A photograph of the Statue of Liberty against a clear blue sky. The statue is adorned with vibrant African beaded jewelry, including a yellow and black headband, a large earring, and multiple necklaces and bracelets in various colors and patterns. The crown and torch are visible at the top.

AFRICA'S

policy towards the US:
The Biden Era

Edited by Bob Wekesa

UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND
JOHANNESBURG



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African Centre
for the Study
of the United
States



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Africa's policy towards the US: The Biden Era

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Africa's policy towards the US: The Biden Era

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Foreword

Multiple perspectives on an African policy framework towards the US

BOB WEKESA

This book is a product of conversations, discussions and debates that took shape from early 2020 as the election season leading to presidential, gubernatorial, and senatorial elections rose in prominence in the US. The elections reached a dramatic peak in late 2020 and early 2021 with unprecedented controversies accompanying the contest between then incumbent president Donald Trump and eventual winner, Joe Biden, along with their respective Republican and Democratic parties. The connecting thread throughout the book is: how should Africa approach the US during the tenure of the Joe Biden administration?

The initial discussions culminated in the publication of thought leadership articles dubbed “Biden and Africa: Continuity or Change?”, published in July 2021 by an imprint of Good Governance Africa, the *Africa in Fact* journal. In this volume, the authors expand and expound on their initial thoughts to offer extended thoughts on US-Africa relations that should be considered by policymakers, intellectuals, government officials and civil society actors.

The book is structured in a manner to provide African perspectives on the US in a cascading manner from the broad and general to the topical and specific. Bob Wekesa’s chapter starts off the discussion in broad strokes, advocating, discussing, and lobbying for the need for an African policy framework towards the US.

Francis Kornegay Jnr’s chapter follows, dealing with some of the opportunities extant in the US that would be leveraged for implementing tangible and forward-looking ideas. Kornegay sees an opportunity to consider new ways of thinking about the US by Africans not from just

the existing mechanisms but from the point of view of new dynamics in Africa, the US and on the geopolitical plane.

Philani Mthembu's chapter is infused with caution: South Africa and Africa would have to tame the exuberance that came with the election and inauguration of Joe Biden as the 46th President of the US. He argues that African actors would do well to base their foreign policy approaches towards the US on realistic, robust, and rigorous analysis rather than runaway expectations.

Delving into the US-Africa security relations theme as his contribution, Gilbert M Khadiagala proposes new approaches to address and redress drawbacks that have afflicted the relationship. The core drawback identified in the chapter is that while security relations across the continent have evolved and multiplied over the years, they have at the same time been shrouded in secrecy and opaqueness that runs counter to human rights and democratic ideals. Khadiagala makes the case for the US and Africa's investment in transparency, openness, and accountability as guiding principles.

Muema Wambua's chapter argues that the US has increasingly taken a unilateral approach to peace and security on the continent as opposed to multilateralism. This, he avers, constitutes a major reversal. Would the Biden administration return to multilateralism in which African agency is elevated?

Siviwe Rikhotso analyses armed conflicts triggered and sustained by political, ethnic, religious factors and proposes a framework in which the US can play a more forward-looking role. The chapter proposes a framework forged in levels of African agency as a panacea to the paucity of peace and security on the continent.

Temesgen T Beyan focuses on the peace and security theme in the Horn of Africa. He argues that America's favouring of Ethiopia over other countries in the region has been the cause rather than the solution to conflicts. He suggests that interstate conflicts in Eritrea and Somalia have been the major source of conflict rather than terrorism *per se*. The proposal is that the fundamental issue that the US should focus on is national development within countries, not counter-terrorism strategies.

Shifting gears, Margaret Monyani examines US-Africa relations in the peace and security sphere, through the prism of women empowerment. Monyani takes cognizance of the fact that while women have borne the brunt of conflicts on the continent, they have not featured prominently in US policies inclined towards peace and security. Inclusion of women in policy formulation and implementation would serve as a more balanced approach to a peaceful and secure continent.

Charles Prempeh contributes to the debate from a homosexuality and related human rights perspective. Noting that homosexuality is often a taboo topic in Africa, he argues that bundling US aid with the promotion of the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer communities could potentially fracture the relationship between Africa and the US.

Focusing on the role of the US in African governance, Gideon Hlamalani Chitanga finds two issues that the Biden administration faces: a roll back of democracy in the US itself under the Trump administration, and the rise of China. The author argues that the US would have to address these issues if it is to garner a more progressive acceptance on the continent.

Turning to the place of communications in public affairs, Job Allan Wefwafwa's chapter draws a comparison between social media use in the US and Africa, singling out interesting semblances such as the indigenous African tribal/clan violence that resemble the US neo-nationalist violence. The chapter further analyzes how the two forms of violence are perpetuated by social media, demonstrating the platform's multifaceted transnational influence on electoral politics.

Following Wefwafwa's communications-themed chapter, Amukelani Charmaine Matsilele, focuses on education-based public diplomacy particularly through exchanges. She argues that, rather than focus on its own foreign policy interests through education-based public diplomacy, the US should be sensitive of African interests and strive to cater for them if forging a partnership with Africa is to succeed.

Prince Mudau's chapter places official development assistance and philanthropy on a weighing scale and finds the latter a better proposition than the former. Analyzing data from both modes of aid, Mudau however

argues that while philanthropy is innovative and agile, it cannot fully replace or obliterate official development assistance. Thus, there is room for US official development assistance to embrace philanthropic practices and organization, to improve delivery of aid in Africa.

In his second contribution to this volume, Siviwe Rikhotso turns the spotlight on economics, trade, and investments, centred on an analysis of US policies towards the continent over the years. Rikhotso argues that African actors ought to be proactive in shaping the trade and economics engagements with the US, if they are to secure benefits in the interest of the continent.

In the final chapter of the book, Sanusha Naidu argues that the US under the Biden leadership should be motivated by its own interests in Africa rather than reacting to the presence of other global powers engaging with the continent, particularly China. Drawing on import and export data, Naidu demonstrates that the US and Africa are not close partners compared to other nations and regions of the world. She thus argues for a new relationship that would boost trade as a key ingredient in political and diplomatic engagements.

This volume has been made possible by the partnership forged with the New York-based thinktank, Social Science Research Council, the Johannesburg-based organization, Institute for Global Dialogue, and the publishers of this volume, Good Governance Africa. To all the three, and many whom space cannot allow to mention, we say thank you. Part of the funding that enabled this publications is thanks to generous and continued support from the US Embassy in South Africa and the Hewlett Foundation.

A call for an African Policy Framework during the Biden era

BOB WEKESA

The chapter begins with a motivation for the need for an African policy framework towards the US. This is followed by a contextual discussion in which the author uses the 2020 US elections as a sounding board justifying the African policy towards the US agenda. The initial sections of the chapter discuss the distinguishable US foreign (and domestic) policy agenda under the Joe Biden administration – democracy promotion. The argument is made that the chaotic 2020 US elections imply that the US can learn from Africa as much as Africa can learn from the US in terms of democratic ideals. Returning to the interest in the 2020 US elections, the chapter argues that the interest should be considered an opportunity for the formulation of an African policy framework towards the US. The rest of the chapter provides Africa-wide, regional, and national strategies that be tapped in developing the policy framework. Examples of opportunities for rolling out the strategies are provided in the form of common African positions and their ideational linkages with the US interests.

This chapter argues the case for an African policy framework with regards to the United States of American (the US) as a strategic approach to redressing the many areas of asymmetry in relations. For instance, on the economic front, there are thousands of American companies exporting processed goods to Africa while there are very few African companies operating in the US, and the few African companies with links to the US deal in unprocessed goods – particularly crude oilⁱ. An example from the political end of things is that the US has a large military and diplomatic footprint in Africa, while Africa’s presence in the US is miniscule even from a collective African point of view. From the cultural perspective the Hollywood film and music industry is a

major means by which African experiences about the US are shapedⁱⁱ. Although African film and music productions find their way into American culture, this is mainly through African artists working in the US cultural industriesⁱⁱⁱ or the historical insertion of African culture into African American culture during the era of slavery^{iv}.

In this chapter, I argue that the absence of a coherent African policy or policies towards the US is responsible for the economic, political and cultural imbalances between the US and Africa. As a former American diplomat has stated in a recent book on US-Africa political history, essentially every US administration has had a foreign policy posture towards Africa^v. Against the background of past and present American policies towards Africa, one struggles to find coherently articulated, consistently pursued, and clearly documented African policies at national, regional, and continental levels. This is a significant setback for African nations and regions and the continent as a whole, when one considers the fact that foreign policies shape, safeguard and promote national interests in the conduct of international relations by charting national or regional values and aspirations^{vi}. As proposed later in the chapter, a remedy to the gaps in African policy frameworks towards the US can be addressed at three levels: continental, regional and national. Policy development at each of these three levels ought not preclude the other, and indeed areas of intersection between these levels can help strengthen and nuance African agenda setting towards the US.

