39. Barry Pavel, Peter Engelke, and Alex Ward, *Dynamic Stability: US Strategy for a World in Transition* (Washington, DC: Atlantic Council, 2015), http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/publications/reports/dynamic-stability-us-strategy-for-a-world-in-transition.

40. Englebert, *Africa: Unity, Sovereignty, and Sorrow*, p. 62.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid, p. 63.

43. Ibid, p. 80.

44. Ibid, p. 243.

45. Ibid, p. 245.

46. Ibid, p. 246.

47. Bronwyn Bruton and J. Peter Pham, "How to End the Stalemate in Somalia," *Foreign Affairs*, September 30, 2011, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/africa/2011-09-30/how-end-stalemate-somalia.

48. See *Mohamed Ali Samantar v. Bashe Abdi Yusuf, et al.*, Brief of *Amici Curiae* Academic Experts in Somali History and Current Affairs [Lee Cassanelli, J. Peter Pham, I. M.Lewis, Gérard Prunier, and Hussein Bulhan] in Support of the Respondents, January 27, 2010, http://www.abanet.org/publiced/preview/briefs/pdfs/09-10/08-1555_Respondent-AmCuSomaliExperts.pdf; also see *Mohamed Ali Samantar v. Bashe Abdi Yusuf, et al.*, Brief of the United States as *Amicus Curiae* Supporting Affirmance, January 2010, http://www.abanet.org/publiced/preview/briefs/pdfs/09-10/08-1555_AffirmanceAmCuUSA.pdf.

49. US Department of State, Office of the Spokesperson, Media Note, "Somalia President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud's Visit to Washington, DC," January 17, 2013, http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2013/01/202997.htm. Also see "Somalia's Government: Baby Steps," *Economist*, August 25, 2012, http://www.economist.com/node/21560905.

50. J. Peter Pham, "The Somaliland Exception: Lessons on Postconflict State Building from the Part of the Former Somalia that Works," *Marine Corps University Journal* vol. 3, no. 1, 2012, pp. 1-33.

51. Stephen D. Krasner, *Autocracies Failed and Unfailed: Limited Strategies for State Building* (Washington, DC: Atlantic Council, 2016).

52. US Department of Defense, "Directive 3000.05 on the Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) Operations," November 28, 2005, p. 2.

53. White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, May 1, 2010, http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf.

54. Carter F. Ham, "Statement before the Committee on the Armed Services, US House of Representatives," February 29, 2012, http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/congress/2012_hr/120229-ham.pdf.

55. J. Peter Pham, *Morocco's Vital Role in Northwest Africa's Security and Development* (Washington, DC: Atlantic Council, 2013), http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/publications/issue-briefs/morocco-s-vital-role-in-northwest-africa-s-security-and-development.

56. While Egypt played a prominent role in African affairs during the heady days of the independence era—when its President Gamal Abdel Nasser, who served as the second chairperson of the Organization of African Unity, was a lodestar to many African leaders—the country's relationship with the rest of the continent was largely neglected in more recent times. Former President Hosni Mubarak didn't even bother to attend the twice-yearly summits of African heads of state and government even once during his last decade and a half in power. Since Abdel Fattah el-Sisi became president in 2014, the trend has shifted again, with Egypt not only ramping up its cultural and security cooperation, as well as its commercial relations with African countries, but also establishing a framework agreement for peacefully resolving its decades-old disputes with Ethiopia and Sudan over the waters of the Nile River.

57. J. Peter Pham and Ricardo René Larémont, *Morocco's Emergence as a Gateway to Business in Africa* (Washington, DC: Atlantic Council, 2014), http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/publications/issue-briefs/moroccos-emergence.

58. Barack Obama, "Remarks by President Obama at the US-Africa Business Forum," remarks made at the Plaza Hotel, September 21, 2016, https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/09/21/remarks-president-obama-us-africa-business-forum.

59. In 2015, the State Department authorization legislation, which passed unanimously out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee before expiring as a result of the adoption of a continuing resolution, contained language directing a review of Bureau of African Affairs and Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs jurisdictions as they specifically related to Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya. Such a change would be welcome, not least because it conforms closer to geopolitical and economic realities: Morocco, for example, is the second-largest African investor in Sub-Saharan Africa (after South Africa) and Moroccan firms transact more than one-tenth of all commerce in the region, whereas the country's trade with other countries in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs is negligible.

60. A consulate in the northern region's most populous city, Kano, was authorized during the first Obama administration, but planning for it was suspended over security concerns following the outbreak of the Boko Haram insurgency.

61. In 2010, the US State Department created the African Women's Entrepreneurship Program (AWEP) as an outreach, education, and engagement initiative that targets African women entrepreneurs to promote business growth, increase trade both regionally and to US markets through AGOA. The modest program—less than two hundred alumnae across forty-eight countries of Sub-Saharan Africa—has given rise to a network of more than 1,600 women entrepreneurs in twenty-two women's business associations across the continent whose small and medium firms have created more than 17,000 jobs in a variety of sectors, including agri-business, food processing, textiles, fashion, and home decor.

62. White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, February 6, 2015, https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2015_national_security_strategy.pdf.

About the Author

J. Peter Pham is vice president of the Atlantic Council and director of the Council's Africa Center. He currently also serves as vice president of the Association for the Study of the Middle East and Africa (ASMEA) and editor-in-chief of its peer-reviewed quarterly *Journal of the Middle East and Africa*. Prior to joining the Atlantic Council in 2011, Dr. Pham was a tenured associate professor of justice studies, political science, and Africana studies at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia, where he was director of the Nelson Institute for International and Public Affairs. He is the author of more than 300 essays and reviews and the author, editor, or translator of over a dozen books, including *Liberia: Portrait of a Failed State*, and *Somalia: Fixing Africa's Most Failed State* (coauthored with Greg Mills and David Kilcullen). In 2015, the Regents of the Smithsonian Institution elected Dr. Pham to the Board of the National Museum of African Art, of which he is presently vice-chair.

"Turmoil in traditional geopolitical hotspots—Europe, Russia, the Levant, and Asia—has distracted the United States from the numerous opportunities and challenges across the Atlantic in Africa...[T]he United States must engage Africa through a whole-of-society approach which transcends government-to-government relations and leverages the contributions of civil society and business. By doing so, the United States stands the best chance of not only advancing its interests–strategic and commercial–but also of promoting its values of rule of law, democracy, and good governance."

– General James L. Jones, Jr., USMC (Ret.)

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