



Africa Policy Outlook 2008

Gerald LeMelle | February 7, 2008

The Bush Administration's fixation on security and the "war on terror" is already escalating the militarization of U.S. policy in Africa in 2008. In his last year in office, President George W. Bush will no doubt duplicitously continue to promote economic policies that exacerbate inequalities while seeking to salvage his legacy as a compassionate conservative with rhetorical support for addressing human rights challenges including conflict in Sudan and continued promotion of his unilateral HIV/AIDS initiative. The third prong of U.S.-Africa policy in 2008 will be the continued and relentless pursuit of African resources, especially oil, with clear implications for U.S. military and economic policy.

In this election year, the U.S. government will pursue a mixed approach to elections in Africa, upholding democratic ideals or looking the other way, depending on military, economic and political alliances. Climate change will be a hot topic in U.S. electoral debates, but it is unlikely that the devastating environmental prospects for Africa will be featured, much less addressed, in U.S.-Africa policy this year.

Militarizing Aid

The United States has dramatically ramped up military activity in Africa since 2002. Representative Donald Payne (D-NJ), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health on the House Committee for Foreign Affairs, and many others have described this trend as the "militarization of U.S. aid to Africa." The total amount of U.S. military sales, financing and training expenditures for eight African countries considered particularly strategic for the "war on terror" has increased from about \$40 million over the five years from 1997 through 2001 to over \$130 million between 2002 and 2006.

According to a Congressional Research Service report released in May of 2007, the United States

has recently established military, counter-terrorism and intelligence programs in dozens of African countries. The Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) has been using Camp Lemonier in Djibouti as its main U.S. base for counter-terrorist activities offshore and in the region since October 2002. In January 2007, the military announced that Camp Lemonier will expand from its current 97 acres to more than 500 acres.

Under the Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Initiative (TSCTI), the Pentagon has provided \$500 million to increase border security and counter-terrorism capacity to Mali, Chad, Niger and Mauritania. The Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance Program (ACOTA) has provided small arms and training for peacekeeping operations to Benin, Botswana, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Uganda and Zambia.

The Gulf of Guinea now features nearly continuous U.S. naval patrols, up from almost no activity in 2004. The Navy currently monitors countries from Guinea to Angola. The Defense Department has also agreed on access to air bases and ports in Africa and "bare-bones" facilities maintained by local

security forces in Gabon, Kenya, Mali, Morocco, Namibia, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Tunisia, Uganda and Zambia.

Private Sector Role

Deepening U.S. military ties to the African continent are visible in both the official and private sectors. Since 2002, the U.S. International Military and Training Program (IMET) has invested approximately \$10 million a year to train African military personnel, and the FY 2008 budget request increased this sum to \$13.7 million. At the same time, under State Department oversight, commercial sales by U.S. manufacturers delivered \$281 million worth of weapons and equipment from FY 2006-2007 to Algeria alone. Such licensed commercial sales to sub-Saharan Africa were just \$900,000 in 2000, but for FY 2008 they are estimated to reach \$92 million, an 80% increase from FY 2006. At present, the United States has Cooperative Security Location (CSL) agreements with five African countries, which are now operational in Entebbe, Uganda; Libreville, Gabon; Accra, Ghana; Dakar, Senegal; and Lusaka, Zambia. There is also a new joint U.S.-Ugandan intelligence fusion center, just outside of Kampala in Uganda.

This escalation has not gone unnoticed. Concerned civil society groups in the U.S. and across the continent of Africa have expressed persistent apprehension over the potential dangers of this change and the absence of any accountability in the process. Democratic governance, sustainable development and human rights are serious challenges in many countries in Africa, but considerable progress has been made by activists, advocates, and civil society organizations over the last few decades. The militarization of aid to Africa could dramatically sharpen the slope of this already uphill battle for social, political and economic justice on the continent.

The militarization of Africa comes at a time when the continent can least afford it. An Oxfam report on armed conflict in Africa released in October estimates that the cost of conflict at the expense of the continent's development over a 15-year period was nearly \$300 billion. According to this study, between 1990 and 2005, 23 African nations were

involved in conflict, and on average this cost African economies \$18 billion a year. By these figures, the cost of conflict was equal to the amount of money received in aid during the same period.