Background: The 2020 US elections as motivation and democracy promotion

The immediate background informing the call for an African policy towards the US is that there was an unprecedented interest in Africa during the 2020 US election campaigns, and the eventual election of Joe Biden as the 46th American president. It was a singular moment in Africa's focus on the US that should not be forgotten with the passage of time. Part of the interest arose out of dramatic developments that shocked the US and attracted rapt attention from around the world. Coming at a time when the US was being ravaged by the COVID-19

pandemic, these developments rose in prominence, becoming top news events in Africa. To illustrate this point, a Google search of the key words “Africa and the US Elections 2020” in early 2021, for instance, returned 300 million items in less than a minute, underlining the significance of the elections for Africa. Headlines such as “Contextualizing the impact of the 2020 US elections on Africa”^{vii}, “The US election in November will be consequential for Africans”^{viii} and “Stakes are high for Africa in US presidential election”^{ix} and the like became a sustained news menu on the continent. Virtual meetings held by African and American organizations such as the African Centre for the Study of the US in Johannesburg and the Center for Strategic and International Studies based in Washington DC aimed at making sense of the elections for Africa became a common occurrence.

In more respects than one, early predictions that the US elections would be messy were proven right, triggering a comparison of the US and African countries as electoral democracies^x. What, for instance, could the US learn from Africa rather than the US always being the agenda setter for African democracy? From the intemperate first presidential debate in September 2020 between then Democratic Party candidate, Joe Biden, and the then incumbent and Republican Party candidate, Donald Trump, to the storming of the US Capitol Buildings in Washington DC, it was evident that the US was a democracy under siege. Due to the chaos that accompanied the US elections, the global power is trying to claw its way back into the saddle in terms of devising a democratic renewal at home and abroad via the global Summit for Democracy^{xi}, with democracy promotion activities lined up from 2021 into the future.

Unlike the neglect of Africa during the Trump administration, Biden has engaged with African leaders, examples being the telephone calls he made to African leaders such as South Africa’s Cyril Ramaphosa and Kenya’s Uhuru Kenyatta in January 2021 shortly after taking office. In February he addressed the African Union Summit, virtually urging African leaders to be “committed to investing in democratic institutions and promoting human rights of all people: women and girls, LGBTQ

individuals ... people of every ethnic background, religion and heritage”^{xii}. During Biden’s “America is Back” speech discussed further below, he said, “we must start with diplomacy rooted in America’s most cherished democratic values: defending freedom, championing opportunity, upholding universal rights, respecting the rule of law, and treating every person with dignity”. Biden’s re-embracing Africa on the basis of democratic ideals is a case of change from the downgrade of engagements under the Trump administration.

Biden’s elevation of engagements with Africa comes with a proclivity towards promoting democracy is a case of a return to the values and norms at the core of the Obama era engagement with Africa. If Trump’s hands-off approach coupled with similarity in traits with Africa strongmen^{xiii} gave leaders on the continent the leeway to engage in undemocratic practices without facing US consequences, Biden’s reset of relations comes with a return to America’s decades-long democracy promotion as part and parcel of engagements. Indeed, one of the key global democracy promotion strategies that the Biden administration is working on, as promised during the 2020 campaign, is a democracy summit. African countries seeking good relations with the US will have to align with democratic principles, particularly accountability, inclusiveness, openness, human rights, and rule of law.

Thus, one sees that the electoral problems in the US in 2020 have once again served as a domestic launchpad for democracy as the lynchpin of American policy globally. That Africa is one of the regions of the world that democracy as an American foreign policy imperative is being rolled out^{xiv} poses the question of how the continent should respond. Should, for instance, Africa point out to the controversies around democracy in the US as reason enough to turn back to Biden’s democracy promotion agenda or should the continent admit that it has its own fair share of democracy problems and therefore elect to work with the US on this score?

Continuity and change in US policy towards Africa

To return to the controversies of US elections in 2020, what may be considered a respite for now is that Biden won the November 3, 2020,

elections, signalling the return of a more stable political situation. One may argue that the fact that the US has returned to more stable governance under the Democratic Party is in fact a demonstration of its global soft power and attractiveness^{xv}. The term stability is used cautiously here, because incessant antagonism in and out of electioneering seasons is a hallmark of American politics. For Africa, the win by Biden ushered in renewed optimism for the reinvigoration of Africa-US relations following the low level to which Africa-US engagements had sunk during Trump's presidency. However, it is evident – for instance as argued above with regards to democracy as the core of US' approach to Africa – that Africa has not done much to seize the opportunity, at least as of November 2021.

The fact that public interest in the landmark elections remained high across Africa was an indication that Africans had taken note of and cared about developments in the US. Indeed, broad public animation took forward-looking analyses and proposals after the January 20, 2021, inauguration of Biden as president and Kamala Harris as vice president, along with the appointment of many African Americans into high-level positions in the then new administration (discussed elsewhere in this volume). Again, a Google search on the phrase, "The Biden administration and Africa" in early 2021 returned 42 million items in less than a minute, indicating that the discussion had progressed from the electoral challenges in the US in 2020 to strategies on African stakes in the then still relatively new administration. Media headlines that spoke to the yearning for a policy framework regarding Africa and the US included: "The United States returns to Africa"^{xvi} by the American think tank Foreign Policy, "The end of apathy: The new African policy under Biden"^{xvii} by the German Institute for Global and Asian Studies, and "Biden's Africa blueprint copycats China's policy for continent"^{xviii}, by the Chinese international media organization, *Global Times*. Clearly, even US geopolitical competitors were taking note of the US policy reset on Africa. That think tanks and intellectuals around the world were and presumably remain focused on the Biden-Harris administration's approach to Africa spoke and speaks volumes about

the importance of Africa, not only with regards US-Africa relations but also on the implications of what US-Africa relations mean to other global powers. These debates and discussions, however, raise questions around Africa's place in the taking care of their interests. To what extent, for instance, are Africans going beyond lip service to develop a policy framework towards the US rather than waiting to fall into line with or contest US positions? For it is one thing to yearn for a policy reset from Washington DC towards the continent, and another thing altogether for Africa to develop its own self-interested policy framework towards the US.

Fortuitously, the unrelenting curiosity in American electoral politics provides an opportunity for scholars and intellectuals focused on Africa-US relations to fill extant gaps and imagine new opportunities for coherent and mutually beneficial policy engagements. It would be wasted opportunity if the huge interest garnered during the 2020 elections were to go to waste. Indeed, the next cycle of presidential electioneering (2024) in the US is around the corner and the heat is already catching up as the Democrats and Republicans angle for the 2022 mid-term elections. Over the years, many scholars and intellectuals have identified continuity and change in America's policy towards Africa as forming a golden thread from one administration to another^{xix}. Continuity over the years can be seen in the fact that many of the US foreign policy instruments towards Africa, such as the trade and economics agency, Prosper Africa and AGOA, remain in place.

It is more interesting to consider instance of change. Many of the new developments instituted by the Biden administration have taken the form of reversing Trump era policies. In reversing Trump's policies at home and abroad, Biden campaigned on the platform of "Build Back Better", and in terms of foreign policy, the platform of "America Must Lead Again". In February 2021, he made a policy speech that gave the "Build Back Better" agenda a foreign policy interpretation. "I want the world to hear today: America is back. America is back. Diplomacy is back at the center of our foreign policy"^{xx}, he said in a speech that set the tone of his foreign policy posture. The speech primed democracy

promotion as a major foreign policy agenda of his administration. Thus, “Build Back Better”, “America is Back” and “America Must Lead Again” are cases of a change from the Trump era and continuation of Barack Obama and various past administrations’ approaches, with democracy, human rights, and governance at the core.

The absence of a coherent African policy position towards the US has long been identified as one of the factors impeding the continent’s productive engagement with a global power whose foreign policy is so impactful on Africa’s cultural, political, economic and security interests^{xxi}. Addressing this gap and exploring new opportunities for recalibrating and strengthening Africa-US ties requires new thinking and a proper understanding of the issues at play across political, economic, and cultural spheres. This would help in laying the foundation for transforming the asymmetrical nature of Africa-US relations, for the mutual benefit of both parties. Failure to seize this opportunity would be a missed opportunity for Africa to shape policy discourse towards the US.

The continental, regional and national approaches

What, therefore, are some of the potential ingredients for an African policy framework towards the US? Posing this question raises supplemental questions and issues. As has been debated in intellectual circles over the years, the US is a fairly homogenous entity, although the clashes and conflicts witnessed in the recent past indicate that the country is not in perfect harmony, and building “a more perfect union” is work in progress. It is also notable that while the 50 states that form the United States from the Atlantic to the Pacific operate under a common federal law, individual state laws and the fact of the US as a melting pot of peoples and cultures means that there are quite some variances. On the other hand, Africa is a much more heterogeneous entity, comprising 55 nations each with their own claim to sovereignty. However, there are many factors of African homogeneity, including the spirit of Pan-Africanism, a shared history of colonial subjugation, and a continuous landmass. Even though the African Union (AU) is often

denigrated as a toothless dog that barks without biting, the fact that the organization is in place, implementing supra-continental policies such as Agenda 2063 being implemented through programs such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), is evidence enough of some form of continental homogeneity. Indeed, a continental policy framework towards the US could serve to further strengthen the proclivity of the continent to unite.

One of the pathways for the development of an African policy framework towards the US would be to empower the African Union Permanent Representative to the US – in place since 2007^{xxii} – to lead the charge. This would be a strategic approach as the AU mission in the US is based on American soil, near official US government entities and close to the diplomatic missions of African nations. This provides an opportunity for policy research, in coordination with the headquarters in Addis Ababa, that could lead to the development of a robust and pragmatic African policy framework towards the US.

At the same time, however, it has been appreciated that the continent is made up of regional economic communities (RECs), which ultimately illustrates close historical and cultural affinities within regions. In the recent past, there have been attempts at greater coordination between the regional economic communities and the African Union (AU) or the entire African Economic Region (AEC)^{xxiii}. The most visible communities in these respects are the Arab Maghreb Union, the Community of Sahel-Saharan States, the Common Markets of Eastern and Southern Africa, the East African Community, the Economic Community of Central African States, the Economic Community of West African States, the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development, the Southern Africa Development Community, and the Southern Africa Customs Union. Since the mid-2000s, the African Diaspora has been considered a region of the continent bringing the regions of the African Economic Community to six^{xxiv}.

Tensions often arise between nations in these organizations and regions as the examples of Rwanda versus Uganda, Kenya versus Somalia, Tanzania versus Rwanda, Rwanda versus DRC, Ethiopia

versus Egypt, and Sudan show. Nonetheless, focusing on the problem areas within these regional organizations misses the point that they have had some successes in addressing issues within their geographical areas. A case in point is the acknowledged role that RECs have played in conflict resolutions in various African regions^{xxv}. Often, the US has been involved in these regional efforts, providing a pathway for the development of African RECs-based foreign policies towards the US. It is therefore feasible that a continental policy framework towards the US can take both a continental approach and a regional approach. Indeed, African nations would not be inventing anything entirely new if they started coordinated their policies towards the US in a more deliberate way. The US itself is a member of continental America's regional blocs – such as North Atlantic Free Trade Area (NAFTA) – which often align their policies towards other regions of the world. In another example, the US is part of entities such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), through which it coordinates policies with its Western allies. Moreover, in several cases, American policy institutions already operate at regional levels as in the case of the United States Agency for International Development Southern Africa office which operates in the SADC region. Moreover, the US already has representation in African regions as in the case of the US ambassador to Tanzania who serve as permanent representatives to the East African Community^{xxvi}, headquartered in the northern Tanzania city of Arusha.

In the debate over continent-wide, regional, and nation-specific policies towards the US, it must be reckoned with the fact that African nations have direct and bilateral relations with the US, as seen in diplomatic and ambassadorial representation. For instance, while African nations congregate as collectives at the African Union and at the regional level, they also have their own interests, pursued under national foreign policies. While it may seem contradictory for nations to develop and articulate individual policies towards the US while pushing continental or regional agendas towards the US, a closer analysis can show that the contradictions can be managed. An approach in this direction would be one in which a framework is developed at

the continental level and adopted at the regional and national levels. Towards this end, Agenda 2063 – the foundational document for the African Continental Free Trade Area – could serve as a starting point. The question would then be, how can Agenda 2063 and its ten-year plan be interpreted from the point of view of Africa's collective, regional and national interests towards the US? The key point is that continental policies ought not to preclude regional policies and the latter need not be a reason for dispensing with national policies. A good example is that African nations can borrow is that of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN)-US relations in place since 1977 and with tendencies towards formal foreign relations and diplomatic engagement^{xxvii}. The collective ASEAN relationship has however not stood in the way of bilateral relations between individual relations between members states such as Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore with the US.

Leveraging common African positions

From the foregoing, it is feasible to devise an African policy framework towards the US in such a way as to incorporate Common African Positions (CAPs)^{xxviii} already agreed on at the continental/AU level. There are many CAPs that have been agreed on at the AU level. Let's pick out three CAPs and pose policy questions on how they could be implemented. The first would be the 2005 Ezulwini Consensus, a common position that sought the reform of the UN Security Council (UNSC) with the objective of securing a seat or more for Africa on the UNSC. This would require the concurrence of the five UNSC veto powers, namely, the US, France, Russia, China, and the UK. The mere mention of these powers shows the difficulties that have been encountered in Africa's implementation of the Ezulwini Consensus. From an African foreign policy perspective however, Africa should keep lobbying the US to do its bid in convincing the other powers to agree to the reforms. Such lobbying may not bear fruit in the short term. It could however form a hardnosed bargaining chip by African countries over the US' self-declared moral leadership in global affairs. It would be a policy issue that could be raised in current push by the US democracy push onto the continent and in the rest of

world. For, the US can be called upon to demonstrate its commitment to the democratic ideals of the equality of nations in institutions such as the UNSC.

In the second example, the Common African Position on the Post-2015 Development Agenda seeks to create a united African front on the completion of the United Nations (UN) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) addressing a myriad developmental bottlenecks and priorities. It is linked to the implementation of the 17 goals of the UN's Agenda 2030 commonly known as Sustainable Development Goals. In this regard, an African policy framework towards the US would include a call to linkages between Agenda 2063, Agenda 2030, and US policies towards Africa. The question would be, how can Africa lobby the US to align its African policies with those of Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030 – which are notably quite similar. An opportunity for Africa to push this agenda during the Biden presidency arises out Washington's current proclivity towards multilateralism. For instance, on his first day in office on 20 January 2021, Biden signed executive orders^{xxix} reversing Trump's unilateralism actions. These actions include US' re-joining the World Health Organization and Paris Agreement on climate change returning the US to good relations with the United Nations system. This is a clear case of change from the period between 2016 and 2020 period when Trump instituted anti-multilateralism and isolationist policies under the rubric of the "America First" and "Make America Great Again" mantras. This suggests that strategic thinking at this point on matters to do with African health and climate would be a good entry point in Africa's development of policies that cojoin Agenda 2030 and Agenda 2063. In a broad sense therefore, Biden's pivot back to the pre-Trump foreign policies will give Africa an opportunity to be more involved in global governance if African leaders seize the opportunity.

The third and final example for this chapter would be the "Common African Position on Humanitarian Effectiveness", which seeks to create a more robust mechanism for dealing with aid directed towards migration and displacement. Through agencies such as USAID, the US government is a major to humanitarian relief of the continent against

the backdrop of increased migrations. However, what is the extent to which the US' humanitarian assistance to Africa does not factor in addressing the root causes of the humanitarian crises in the first place? What would be Africa's policy proposals towards the US in terms of stemming the factors that cause humanitarian crises in the first place? In the specific case of Biden's reversal Trump's anti-immigration policies, how would this CAP fit Biden's affirmation of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) an Obama era policy that shielded immigrants from being deported, his revocation of Trump's ban on visa issuance for citizens from Muslim countries from entering the US, among others?

In this scheme of things, African regions and nations would equally develop US policies in alignment with the Common African Positions. However, some leeway would be allowed for regional and national policies that address their specific interests. For instance, the interests of mineral resources rich nations such as the Democratic Republic of Congo and Angola may differ from those of countries that more reliant on service industries such as Ethiopia, Kenya, and Rwanda. Similarly, nations that are in the hinterlands of Africa – the so-called landlocked countries – may have different priorities from those in the coastal and maritime regions of the Atlantic, Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean. Thus, the geographical negotiation in developing the framework would serve a horizontal purpose while the specific issues across economics, culture and politics inform vertical interests. The unifying factor would still be that principles of fair trade across the productive sectors and equality in the international system are the guiding light for US-Africa engagements.

The geographical starting point to African policies towards the US does not comprehensively address the crucial issue of the analysis that would go into their formulation. There has been a vibrant debate on the continuities and discontinuities of the US policy towards Africa as Washington transitioned from the Trump to the Biden administration. Intellectuals have offered probabilities and hypotheses across policy issues ranging from trade and economics to geopolitics and

constitutionalism, democracy, and human rights; defence, military, counterterrorism, peace, and security; and environment and climate change, among others. Such policy analytical efforts are useful as they would provide information on the direction that the Biden administration is taking as a prerequisite to a policy response from Africa. However, a focus on what the US does towards Africa should not be the core of African foreign policy formulation. African intellectuals have debated the concept and practice of African agency for many years. An African policy strategy towards the US provides an opportunity for Africans to use the agency they possess to propose clear interests towards the US, thereby opening an opportunity for negotiation. After all, the politics of policy development demand that a party looking to develop mutually beneficial relations should begin at home, with their own interests, before setting out to negotiate with the other party. In other words, Africa should approach the US as an actor rather than waiting to be acted on.