The fundamental question for many is whether the U.S. will utilize this increased military presence to support freedom, self determination, growth, prosperity, and accountability on behalf of the majority of the nearly one billion people in Africa or if this new initiative will instead serve to oversee surrogate nations whose leadership is accountable first to U.S. security and economic interests.

AFRICOM's Inspiration

This growing militarization of U.S.-Africa policy is certain to escalate sharply in 2008 as the United States hurtles full speed ahead with the launch of Bush's still ill-defined Africa Command (AFRICOM). While AFRICOM appears to be a done deal, with a budget request of \$389 million for FY 2009, the public explanations and justifications for it can only be described as seriously confusing if not downright evasive.

In October 2003, James Jay Carafano and Nile Gardiner, both from the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank, proposed to the Bush Administration the creation of a centralized Africa command for the U.S. military. The Carafano/Gardiner proposal makes clear that the objective is to preserve U.S. access to African oil and other natural resources on the continent. Africa produces 90% of the world's cobalt; 64% of its manganese; 50% of gold; 40% of platinum; 30% of uranium; 20% of total petroleum; 70% of cocoa; 60% of coffee; over 80% of coltan and 50% of palm oil. The Heritage report also points to the strategic importance of Africa in the global "war on terror." This proposal resonated with the Bush administration.

Altruistic Motives?

AFRICOM began initial operations in October 2007 with temporary headquarters in Stuttgart, Germany. But much like 150 years ago when Western countries argued that their real goals in Africa were

to bring liberty and democratic ideals to the continent, the Bush Administration has been trying to convince skeptical audiences in Africa and elsewhere that AFRICOM is ultimately driven by altruistic motives.

AFRICOM's projected structure would place humanitarian work previously done by the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) under the directive of Department of Defense (DOD). To U.S. and African civil society groups, and even to AFRICOM's critics in Congress, the Bush administration has argued that the State Department will remain responsible for diplomacy and development while AFRICOM will "support" USAID and other humanitarian organizations in the delivery of humanitarian aid and assistance. The Bush administration suggests there will be more civilian oversight of AFRICOM than any other military command. Yet it remains hard to see how African policy will not be driven by military engagement as opposed to a genuine partnership if the State Department and USAID are positioned under the Defense Department in AFRICOM.

Military commands are simply not designed to do humanitarian work. For commissioned officers and the Defense Department, humanitarian work will never trump military objectives. This reality was clearly illustrated in Iraq when the State Department and humanitarian groups were simply cut out of planning discussions around the build up to the invasion and its aftermath. AFRICOM appears likely to follow a similar trajectory.

The United States is telling African governments that AFRICOM is simply a restructuring of African programs currently split among the existing U.S. global military units of the U.S. European Command (EUCOM), U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), and U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM). General William Ward, AFRICOM's designated commander, made the case for his new command at a meeting with African Union (AU) leaders in Addis Ababa in early November, arguing that the United States has a national interest in

helping to "stabilize" Africa. "We come and do things to assist our African partners in increasing their capacity, their capability to provide a stable environment here in Africa," he said. When asked whether AFRICOM was "simply a militarization of the continent" he replied, "Absolutely false; not the case." His answer is, of course, contradicted by the very reality of the increasing militarization of U.S. foreign policy in Africa over the last five years.

Soldier of Fortune

AFRICOM is being touted in *Soldier of Fortune* and other private military contractor industry publications as ushering in a bountiful new job market. In Iraq, contractors hired by the U.S. government were accountable to no one, resulting in unacceptable human rights violations. It is

reasonable to be concerned that mercenaries and other contractors hired for AFRICOM's work will follow a similar pattern.

African voices from civil society and from democratically elected African governments should be heard and heeded in decisions relating to the location of AFRICOM and its role in Africa. Thus far, only Liberia has given any public support for this initiative. Other nations and regional bodies including the Southern African Development Community (SADC) have expressed deep concern about a deepened U.S. military footprint on African soil.