Conclusion: A collective public-private-civil society approach

Perhaps a fundamental question in the whole issue of Africa's policy towards the US: who should develop it? Just which actors and communities would be most strategic and proactive in shaping Africa-US engagements and the terms of engagement in the coming decades? It is easy to quickly conclude that policymakers, especially those from governments, should lead the way. However, as it has been pointed out, in some respects, government officials – who are often politicians or closely allied with political classes – may be more of an impediment to policy formulation than being facilitators. For instance, if an African policy framework towards the US is strong on issues of democracy and human rights, illiberal regimes on the continent might not sign on it. Also, governments may not necessarily have the intellectual tools to undertake the odious job of analysing documents and scenarios. Indeed, intellectuals working within academic institutions, civil society organizations and the private sector may be more proximate to the issues that need to be analyzed in the course of policymaking.

At the same time, however, a policy framework towards the US might not take off if governments dismiss it or stall implementation. All this suggests the need for building consensus on an agenda for engagement, drawing on informed knowledge, diplomatic experience, and expertise in various fields. Policy formulation and plans of action at the state and non-state levels, and at bilateral and multilateral levels, will require strategic consultations, networking and mobilization. Africans will have to provide leadership for the project of building a coherent continental policy for engaging the US in a competitive and rapidly changing world order. As suggested earlier, a summit or conference of intellectuals from public, private sector and civil society organized by the AU Mission in Washington, in coordination with the AU headquarters, could serve as a starting point in developing an African policy framework towards the US. ◇

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Rethinking US-African relations: Policy and constituency challenges*

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With the Joe Biden-Kamala Harris administration approaching its first anniversary by 2022, there were important collateral developments that may have given momentum to what had been growing consensus on a much-needed rethinking of US-Africa policy. As of early 2021, New York congressman Gregory Meeks had ascended to the position of chair the House Foreign Affairs Committee, the first member of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) to occupy this strategic foreign policy gateway, was a major advance in African-American foreign policy influence. Meeks expected to add much-needed political will to the chairmanship of the Africa Subcommittee, headed by fellow Black Caucus member Karen Bass, while veteran Caucus member Barbara Lee, who formerly served on the staff of Ron Dellums for mayor of Oakland (2007 to 2011), took over chairing the equally strategic House Appropriations Foreign Aid Subcommittee. These developments were accompanied by President Biden appointing the former assistant secretary of state for Africa, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, as US ambassador to the United Nations. Never before had there been such a high-level pivotal concentration of forces among African-Americans in the US official foreign affairs establishment, with the potential to shape or reshape relations between Africa and the US and American foreign policy more broadly.

* Note: This chapter was published posthumously after the passing of the before editing processes could be completed. The style adopted is past tense. Kornegay's long-term colleague Philani Moyo did his best to expand the chapter from a shorter piece as best as he could without losing too much of Kornegay's voice and thoughts on the topic.

While this presented an opportunity for African counterparts at various layers of diplomacy to proactively engage with the US on a reformed Africa policy, it did not guarantee that movement on that front would be rapid. This was because of the myriad domestic and foreign policy priorities of the Biden administration, ensuring that structurally, Africa would not automatically assume a higher level of attention and focus. This placed the onus on African stakeholders to pressure their counterparts in the US to open avenues of dialogue on a new Africa strategy for the US. These avenues of engagement and dialogue would have to be opened both in the United States and in Africa. The chapter, which builds on a shorter piece published shortly after the administration came to power, advocates for the need to rethink key elements of US-Africa relations following the disruptive foreign policy of the Trump administration.

Rethinking US-Africa policy would however not be an easy task, as Africa would continue to compete against other pressing domestic and global priorities for the United States. While on the domestic front the COVID-19 pandemic continued to take much of the attention of the White House, on the foreign policy side the withdrawal of all troops from Afghanistan, ending a 20 year war would have allowed the US to refocus its strategic orientation towards the Indo-Pacific region, seen through the strategies such as the unveiling of a trilateral defense partnership between the US, the UK, and Australia that would have resulted in the sharing of technology and Australia being in possession of nuclear powered submarines.

This would not sit well with Beijing, which would interpret it as a move directed towards containing the rise of China in its own region and beyond. It would however have been a partnership that would accentuate then-existing tensions within the transatlantic partnerships, as seen through France recalling its ambassadors in the US and Australia in mid-2022, an unprecedented diplomatic move as the French displayed their anger at Australia canceling an earlier made deal with France to assist Australia build conventional diesel powered submarines, costing the French defense industry close to \$50 billion

of projected revenue. The fact that the French claim to have not been consulted nor involved in the new defense partnership for the Indo-Pacific would have left France feeling sidelined and in fact stabbed in the back by fellow allies. It would not be easy to paper over these cracks in the transatlantic alliance, and these developments would all require close attention by the Biden administration.

African stakeholders would thus have to take more seriously the idea of the diaspora as the sixth region of the AU, ensuring that this would be followed up by a programmatic focus by African stakeholders that sought to build, and in some instances, rebuild an African constituency on foreign policy in the US. Indeed, African stakeholders would have to be more aware of the inner workings of the US political system and where the appropriate pressure points were within the system, especially given some of the historical appointments at various levels of foreign policy in the US, and their potential significance for US-Africa policy. Such efforts to support the development of a vibrant engagement at different diplomatic tracks would have ensured that African priorities remained well understood in policy circles in Washington and thus enabled a sustained dialogue on what a new US-Africa policy could look like. Failure to support a vibrant Africa constituency in the US, and perhaps a US constituency in Africa, would have led to Africa remaining at the periphery, and only being involved in US foreign policy in an ad hoc manner involving different Africa programs that did not necessarily coordinate or align to African strategic priorities.

Black America's Africa constituency that was

The historic black convergence at executive and legislative levels placed major pressure on the occupiers of these roles to deliver long-awaited alterations in how the US relates to Africa, if not the world, more broadly. That said, what about the level of African-American intellectual and activist engagement outside government and within academia to interact with the then-new governmental cohort of African-American leadership in Congress and in the Biden-Harris administration? Hence,

the propitious timing of the February 19 2021 symposium, convened by Howard University's Center for African Studies on 'Rethinking US-Africa Policy and the role of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)'. The event could not have come at a more timely moment and in a more fitting venue of historical engagement in academic African area studies and African-American African affairs and initiatives.

Howard University was the venue for the launch of the African Heritage Studies Association (AHSA) in 1970, in the aftermath of the African diaspora 1969 revolt at the Montreal African Studies Association annual international conference. This set in train an era of black academic activism in African and emerging African-American/Black Studies at American universities over the next decade.

Howard also hosted the CBC-sponsored African-American National Conference on Africa in what proved to be an aborted attempt to launch an Africa lobby but for the controversy of Caucus members having signed on to Bayard Rustin's widely published 'Black Americans in Support of Jet Planes for Israel' in 1970. Otherwise, this momentum eventually lay the groundwork for the Caucus-led 'African-American Manifesto on Southern Africa' in the lead-up to the founding of the Trans-Africa Lobby for Black Americans and the Caribbean spearheading anti South African apartheid protests.

In 2021, these developments were yet to be exhaustively and critically assessed in understanding the lack of a mobilized post-apartheid protest African affairs activist constituency in 2021. This could have proved the Achilles heel of black-led US-Africa policy progress during the Biden-Harris era, and hence an area for closer attention by African stakeholders who sought to deepen and reorient the policy of the US in Africa.

Given the nature of the US political system, the lack of a vibrant African constituency in Washington would have remained a weakness, but one that could have been overcome with the necessary support and engagement from African counterparts. It indeed remained a paradox that not much had been done to revive and support the mobilization of a broader African constituency outside of government that could

have kept African issues on the table in foreign policy circles in the US. This would have required African states and institutions with the relevant capacity to encourage and support the development of an Africa constituency. In order to realize this aspiration of creating a vibrant Africa constituency in Washington, there would have been need for greater involvement at a programmatic level from universities, think tanks, and civil society organizations working in foreign policy. There would also have been a need for greater exchanges beyond the executive branches of government, especially through the relevant parliamentary structures in light of the policy proposals outlined by Congressman Meeks. Cities and provinces should also have been encouraged to breathe life to various twinning initiatives at the sub-national layers of governments.

Prioritizing the strategic over the programmatic

In 2021 the world was in a new day as it entered the third decade of the 21st century. There was an urgent need then to try and discern the contemporary and future challenges facing Africa within the global strategic context and in terms of how US policy toward the continent may have required reconceptualizing. With the launch of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), this required contextualizing trade as a major, if not central component driving pan-African continental integration and as a trajectory occurring within a dynamic geopolitical landscape of external influences interacting within the complex inter-African terrain of the African Union (AU).

The basic challenge was that of reshaping an Africa policy prioritizing the strategic and geostrategic over the programmatic. There already existed a proliferation of Africa programs, some with more strategic significance and potential than others, none perhaps more so than in the area of trade and the future of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). This was at a time when the AfCFTA had been launched. This was an area that strategically related directly and urgently to the regional and continental integration imperative in defragmenting the colonial political map of an Africa of interdependent states of varying

degrees of viability. Within this context, it was urgent that national sovereignty became shared sovereignty – a pan-African imperative. This challenge is at the very heart of the AU's Agenda 2063, which aspires to transform the continent in anticipation of the centenary of the AU's founding predecessor, the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

In evaluating US-Africa relations, it would thus have been important for the Biden administration to review all the then-existing Africa programs, often legacies of different US administrations. The review would have led to a more coherent policy with a strategic overarching narrative and focus. It would also have assisted the Biden's administration's look at the strengths and weaknesses of then-existing programs to reduce the weaknesses and enhance the strengths of the programs then in place. This would have been important in order to avoid a fragmented approach devoid of a compelling and guiding framework to center US-Africa relations. Indeed, overcoming the programmatic approach in favour of a strategic engagement would have allowed the US to focus on its own value addition to Africa instead of focusing on the negatives of some of its competitors – Russia and China particularly – in Africa.

Agenda 2063 should have informed US-Africa policy in keeping with the AU's aspirational Continental Free Trade Area aim as the integrationist centrepiece for realizing the African Economic Community as laid out in the Lagos Plan of Action. This is where the Biden administration might have considered focusing efforts within a context informed by the need to strategically as well as programmatically transition AGOA into a US-AfCFTA relationship that also factored in the fast-changing global geo-economic and geopolitical landscape of trade. Given the complexity of this challenge, the Biden administration should have, in conjunction with the AU and the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), begun engaging the AfCFTA secretariat in Accra, headed by South African Wamkele Mene, on a post-AGOA dialogue of transition into the next phase of Africa-US trade relations. This should have factored in a strategic role for the AU's regional economic communities (RECs).

Such a dialogue would necessarily unfold against the backdrop of reviewing how Africa had benefited from AGOA while reversing the bilateralism of the Trump administration's highly politicized Africa trade agenda into one placing the AfCFTA at the centre of US-Africa trade strategy.

Implementing these set of measures would thus have gradually ensured that the US privileged the strategic over the programmatic and overcame a largely programmatic focus on Africa that was often devoid of an overarching and compelling narrative and framework that could have driven overall relations. With AGOA set to come to an end in 2025, it would have been an opportune moment to use the implementation of the AfCFTA as a centerpiece for enhanced strategic relations between the US and Africa. Such relations would have ensured not only a deepening of bilateral ties with a select grouping of countries, but a pan-African approach that would have brought in regional economic communities and pan-African structures such as the African Union. Such an approach would have been integral to reversing the movement towards bilateralism that characterized the Trump administration.

Reversing Trump bilateralism

The Trump administration's bilateral 'trade reciprocity' approach in negotiating a trade deal with Kenya represented what was promising to unfold as a setback for African trade integration in moving beyond the unilateral trade preferences of AGOA. A Brookings Institution analysis noted: "Although these negotiations could produce the first bilateral trade agreement between the US and a sub-Saharan African country, a shift from the regional preferential trade agreements to bilateral free trade agreements could undermine the growth of smaller countries, who may not be of enough economic interest to the United States. Bilateral agreements could also undermine efforts to create a regional economic bloc through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)."

Indeed, Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta's decision to strike out on his own in spite of the AfCFTA generated no small amount of

controversy within Kenya's trade community and in Africa as a whole. If Kenyatta's disruption of the fledgling AfCFTA was not controversial enough, the Trump administration's reported conditioning of the trade deal on Nairobi adopting a higher-profile pro-Israel posture amid Trump's Israel 'normalization' drive, added additional fuel to the fire in reflecting Trump's complete disregard for Africa; and this was not to mention his veto of Nigerian Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala to head the World Trade Organization (WTO), leaving it in limbo until rectified by Biden.

The movement towards bilateral trade agreements by the Trump administration was also in conflict with the recommendations of the African Union (AU) Report on Institutional Reforms, especially those related to the AU playing a more proactive role in coordinating Africa's relations with external partners. Indeed, cooperation on implementing the African Continental Free Trade Area would have added great value to the partnership given that there would have been need for a new arrangement once AGOA came to an end in 2025. This would have necessitated a new trade landscape that took into account the AfCFTA and Agenda 2063.

While the Biden administration reversed the Trump administration's stance on the WTO and the appointment of Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, the organization continued to face multiple challenges in returning to its former position as a central forum in the global trading landscape. Much had happened since the height of the Doha Development Round of negotiations, and the trading landscape was more fragmented in contemporary times and was likely to continue amid an increasingly confrontational relationship between the US and China. Enhancing regional cooperation as a buffer against a growing economic nationalist trend would thus have been important for Africa, especially in so far as the implementation of the AfCFTA could act as a catalyst for greater intra-regional trade and investment, while also supporting the development of regional value chains in Africa, which had been found especially wanting during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Indeed, with Africa's population set to be over 2 billion by 2050, most of which were expected to be made up of the youth, it would have been important for Africa as a continent and within its sub-regions to deliberately support the development of regional value chains, with the AfCFTA acting as a catalyst for the realization of this aspiration. This would have become increasingly important in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic in order to ensure that the next pandemic found Africa more resilient and more prepared to produce vital health related and other equipment and products that created jobs for Africa's growing youth population.

Geopolitics

In early to mid-2021, it was too early to discern where the Biden administration was headed in its Africa policy, although suspending bilateral trade negotiations with Kenya would have been an obvious place to start pending the administration staffing up its Africa team at State Department and undertaking a thoroughly comprehensive review of the Trump agenda and initiatives. However, it seemed safe to venture that the Trump administration's Africa agenda had much to do with its pro-Israel Middle East priorities in close collaboration with Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates in pursuit of its destructive 'maximum pressure' campaign against Iran as it had to do with Africa. Hence, its decision to violate international law in recognizing Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara, bolstering the military wing of Sudan's fragile transitional government in maneuvering Khartoum into 'normalizing' relations with Israel in exchange for de-listing it as a state sponsor of terrorism, suspending aid to Ethiopia to force Addis Ababa into concessions to Egypt in mediating the stalemate over future operationalizing of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) – and making the already problematic trade deal with Kenya conditional on high profiling Nairobi's already normalized relations with Israel.

Reversing Trumpian geopolitical complications for Africa's strategic autonomy and integrity in relation to the Middle East and specifically,

Persian Gulf sub-imperial aims, could not be separated from a broader strategic agenda advancing the continent's aspirational 2063 economic integration revolving around AfCFTA implementation. For starters UN Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield could have spearheaded the appointment of a new UN envoy through the United Nations Security Council thus breaking the logjam on Western Sahara. US diplomats could have also led the way in kick-starting the Arab Maghreb Union as a functioning regional economic community within the AU system and AfCFTA. However, it was not clear if the Biden administration was going to reverse Trump's decision to recognize Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara. This went to show that some of the Trump administration's foreign policy decisions had had far reaching consequences for Biden and any future occupants of the Whitehouse. Given the myriad areas of focus for the Biden administration, it would have been important that African stakeholders proactively engage with Biden's team and non-state actors in the US on areas that could be considered of strategic interest to African priorities.

There was a growing urgency to resolve the GERD standoff between Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia, where a pooling and sharing of sovereignty in the interest of Nile Basin regional cooperation should have received priority. Here, Addis Ababa would have had to concede on national sovereignty within the interdependent reality of the Nile conundrum. Resolving this stalemate should have happened in conjunction with securing Sudan's civilian democratic transition while addressing Ethiopia's crisis in Tigray, which was critical in its democratic consolidation and stability. Here the US could play an important role as an honest broker, instead of siding with one side as the Trump administration did in clearly siding with Egypt over negotiations on the GERD. The additional internal dynamics created by the Tigray crisis had added another layer of complexity to an already difficult and complex situation.

All combined, stabilizing the Horn of Africa was crucial to advancing the 'Cape to Cairo' eastern and southern African Tripartite Free Trade Area (FTA) component of the AfCFTA. This, in turn, had wider Afro-Asian geo-strategic economic potential of convergence with mega-

trade trends in the East Asia/Indo-Pacific, where Biden would have needed to revisit what was then the Comprehensive Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) on the one hand, and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) on the other, both of which factored in the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) economic community. South Africa's accession to the Treaty of Amity had added an important bridge between Africa and ASEAN countries in encouraging greater cooperation between the different regions.