It's important for Africa advocates in the United States to stand in solidarity with African civil society voices on the continent by challenging not only the existence of AFRICOM but seeking several important changes to the proposed program. AFRICOM should decouple the U.S. Department of State and USAID from the Defense Department to ensure that U.S.-Africa policy will be driven by diplomacy, development and genuine partnership, not military engagement. Clear lines of accountability and mechanisms for transparency must be established not only for AFRICOM but also for any private military contractors employed by the United States in Africa to ensure the protection of the rule of law, democracy and human

rights on the continent. Funding for AFRICOM and the increasing militarization of aid and engagement in Africa should be reallocated to serve a comprehensive agenda that promotes just security by supporting sustainable development, deeper debt cancellation for impoverished countries in Africa, and fully funding the fight against HIV/AIDS and other health challenges on the continent.

AFRICOM raises more questions than the Bush administration is able to answer at this point. Who does the United States intend to stabilize by introducing more military equipment and approving more arms sales into the region? How does the United States decide when to use force in “stabilizing” a conflict? If people are protesting unfair corporate practices near the grounds of an oil company, will the United States use force, or encourage the use of force by African military units, to protect these corporate assets? Will U.S. soldiers be accountable in any way to African governments or their citizens? To what degree will the United States employ mercenaries and other contractors in Africa? Will U.S. economic interests trump the rule of law, democracy and accountability in Africa? The answers to the questions above will go a long way to determine whether AFRICOM constitutes a solution to a bureaucratic challenge of a region divided between other global military commands or is actually likely to encourage future conflicts.

Kenya

It's only February, but the recent turbulence in heretofore-stable Kenya brings U.S. policy toward Africa in 2008 into focus. U.S. interests in Kenya are well documented. Kenya's role as a manufacturing and financial hub for East Africa makes it an appealing partner for Western investments. The country's geographic location, bordering on Somalia, a collapsed state, also appeals to U.S. security interests, particularly given President Mwai Kibaki's history of unswerving support for the Bush Administration's “war on terror.” It is therefore not surprising that the United States initially responded to the dubious official election outcome and immediate swearing in of Kibaki for a second term by calling on the Kenyan people to “accept the results...calmly.”

Once it became apparent that the elections were clearly tarnished, various U.S. officials backtracked and engaged in a clumsy game of semantics regarding what was actually said. But all of Africa saw the U.S. rally around Meles Zenawi when he also claimed to win the Ethiopian election in 2005, despite overwhelming evidence that he and his Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) had lost badly. Zenawi immediately cracked down on the opposition and at least 200 people were killed and 700 were injured. The EPRDF never relinquished control of power and two years later, Zenawi's U.S.-backed troops invaded Somalia.

U.S. support of favored illegitimate regimes like Zenawi's in Ethiopia and the unhelpful, contradictory U.S. diplomatic response to the botched elections in Kenya risk encouraging leadership around the continent to ignore the will of their citizens when they have international backing. Do these two instances foreshadow the standard AFRICOM response to contested elections in Africa?

Other Elections

In 2002, Kenya appeared to be a shining example of the possibilities of democracy and the genuine emergence of freedom and real stability, after frequent government critic Kibaki was elected in a contest regarded as free and fair. The spectacle of Kenya in turmoil is certainly distressing to other democratic movements across the continent in a year that will see several other important African elections that may experience unhealthy influence from U.S. militarization.

Longtime U.S. foe, but now a new oil friend and military partner, Angola, will have its first legislative elections in September. Half of the country has registered to vote in the long-awaited polls as citizens hope to usher in a new era of multi-party democracy after Angola's 27-year civil war ended in 2002. The legislative elections were initially scheduled to be held in 1997. A presidential election will follow next year. The Angola opposition group, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), has accused the government of deliberately delaying the elections. U.S. military

operations in Angola have been growing by leaps and bounds since 2002, with arms sales up over 1000% and ongoing International Military and Training Program trainings and security agreements with the U.S. Navy.

Divided Ivory Coast leaders aim to hold long-delayed elections in the first half of 2008. Rebels have controlled the northern half of the West African state and world's top cocoa producer since a 2002-2003 civil war, but President Laurent Gbagbo and former rebel leader Guillaume Soro, who became prime minister in April 2007, agreed in March 2007 on a process of disarmament, reunification and organization of elections. Many observers inside and outside the country are concerned by the slow pace of progress on practical aspects of this agreement and fear that the elections will be postponed again.