With Africa's demographic dynamism set to eventually overtake both China and India in population by mid-century, an AfCFTA-ASEAN Indian Ocean geo-economic convergence could have reshaped the global strategic landscape. It would have been a mistake to leave out the Atlantic, where, if Biden could have overcome the foreign policy establishment's North Atlantic bias in favour of a whole of transatlantic vision, AfCFTA relevance would have entered the equation as well. As such, Africa's diaspora as well as Africa itself had a major stake in affirmatively promoting accelerated regional and continental integrationist evolution. This was also to have required greater attention at a strategic and programmatic level on how to operationalize the idea of the diaspora as the sixth region of the African Union.

The idea of global Africa would thus have been realized in a deliberate and proactive manner. This would not be the domain of state actors alone as it would have required a greater role for multiple track diplomacy efforts promoting people to people relations amongst institutions of higher learning, think tanks, and civil society organizations. These efforts would have complemented the implementation of Agenda 2063 and built an African constituency in the United States with solid ties to African counterparts, while also strengthening US related research and policy engagement on the African landscape.

It would certainly not have been in Africa's interests to get caught in between the geopolitical tensions on display in US-China relations. African stakeholders would have been more strategic by seeking to carve out their own strategic autonomy through regional integration efforts. Indeed, the reality for Africa was that it did not have the

luxury of choosing its external partnerships in a manner that included some while excluding others. It thus had to work with all partners that had an interest in deepening relations. In managing a changing geopolitical landscape, African stakeholders should have made it clear that they would not be forced to choose between the US and China but would seek to work with both in order to advance the continent's development priorities.

Regional economic communities

How might these projections inform US-Africa policy and Africa-US relations? Perhaps a closer diplomatic US-AU relationship might have been the place to start given Washington's posting of an ambassador to the AU and an AU ambassador posted in exchange to the US. However, it was not clear how deep this relationship was and whether or not it would be upgraded into the centerpiece of US-African relations in a manner also factoring in a greater role for the AU's regional economic community (REC) pillars. These were in need of major strengthening and capacity-building as well as rationalizing as building blocks for accelerated continental free trade implementation. This is where House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Meeks broke new policy ground in suggesting that, "We should establish dedicated US embassy country teams for the Regional Economic Communities, separate from the bilateral mission and staffed by representatives from the state department, US Agency for International Development, the department of defence, and the commerce department. America will not be relevant if we're not present in these bilateral and multilateral fora".

The above proposals by Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee should have been followed by an appropriate response by African counterparts on the feasibility and pros and cons of a regionalization of US-Africa policy that brings in more closely the regional economic communities and the African Union. This would arguably have been in line with the African Union's own efforts to ensure greater coordination of Africa's external relations in a manner that encouraged a stronger role for the RECs. A focus on a US-Africa

strategy that elevated intra and interregional cooperation would have positioned the US as an important partner for implementing Agenda 2063 and its flagship projects.

Much of the cooperation with the regional structures would also have to focus on enhancing their capacity to plan, implement, and monitor progress on the various regional development plans already adopted. It would also have to support efforts to increase the level of domestic resource mobilization, including tackling issues of illicit financial flows as an integral part of domestic resource mobilization. This was important to Africa's quest for strategic autonomy, but given the myriad challenges facing the Biden administration, African stakeholders would have to use their agency to ensure that decision makers in the US take into account African priorities in formulating their own policies and strategies.

With the African Union and its regional economic communities already enhancing their own coordination in recent years, it would have been appropriate for the US to work with African partners in enhancing their own capacity and agency through regional integration. The added benefit for the US and its own strategic interests in supporting greater agency and capacity for Africa within the regional economic communities, in addition to existing cooperation with the AU and bilateral partners would be to enhance Africa's ability to coordinate and meet its interests with other external partners, some of which the US perceived as competitors on the continent. It would have been more sustainable for the US to keep its competitors in check by ensuring that African counterparts had the tools, capacity, and ability to defend and enhance their interests when negotiating with other external partners. This would have been through enhanced regional cooperation and taking some of the proposals by Congressman Meeks forward in ensuring that the US presence in Africa also extended towards the regional economic communities, which would have been important pillars and drivers of the continent's development aspirations.

Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) lessons learned?

In relating such a RECs outreach to a post-AGOA transition, might it not have been possible for such a transition into an AfCFTA-US agreement to involve regionalizing the AGOA forum within the regional economic communities? Hence, the possibility for the Biden administration engaging the AU and its triumvirate governing partners in the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the African Development Bank (AfDB) in establishing a high-level AU-US Integration Forum accompanied by regional economic community-US forums for convening dialogues and brainstorming possible differentiated regional phasing of AGOA into a US-AfCFTA architecture. Here, African 'lessons learned' from the highly disruptive Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) experience imposed by the European Union (EU) might have served a valuable purpose in informing how the US and the AU in conjunction with UNECA and AfDB might proceed in arriving at an equitable Africa-US trade regime accelerating continental integration into the eventual African Economic Community. Perhaps a US envoy to the AfCFTA in Accra liaising with the US ambassador to the AU in engaging UNECA and AfDB as well might have been considered a possible nexus of US-AU diplomacy.

The idea of regionalizing a post-AGOA trading landscape would allow for a transition towards a trade partnership shaped by the implementation of the AfCFTA. It would also allow for the development of differentiated strategies across the various sub-regions, based on the readiness for a developmental free trade agreement taking into account the varying stages of development the different RECs find themselves in. African countries would also have to ensure that the manner in which regions are constituted in agreements is aligned with how the continent itself defines regions, unlike what happened during the negotiations with the EU on the Economic Partnership Agreements. This would also be a step in the right direction in exploring the operational dimensions of the proposal by Congressman Meeks on a regional and Africa wide strategy for the US.

Creating the space for exploring ideas between African and US counterparts on a post-AGOA trade landscape would add much value to the US-Africa relationship and bring greater legitimacy to a post-AGOA framework. While there may still have been a need for the type of unilateral preferences seen under AGOA beyond the year 2025, such a dialogue would have allowed for a process and framework that all partners would have had an opportunity to input, while gauging which countries and regions would be ready to move towards a free trade agreement guided by the prescriptions of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

Conclusion

While the focus here has primarily been on Africa-US trade relations, the same template might serve a purpose in the peace and security sphere as well. Operationalizing the AU African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), including its maritime dimension, was critical to stabilizing Africa's complex and fragmented inter/intra-state landscape for advancing economic integration within the AfCFTA. Indeed, the US would have had an interest in ensuring that the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) had the requisite capacity to tackle Africa's myriad peace and security challenges within the various sub-regions of the continent, especially when state building failures and the uneven distribution of resources on the continent had led to the growing threat of terrorism.

On the American African affairs constituency side of US-African relations, advancing a strategic policy agenda reflecting Meeks' regional economic communities caveat would have called for a new approach to constituency-building in a departure from the protest activism that animated the anti-apartheid-centred Africa lobby of the 1970s and 80s. This is where HBCUs could have played a crucial role in developing entities such as friends of ECOWAS, friends of SADC and friends of the East African Community and/or of IGAD (the Inter-Government Association for Development) as US-based complements to a revived SADC-US forum with similar forums for ECOWAS and other RECs. Such an approach could, in the process, strengthen ties between African-

Americans of African immigrant descent and African-Americans of historical lineages as a reflection of Black America's increasing diversity.

Finally, lessons learned from the 1970s and 80s would emphasize the need for a broad-based coalitional African affairs constituency, not one organized along the neo-Garveyite principles that have much to do with why there is no mobilized constituency at present. Such a constituency would also need to steer clear of the toxic ideological and paranoid politics intersecting with racial separatism of that period. Hence, the importance of an HBCU role in African affairs constituency renewal. The February 19 Howard University symposium might well have marked such a new beginning. Indeed, the opportunity here would be that unlike a purely state centric approach, engagements at the level of universities, research institutions, think tanks, and civil society would arguably be more sustainable as these structures would be able to dedicate additional resources within, but also to mobilize resources from third parties to support greater cooperation and people to people relations. ◇

Foreign policy priorities under Biden: Implications for South Africa, Africa and the world

PHILANI MTHEMBU

The election of Joe Biden has had significant implications for the United States in how it manages its domestic agenda and its role in a changing geopolitical landscape. This chapter is an extension of a shorter article on the same subject, which was published shortly after the Biden administration came into power. It argues that African stakeholders will have to carefully manage their expectations in order to avoid disappointment with the Biden administration. Expectations must thus be formed on the basis of a systematic analysis of the opportunities and constraints facing the Biden administration and the Democrats, and an understanding of the limitations within the US political system, especially with the midterm elections set to take place in November 2022. African stakeholders must thus learn from the misplaced expectations that accompanied the Obama administration, and lessons must be learned in how expectations are formed and managed based on the domestic and foreign policy priorities of the administration of the day. It argues for a more focused agenda, with fewer issue areas to prioritize, but to put the maximum amount of resources and coordination towards them.

The election of Joe Biden, which made the Trump presidency a one-term administration, has had significant implications for the United States in how it manages its domestic agenda and its role in a changing geopolitical landscape. It has also impacted how the world views the US, even though the effects of the Trump administration and its various decisions on the global stage are likely to outlast his time in office and impact not only the Biden administration, but also subsequent occupants of the White House. It would thus be misguided to simply

wish away the Trump presidency as though it was either an extreme anomaly or it simply did not happen. Indeed, many of the policy positions taken during the Trump administration continue to be US foreign policy positions and have not been reversed. This should shape how partners of the US set about creating a set of expectations for the Biden administration.

International partners of the US will also have to factor in the reality of a fiercely divided domestic political landscape, both between the Democrats and the Republicans, and intra-party divisions within the two political partiesⁱ. One should also factor in the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has killed more American citizens than the Spanish Flu of 1918ⁱⁱ. Its effects, especially in the US, should thus not be underestimated. International partners must also factor in the various tensions within society and the accompanying cultural wars on a range of policy positions. This constrains the possibilities of the current administration to make vast changes as the smallest of decisions and policy positions has become fiercely contested in the political system and in the media.

The following chapter is an extension of a shorter article on the same subject, which was published shortly after the Biden administration came into power. It argues that African stakeholders will have to carefully manage their expectations in order to avoid disappointment with the Biden administration. Expectations must thus be formed on the basis of a systematic analysis of the opportunities and constraints facing the Biden administration and the Democrats, and an understanding of the limitations within the US political system, especially with the midterm elections set to take place in November 2022. African stakeholders must thus learn from the misplaced expectations that accompanied the Obama administration, and lessons must be learned in how expectations are formed and managed based on the domestic and foreign policy priorities of the administration of the day. It argues for a more focused agenda, with fewer issue areas to prioritize, but to put the maximum amount of resources and coordination towards them.

Looking at the persistent challenges brought to the fore by the pandemic, and the foreign policy pressures facing the Biden administration, it is evident that Africa will not be on the top of the list of priorities, at least not in the early stages of his presidency. However, it is precisely in Africa that the US will have to rethink key elements of its strategy so that it does not reflect a knee-jerk reaction, mostly targeted at countries the US considers rivals in Africa, and thus missing the potential for expanded cooperation with a continent set to double its population to over 2 billion by 2050. This will create opportunities not only for Africans, but also for external actors and it will be important to reimagine and rethink how the US wishes to engage the African continent and its various institutions. It will however primarily be the responsibility of African stakeholders, including strategic countries with close ties to the US, regional economic communities and the African Union (AU) that must lead efforts to strengthen relations on the basis of Africa's development priorities. It will also be the task of non-state actors in Africa to proactively engage with their counterparts in the US, especially think tanks, universities, and civil society organizations. This will have the effect of expanding avenues for dialogue and people-to-people relations. At the state level, it will also be important for African stakeholders to coordinate and ensure that while the respective ministries of foreign affairs will lead coordination efforts, relations also expand to cooperation amongst other national departments and sub-national actors such as cities and provinces in the US and Africa, while continued support for the respective private sector actors must continue to be encouraged to ensure that relations are sustained irrespective of the changing political fortunes of the Democrats and the Republicans.

Should expectations be tamed? COVID-19 and the role of the domestic agenda

One of the major challenges for the US administration under Joe Biden is the management of domestic and global expectations following the disruptive presidency of Donald Trump, whose actions at home and

abroad continue to reverberate beyond his term in office. Many of the aftershocks will thus remain with the Biden administration.

Some of the foreign policy decisions of the Trump administration have indeed had far-reaching implications across the world – whether due to an aggressive trade war against China and some of its own transatlantic European allies, or through its decision to move the US embassy to Jerusalem and the recognition of Israeli settlements, some of these decisions will be difficult to backtrack on. The US position on Morocco and Western Sahara is another case in point where the Biden administration will be tested, especially because the US recognition of Moroccan claims over Western Sahara are tied to Morocco normalizing relations with Israel. Having increasingly sought to withdraw from global institutions it had historically played an integral role in establishing during the Trump years, the US government will also have a difficult task convincing international partners that they can be relied on, and that the Trump phenomenon was an anomaly rather than a sign of things to come.

Domestic challenges in the US have also been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, with the country being one of the most affected in the world in terms of cases and deaths recorded. This is impacting on social cohesion and the ability of the new administration to effectively execute its key priorities, especially in a political environment where everything, including COVID-19 and vaccine mandates, have seen polarization along party political linesⁱⁱⁱ. The fact that domestic issue areas act as a constraint for the Biden administration is also visible through ongoing inquiries into the January 6, 2021 insurrection, which continues to divide the country and make the task of building national unity even more difficult^{iv}. While Trump is no longer in office, he continues to influence the national discourse, especially with the possibility of running for office again in the next Presidential elections in 2024^v. This has meant that questions relating to the legitimacy of the current administration, which Trump and his supporters insist got into the White House through a 'stolen election', continue to find their way into the national discourse and fuel greater divisions in society on

fundamental questions such as the legitimacy of the electoral system and process. While the US still has the largest economy in the world, it remains open for discussion whether the country can continue to accumulate more debt in the coming years and shift its debt ceiling indefinitely^{vi}.

So far-reaching has the single term of Trump in office been, that many of the allies of the US have been forced to question the overall partnership with the US. This has been evident during the diplomatic spat between France and the US over Australia abruptly ending a defense contract for France to supply conventional submarines for Australia in a deal worth approximately \$90 billion in favour of a trilateral defense agreement between Australia, the US, and the United Kingdom^{vii}. This will lead to the sharing of technology and Australia being equipped with nuclear-powered submarines. French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian and President Emmanuel Macron have made their frustrations well known, with the foreign minister likening the unpredictability and manner of execution from the White House to the unpredictability of the Trump administration^{viii}. France has additionally sought to gain solidarity amongst its neighbours in Europe while withdrawing its Ambassadors in the United States and Australia, an unprecedented diplomatic move highlighting their levels of frustration^{ix}.

South Africa and its African counterparts may thus have to tame their expectations given that the Biden administration will in the short term be largely concerned with national questions related to the pandemic and challenges of social cohesion. The police killing of George Floyd and others like him, the Black Lives Matter movement, and the storming of the Capitol in light of the increased threat of domestic right-wing terrorism, have all unleashed a plethora of challenges that will likely preoccupy the administration for some time. This will have foreign policy implications, and South Africa and its partners in Africa will have to craft a strategy based on a few concise areas of convergence for African political, social, and economic actors. This is especially important given that much of the time of the Biden administration is absorbed by pressing domestic and external challenges, including the

ongoing rifts in the transatlantic partnership and deteriorating relations with China and Russia. A long list of areas will not work, and Africa must prioritize fewer points of engagement, with a greater impact on Africa's development objectives. These key objectives would have to be aligned with agreed to regional and continental development priorities articulated in the various regional indicative strategic development plans and in Agenda 2063 and its ten year implementation plans and catalytic projects.

It will thus remain important to proactively engage with state and non-state actors in the US on a set of key African priorities for the Biden administration to consider. Some of that will include efforts to reverse Trump-era policies on Israel and Palestine, Western Sahara, and mediation efforts in Ethiopia, which have been made more complicated by the ongoing political conflict in the Tigray region. Given the longstanding links between South African stakeholders and members of the US anti-apartheid movement, it will also be important to revive these ties at a non-governmental level in the early days of the Biden administration. Given the imperative of the economic recovery from the pandemic, South African and African partners will also have to focus on enhancing economic cooperation with their counterparts in the US. Lastly, it will be important to enhance efforts to build the requisite state capacity across Africa. This will be important for efforts to improve governance and the ability of state actors to deliver on their national and regional development plans.

Re-engaging: What kind of world is the Biden administration entering?

The Biden administration has made the pronouncement that 'America is back'; however, the type of world the US is coming back into remains an open question. Indeed, sometimes it is assumed that the US can simply slot back in where it left off and be readily welcomed back. However, this is an unrealistic expectation as many parts of the world have continued their economic and political objectives in the absence of the US as it withdrew from important treaties such as the Paris

Agreement on Climate Change and the World Health Organization in the midst of a pandemic. This has even caused strategic partners in the EU to speak more about European strategic autonomy^{xi} given the reality that the Trump phenomenon may continue to linger in the US for some time. They have thus been forced to think more seriously about their interests in a range of areas from security to economic aspects.