Despite the fact that the United States has so clearly supported undemocratic regimes when it has served a military, economic or other political interest, the United States claims to be aggressively working for "democracy" in Zimbabwe. Although some in the Bush Administration seem to be realizing that overt U.S. engagement in Zimbabwe has been counter-productive, the United States has been intensifying sanctions and increased funding of opposition groups. This economic pressure for regime change not only strengthens Robert Mugabe's hand when blaming outside forces for the current economic crisis but it has the potential to undermine the opposition's legitimacy both now and if they were to gain power.

The United States ought to cease and desist from this antagonistic unilateral engagement and instead step back to work with other elements of the international community to develop a multilateral engagement. U.S. policies should facilitate bringing together regional actors like Southern African Development Community and the African Union with international agencies in order to promote the democratic process, a national and popular constitutional reform process, economic justice and human rights.

A major shift in South Africa's political landscape occurred at the end of 2007, when the African

National Congress (ANC) confirmed Jacob Zuma as its candidate for the 2009 presidential elections. Given the ANC's overwhelming strength, Zuma will be the heavy favorite to win. Still, 2008 will be an important year in the lead up to elections South Africa.

Sudan's Multiple Conflicts

Perhaps the most interesting upcoming African election from the U.S. perspective will be in the Sudan. The U.S.-brokered and Kenya-hosted Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of 2005 ended the civil war between North and South, and declared that the year 2009 will witness an unprecedented and internationally monitored general election in the Sudan. In 2008 it will be determined whether these elections are a realistic possibility. As deadly violence against civilians raged on in Darfur in 2007, serious fractures emerged in the North-South peace agreement. The complete implementation of all the provisions of the CPA, including a nationwide census to prepare for the 2009 elections is critical to the process of democratizing Sudan and achieving peace and development for its entire population.

There is little indication, however, that President Omar Al-Bashir's National Congress Party (NCP) regime in Khartoum has any intention of jeopardizing its hold on power, and it will attempt to delay the election process as long as possible unless it faces credible pressure from the international community. If a legitimate census is not carried out and a national electoral commission is not successfully established and operating in 2008, a serious blow will be struck both to the CPA and the ability of Southerners to wait for the 2011 referendum that will determine if the South will stay united with the North of Sudan or opt for separation.

This election will be of particular interest because the United States has taken a strong rhetorical stance against the Sudanese government regarding Darfur while simultaneously maintaining strong intelligence and military ties with Khartoum, including arms sales and official military trainings. On December 31, Bush signed divestment legislation into law and pledged to uphold sanctions against the Sudanese government. For the first time,

the Bush administration seems to be becoming more comprehensive, at least in its public statements, in its approach to Sudan.

New Envoy

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice swore in Richard Williamson as the new U.S. Special Envoy to Sudan on January 7 and the following day Bush made a statement committing the U.S. to supporting the implementation of the CPA, the deployment of an effective peacekeeping force in Darfur and the diplomatic engagement necessary to support serious political dialogue between the region's stakeholders. Unfortunately, in the past several years, we have seen the Bush administration use powerful rhetoric that in reality meant nothing on the ground and masked insufficient or contradictory U.S. diplomatic action.

Bush's statement says that the CPA, "laid the groundwork for lasting peace and unity for all of Sudan," a sentiment that is popularly promoted by policymakers and advocates alike. Africa Action's dialogue with Sudanese in each region of the country reveals that the CPA – while a critical agreement that must be implemented – should not be held up as an exact model for all other agreements. Circumstances are different in every region and all new peace processes must both address these unique regional characteristics and avoid repeating some of the mistakes of the CPA by being more inclusive, more participatory, and more transparent to the general Sudanese population.

The United States must also follow through with diplomatic engagement once peace agreements have been signed to ensure timely implementation. The real process of peace and justice happens after the political negotiations have been concluded when the agreements are put into practice.

If the Bush Administration is serious in its commitment to a comprehensive and productive Sudan policy, it must prioritize these areas over the "war on terror." It must use its influence on Sudan to ensure the prompt and comprehensive implementation of the CPA. In Darfur, it must use its leverage in the international community to resolve the outstanding issues of UN command and

control of the African Union/UN hybrid peacekeeping force known as UNAMID and to ensure that this peacekeeping force is fully resourced and deployed. The United States and the international community must not allow Khartoum to veto troop contributions from nations around the world. Tensions with Chad are heating up on the western border of Darfur, and the United States must begin to adopt a regional perspective when addressing this conflict.

There are over 8,000 helicopters among NATO countries, many of them that could pass the "hot and high" test needed to work in Darfur's extreme heat and high levels of dust. Darfur needs at least 70 of these, but contributing countries are resisting, arguing that they don't have the helicopters or that they are anxious about the command and control issues of UNAMID. The U.S. has the opportunity to finance the provision of helicopters by other NATO countries as well as leverage the necessary international leadership to ensure UN command and control of the force. For myriad reasons, U.S. troops in Darfur are neither politically possible nor practically desirable. However, there might be ways for the U.S. to loan the United Nations the helicopters and other support vehicles that are essential for UNAMID.

The deployment and support of UNAMID must go hand-in-hand with renewed efforts to build an inclusive and participatory peace process for the Darfur region and for the North of Sudan where new conflict is emerging. The International Criminal Court must get full international support to do the important work of accountability in Sudan's many conflicts.

Horn of Africa

The primacy of U.S. security interests and militarization in the Horn of Africa has gone a long way towards further destabilizing an already volatile area. As part of Operation Enduring Freedom's Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Initiative, U.S. naval vessels have engaged in several military strikes in Somalia. Over a thousand people have died since U.S. war planes bombed towns in southern Somalia and up to half a million people have fled the eruption of violence in Mogadishu to live in camps.

The United States has allied with unpopular and repressive Ethiopian President Meles Zenawi and orchestrated the invasion of Somalia by Ethiopian troops. This appears to have accomplished little more than another human rights and humanitarian crisis with hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people, untold numbers of refugees in neighboring countries, and regular reports noting the brutality of rape, beatings, shooting and indiscriminate shelling by all parties to the conflict in and around Mogadishu.

The exercise has weakened Ethiopia considerably in its still-unresolved border dispute with Eritrea (despite an Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission decision in 2002 which the Ethiopian government refuses to abide by even after both countries' repeated pledges that the decision of the commission would be binding and final). Ethiopia's actions have also angered and inspired ethnic Somalis in Ethiopia's Ogaden region. Given the increasingly complicated and tense reality on the Horn today, it would be interesting to see if American officials believe that U.S. policy in the region actually achieved any counter-terrorism goals. Ironically, it is only in the internationally unrecognized but clearly democratic state of Somaliland (known as northwest Somalia), that there is peace.

Great Lakes Region

East Africa's Great Lakes region is another center of conflict where heightened U.S. diplomatic efforts, rather than military engagement, is critical. Despite hopes brought on by the democratic presidential elections of December 2006, fighting between Democratic Republic on Congo (DRC) President Joseph Kabila's forces and rebel groups escalated after May 2007, when attempts to integrate insurgents lead by Laurent Nkunda into the national army collapsed. The humanitarian crisis sustained by this civil strife, particularly in the country's eastern Kivu province, has truly been staggering. According to a January report by the humanitarian group International Rescue Committee (IRC), the DRC experiences around 45,000 conflict related deaths

per month, a 60% higher death rate than other similarly poor African countries.

The situation in Northern Uganda followed a more positive trend in 2007, with a marked decrease in violence related to the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and reengagement of the Juba peace process. Still, the region's complex interstate politics and unpredictable behavior of rebel leaders like the LRA's Joseph Kony mean that sustained high-level international involvement is critical to the diplomatic resolution of this crisis. The United States will need to support multilateral political negotiations that address the dimensions of the region's multiple conflicts in order for peace and stability to be sustainable in any of the Great Lakes countries, and the DRC as a whole. Sudan's future

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also depends partly on successful international efforts to peacefully address the conflict in Northern Uganda, since renewed LRA attacks in Southern Sudan could derail successful implementation of the CPA. Post-election instability in Kenya, a country that has

historically absorbed refugees and hosted political negotiations for conflicts across East Africa, makes U.S. prioritization of regional diplomatic solutions to these conflicts all the more critical.

U.S.-Africa Economic Policy

As U.S. policy towards Africa becomes increasingly militarized, the U.S. economic agenda and energy concerns follow close behind. During the Cold War, U.S. competition with the Soviet Union led to disastrous policy decisions for the African people; it stunted the development of democracy and undermined economies. U.S.-Africa policy is at risk of repeating this historical mistake as the U.S. and China compete for African resources.

The U.S. will continue to prioritize trade liberalization and development strategies that favor U.S. investments and corporations. U.S.-backed economic restructuring programs coming out of the international financial institutions persist in depleting African economic sovereignty as leaders

are forced to comply with budget ceilings and privatization prescriptions in order to be eligible for new loans or the hope of debt cancellation.

One major impediment to the liberation of African economies from the constraints of the unjust international financial system remains the leadership of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Both these institutions got new leaders in 2007, with former U.S. Special Trade Representative Robert Zoellick taking charge of the Bank to replace the disgraced Paul Wolfowitz and former French Finance Minister Dominique Strauss-Kahn becoming IMF Managing Director. Both institutions continue to suffer from a crisis of international legitimacy. The prior records and official actions so far of their new leaders indicate that each organization intends to continue business as usual, serving the ideologically defined interests of the U.S. and other wealthy member states.

Because 2008 is an election year in the United States the legislative calendar will be short, yet Congress still has opportunities to take major steps this year in living up to the rhetorical commitments of the U.S. government to genuinely promote human development in Africa. Opportunities for effective policy shifts exist in two essential areas: the cancellation of Africa's illegitimate debt, and U.S. global HIV/AIDS programs.

Budget Process

The U.S. government budgeting process for FY 2009 is off to a notably contentious start, in part because of the massive costs of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the looming national economic downturn. In this heated environment, foreign assistance programs of all types are likely to be vulnerable, including U.S. development programs that are critical to human development in Africa. Despite repeated promises from wealthy countries to provide 0.7 % of their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for development aid, not one of these countries has come close to that figure, and the U.S. continues to rank near the bottom of all donor countries for official development assistance worldwide. Halfway to the 2015 deadline, sub-Saharan Africa is making the least development progress of all the regions in the world and is not

on target to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The Bush Administration's proposals for foreign aid for the upcoming fiscal year still fall far short of what the United States can, and should, provide. Nothing better exemplifies this than Bush's spurious announcement in May 2007 of the "doubling" of funding for international HIV/AIDS programs to \$30 billion over the next five years. For the current fiscal year, 2008, U.S. spending on global HIV/AIDS programs totals \$6 billion. A true doubling of current funding levels would be to \$12 billion a year, or \$60 billion over five years. In reality, Bush's proposal would achieve flat funding that would fail to keep up with increasing demand for HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care programs worldwide, leading to an overall decrease in the percentage of people on treatment globally supported by U.S. programs.

Trade Transparency

Prospects are slim for progress at the World Trade Organization summit at the end of 2008, as the struggling Doha round of trade negotiations appears unlikely to salvage any hope of reforming the global trade system to promote equal North-South relations and economic development in Africa and other marginalized regions.

Bush's "fast track" authority to push through free trade agreements without the Congressional oversight mandated by the Constitution expired in July 2007, but programs signed before this deadline will be dealt with by Congress according to the fast track process, as happened with the bilateral U.S.-Peru free trade agreement passed in December. Since the breakdown of the United States-Southern Africa Customs Union free trade area (U.S.-SACU FTA) negotiations in 2006, bilateral negotiations have been the main approach to trade liberalization pursued by the Bush Administration in Africa, a trend that is likely to continue.

The challenge of this dynamic is that the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) has been able to have closed door negotiations with officials in countries across the continent that result in trade commitments, but since these discussions do not technically constitute

formal free trade agreements the USTR has not been obliged to come to Congress, effectively keeping the public out of the process. This lack of transparency is problematic for U.S. and African civil society organizations that desire to address issues like subsidies and intellectual property rights as they impact HIV/AIDS treatment access.

The United States is Africa's largest single country market, purchasing close to one-third of the region's exports. Oil constitutes over three-quarters of U.S. purchases and the continued impacts of both the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and AFRICOM mean that this share is only likely to grow.

Amid fears of economic downturn, U.S. discourse has shifted away from widespread public support of free trade, as presidential candidates as disparate as presidential candidates John Edwards and Mike Huckabee touted their support for "making trade fair." The primary source, however, of this rhetoric's popularity is concern over domestic job losses and the U.S. economy. Combined with the Bush administration's continued adherence to the pursuit of trade liberalization through bilateral negotiations of the USTR, this means that U.S. trade reforms aimed at correcting global trade inequalities are unlikely without a significant effort by advocates to shine a spotlight on U.S.-Africa trade negotiations.

Debt: Opportunities and Threats

The Jubilee Act, a bill that would lead to the cancellation of 100% of the debt of 67 impoverished countries without the destructive economic and policy conditions found in previous debt reduction initiatives, is gaining bipartisan support in both the House of Representatives and the Senate. If made into law, the act would be a leap forward toward the eradication of Africa's \$200 billion-plus debt burden that acts as the biggest impediment to sustained development on the continent.

This legislation also mandates the development of a new legal framework to address the unscrupulous activities of "vulture funds," private investment firms that make massive profits by purchasing the debt of developing countries at a reduced price and

then suing for the full amount, draining off the fiscal space for education and health care spending that debt cancellation generates. Although hedge funds have been engaged in shadowy vulture practices since the mid-1990s, international attention on the vultures increased in 2007, particularly with the cases of Zambia and the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville).

This trend is likely to continue in 2008, not least because of the close political and financial relationship between former U.S. presidential candidate Rudy Giuliani and the notorious Paul Singer, founder of Elliott Associates and widely acknowledged to be the godfather of the vulture investment strategy. At least seven African countries are at immediate risk of being targeted by vulture funds, and unless action is taken to curtail their activities, the ruthless actions of groups like Elliott and Donegal International threaten to spoil the social gains promised by new debt cancellation.

HIV/AIDS: A Legacy Issue

The revised HIV-prevalence estimates released at the end of 2007 by the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNAIDS have three major implications. Africa is still the center of the global AIDS pandemic; progress is possible if evidence-based prevention methods and cutting edge treatment programs are made available to those in need; and much, much more has to be done to address the world's greatest crisis.

As the HIV/AIDS emphasis in his February trip to Africa demonstrates, Bush wants to leave the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) as a celebrated part of his legacy, but public health experts agree that this program has so far fallen drastically short of the funding levels necessary to make serious progress against the pandemic. Effective implementation of U.S. global HIV/AIDS programs under PEPFAR has also been hampered by ideological constraints in this program and an over-reliance on name-brand drugs as opposed to the more cost effective generic versions.

The next iteration of this plan needs to increase funding levels to a minimum of \$50 billion to fight global HIV/AIDS over the next five years, eliminate

ideological limitations and provide the full U.S. fair share of support for the multilateral Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. A vibrant campaign by U.S. activists has been underway to educate the 2008 presidential candidates about this issue and stark differences have emerged between the Democratic and Republican candidates' positions on the global pandemic. Meanwhile, some 1.7 million Africans (mostly women) were newly infected with HIV in 2007, and three-quarters of the world's AIDS-related deaths that year occurred on the continent.

Oil Wealth: For Whom?

Oil is at the center of the intersection between growing militarization and U.S. economic interests in Africa. To many U.S. and African civil society groups, all roads seem to point to Bush's 2006 State of the Union address where he stated his intention to replace 75% of U.S. oil imports from the Middle East by 2025. It is expected that the United States will get 25% of its oil from Africa by 2015. Unfortunately, many Africans in oil-producing countries comment that the black gold can be not only a blessing, but also a curse. Oil wealth often fails to benefit the majority of the population in the country in which it is found. Conflict is easily sparked and not easily resolved in oil rich regions, and the environmental consequences of widespread extraction can be devastating.

The key indicators to monitor will be the U.S. relations with top African oil producing nations and how successful these militarized countries are at using their oil wealth to eliminate poverty, expand democratic reforms, and develop independent judiciaries and justly enforced rule of law. While Nigeria remains the biggest oil producer in Africa, the government revenues of five other sub-Saharan countries are largely based on oil. Nigeria's 2.5 million barrels per day account for nearly 80% of government revenues. Despite its wealth, more than 70% of the population lives in poverty and Nigeria ranks 158th out of 177 countries on the Human Development Index (HDI).

Angola's oil production is expected to reach 2 million barrels per day in 2008. Its oil and gas industries have attracted over \$20 billion in foreign direct investment since 2003. Oil accounts for over 40% of Angola's GDP and almost 90% of the government's revenues. It ranks 162nd on the HDI. Sudan produces some 520,000 barrels per day despite internal upheaval, including the unrest in the western region of Darfur and a tenuous grip on the 2005 peace treaty that ended the decades-long war between North and South. In spite of increasing investment by China, Turkey and other foreign states, Sudan remains one of the world's poorest countries: number 147 on the Human Development Index. Equatorial Guinea, the Republic of Congo and Gabon round out the top six African oil producers, countries that rank 127th, 139th and 119th on the HDI respectively.

Climate Change

In April 2007, the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change predicated that within decades, temperature increases may render around 600,000 square kilometers of arable land on the continent too dry to cultivate.

The issue of climate change is a rapidly rising priority on the agenda of international policymakers, and will remain an important concern for the U.S. presidential elections this November. The risks of climate change to Africa are tremendous, and African scientists point to the extreme droughts of the past 25 years as evidence that the impacts are

already being felt. If climate change continues at present rates, unpredictable fluctuation in rainfalls and more frequent and severe droughts threaten agriculture, the backbone of most African economies. Higher incidence of floods and other natural disasters would challenge even the continent's most stable and economically thriving communities.

UN experts predict that these impacts will be most concentrated in the Sahel and central Southern Africa, although if sea levels rise, densely populated river delta areas like those found in Egypt and West Africa will also be at risk. In April 2007, the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change predicated that within decades, temperature

increases may render around 600,000 square kilometers of arable land on the continent too dry to cultivate. According to the 2007/2008 UNDP Human Development Report, “Semi-arid areas of sub-Saharan Africa with some of the highest concentrations of poverty in the world face the danger of potential productivity losses of 26% by 2060.” While about one-third of Africans already live in areas prone to periodic droughts, various models place the number of newly drought-affected individuals in Africa at 75-250 million after just a one degree Celsius rise in global temperatures, a change that some experts predict could happen as soon as 2020.

The threats posed by climate change are intricately linked to existing human development challenges such as food insecurity, conflict, and public health problems like the absence of clean water. In areas where rainfall increases, swampier environments with more standing water will facilitate breeding of mosquitoes and thus greater spread of malaria and other insect-borne diseases. People living with HIV or AIDS will face malnutrition as food shortages occur, impeding the effectiveness of treatment regimens.

In the short term, the current trajectory of climate change could erase what human development progress has occurred in Africa in recent years. Few African countries possess the capacity to invest in adaptive policies or technological mechanisms to soften climate change’s socioeconomic impacts, as do rich nations. Archbishop and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Desmond Tutu terms this inequality “adaptation apartheid,” where “people are being left to sink or swim with their own resources.” In the longer run, climate change is a threat to all humanity, and the United States and other wealthy nations have a duty to address the global peril that they are primarily responsible for. While some emerging economies such as China and India are beginning to produce large amounts of greenhouse gases, according to UN estimates, sub-Saharan Africa’s entire population, rapidly approaching one billion people, emits less carbon dioxide than the 23 million Americans who live in Texas alone.

U.S. policymakers must become leaders in the international effort to take on the climate crisis head

on – this means finding ways to drastically curtail their own emissions as well as facilitating economic growth in developing countries that is environmentally sustainable. Low-carbon technology transfers should become a fundamental part of development assistance programs. Simultaneously, rich countries should help African nations and other impoverished countries build up the infrastructure and economic mechanisms necessary to mitigate the harmful effects of climate change. If not, they will be directly responsible for the humanitarian crises of unprecedented scale described above.

Conclusion

Despite being the most stretched out campaign in American history, the 2008 U.S. presidential election is marked by the typical absence of any serious discussion of Africa. It is as if Africa has already been ceded to the Department of Defense and therefore out of the view of the American public. In contrast with the accelerating militarization of U.S.-Africa relations described above, this silence is deafening.

The next president of the United States faces a stark policy choice. Will he or she continue to pursue "stability" by further militarizing the continent and flooding it with even more guns? Or will the United States choose instead to embrace a strategy that invests in socioeconomic infrastructure, champions fair terms of trade for African products and promotes sustainable economic development that addresses the aspirations and welfare of the African people?

Gerald LeMelle is the Executive Director of Africa Action and a contributor to Foreign Policy In Focus. Michael Swigert, Africa Action’s Department of Policy Analysis and Communication Program Associate provided research support. Edited by Marie Clarke Brill and Emily Schwartz Greco.

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