The Biden administration has thus sought to mend alliances with traditional partners and position the US to again become a respected power. However, this will not be a straightforward process as many parts of the world reflect on the possibility that a Trump-like presidency may again happen in the near future, or that many of his far-reaching policies will be difficult to reverse in a divided domestic political landscape. This has prompted some European leaders to advocate for having greater control of the key value chains^{xii}, especially for the production of high-tech goods that will be important for the future. What has also been apparent is that despite the fact that the Trump administration was belligerent and did not cultivate good relations with China, the Biden administration will find it difficult to change the policy trajectory of a confrontational relationship, especially when the majority of the US population, both Democrats and Republicans, continue to express distrust towards Beijing^{xiii}.

This will continue to shape the approach adopted by the Democratic Party government as it seeks to appear strong for the domestic population. This is especially the case given the reality that whilst the Trump administration spoke of a trade war, it could also be referred to as a tech war as the two countries seek to improve their competitiveness in the industries of the future. The fact that they are more directly competing for the production of high tech manufacturing products makes it likely that the tensions characterizing the relationship will continue. Rather than being caught in the middle of two giants fighting, African countries must ensure they have the requisite capacity to strategically engage both while maintaining a degree of strategic autonomy. This is important since Africa possesses many of the raw materials needed to fuel the fourth industrial revolution.

The direction of US policy on China is also evident through the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee Strategic Competition Act of 2021-1. Amongst other things, it proposes millions of dollars of funding towards reports on the 'negative impact' of China's Belt and Road Initiative Projects, which forms part of a proposed \$300 million 'countering China's influence fund'^{xiv}. The US rhetoric on China's treatment of the Uigurs in Xinjiang is another element that has largely attracted bipartisan support in Washington. It will thus be important to ensure that Africa is taken seriously by the Biden administration for the opportunities it presents, and not simply because of efforts to counter China in Africa. The fact that the US relationship with China will remain one the key areas shaping the future international landscape means that African countries and other regions of the world must factor it into their own geopolitical risk analysis processes to ensure that they are not negatively impacted.

It is also clear that in terms of a changing geopolitical landscape being navigated by the Biden administration, it will have to factor in not only an acrimonious relationship with China and Russia, but also cracks in the transatlantic partnership, especially in a post-Brexit European landscape. The administration is also dealing with the domestic and external fallout from the Afghanistan withdrawal by all troops from the US and its allies, ending a twenty-year war that had cost many lives in both countries^{xv}. It is thus evident that Africa will not necessarily be at the top of the agenda of the Biden administration given the myriad domestic and global challenges it has to manage. This places the onus on African counterparts to bring to the attention of state and non-state actors within the US what their priorities are, and how they would further the mutual interests of the US and African counterparts.

How should South Africa and African partners respond to the new US outreach in Africa?

Having noted the domestic constraints for the Biden administration, it will be important for African stakeholders to familiarize themselves

with the key personnel of the current administration, some of whom also served during the Obama administration. This is important in crafting a proactive South African and African strategy towards the US that takes into account the track record of appointed officials and the domestic constraints faced by the administration. Some of the important positions include Secretary of State Antony Blinken, chairperson of the House Foreign Affairs Committee Gregory Meeks, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, administrator of USAID Samantha Power, and US trade representative Katherine Tai.

The late Francis Kornegay, a senior research fellow at the South African-based Institute of Global Dialogue, notes in this volume that the Biden administration contained a historic amount of African Americans in strategic positions within the executive and the legislature, who would be tasked with efforts to rethink not only US-Africa relations, but US foreign policy in general. He also noted the importance of the “chairmanship of the Africa Subcommittee, headed by fellow Black Caucus member Karen Bass, while veteran Caucus member Barbara Lee, who formerly served on the staff of Ron Dellums, takes over chairing the equally strategic House Appropriations Foreign Aid Subcommittee”. These developments are accompanied by President Biden appointing the former assistant secretary of state for Africa, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, as US ambassador to the United Nations. “Never before has there been such a high-level, pivotal concentration of forces among African-Americans in the US official foreign affairs establishment, with the potential to shape or reshape relations between Africa and the US and American foreign policy more broadly.” These observations by Kornegay are crucial to how African stakeholders should go about articulating their priorities, and which policy inlets they can make use of. Indeed in the case of House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairperson Gregory Meeks, it was notable that he shared some of his views on a potential new engagement strategy from the US in its relations with Africa that would encompass a more deliberate approach towards Pan-African structures and regional organisations in the sub-regions^{xvi}. Key to this new approach would be ensuring that while the US continues

to cultivate key bilateral relations, it also become more visible in the various regional institutions.

Another appointment of interest to African stakeholders is that of Judd Devermont, who recently headed the Africa programme of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). He will largely be tasked with the process of formulating a new Africa strategy and draw on his previous experience within the think tank environment, where he has actively engaged with African counterparts on what they regard as priorities the US administration should take into account when formulating a strategy. The appointment makes it clear that while Africa may not have been central to US thinking in the beginning of the Biden administration's term of office, it is beginning to gain greater importance. He will also be able to draw on his experience within US intelligence to ensure that he consults broadly both within the US and in Africa.

South Africa and its partners on the African continent will thus have to ensure the proposed agenda is not so broad that it limits the creation of concrete programs. The proposed agenda could thus be limited to areas such as economic development, regional integration, geopolitical dynamics and governance. Under economic development, African stakeholders can already begin to envision and deliberate on a post-African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) trading relationship with the US that factors in the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). South Africa's diplomatic team, working with fellow African diplomatic representatives in the US could thus already initiate conversations with counterparts to get a sense of the evolving US trade agenda, especially related to Africa. This would also include a proactive engagement with US counterparts at USAID to ensure the continued support of development efforts on the continent, especially for least developed countries (LDCs) and middle income countries, which still have large sections of their societies living below the poverty line. Such support could also include building the requisite capacity amongst LDCs on the implementation of the AfCFTA in what would resemble an aid-for-trade program in line with a transitioning AGOA and a new African trade landscape in the form of the AfCFTA.

However, these discussions would also touch on how South Africa and partners in Africa could work with the US on triangular cooperation projects. Indeed, South Africa has worked with USAID and Irish Aid on various triangular cooperation projects with potato farmers in Malawi and Lesotho. Given the growing importance of triangular cooperation to the implementation of the sustainable development goals, these discussions could identify potential development areas to work together on in Africa. This will be important in the aftermath of the United Nations' 2nd High Level Conference on South-South Cooperation, held in Buenos Aires in 2019. It firmly endorsed not only the growing importance of South-South Cooperation, but also the importance of triangular cooperation to support the implementation of the sustainable development goals^{xvii}. Having entered the decade of action in the lead-up to the 2030 deadline for implementing these goals, the US will have to demonstrate how it wishes to partner with African countries to meet their development priorities. As more African countries set up structures to manage their South-South cooperation, and with the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) having an expanded mandate to coordinate South-South cooperation in Africa, it will be important for the likes of USAID to work closer with leading actors in Africa at a country level and with the likes of the APRM and the African Union Development Agency (AUDA) during the decade of action leading to the final period of implementation for the Sustainable Development Goals.

Taking into account the growing importance of regional integration to African efforts to play a more important role in global affairs, it will be important that it remains one of the key areas that African actors focus on in their relations with the US. The AfCFTA will serve as a catalyst for ramping up efforts to accelerate regional integration. African stakeholders will thus need to be proactive in focusing US efforts towards catalytic projects able to galvanise regional integration efforts, including through the identification of cross-border infrastructure projects and providing support to customs officials to build the necessary capacity to enforce new trade rules. This would position the

US as a key partner in meeting Africa's development priorities as they are articulated in Agenda 2063. Given the global supply-chain weaknesses that came to the fore at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, African countries will seek to use the pandemic as a catalyst for supporting the development of regional value chains, and the AfCFTA will be a central part of that strategy^{xviii}. If the US partners with African counterparts in supporting the development of regional value chains, it will help to enhance Africa's agency with all external partners, including those that the US considers as competitors in Africa. It is thus arguable that it is in the strategic interests of the US for Africa to have greater agency and strategic autonomy in its international relations, including through the creation of regional value chains as it would make the continent less susceptible to being overly dependent on any one external actor, including external actors the US regards as competitors or adversaries in Africa and beyond.

African stakeholders will also have to raise geopolitical dynamics on the continent with the US, especially in rebuffing efforts to force African countries to choose between China and the US in their international engagements. African stakeholders will also have to ensure that issues such as Libya, Western Sahara, and Ethiopia-Egypt-Sudan mediation efforts on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) project remain a priority in terms of moving away from some of the Trump-era posturing and decision-making, which often lacked impartiality. This is complicated further by the ongoing conflict in Tigray. In line with the recommendations of the African Union (AU) Report on Institutional Reforms^{xix}, the AU and its membership will thus want to better manage its relations with external partners instead of being caught up in the geopolitical tensions amongst the great powers. This means utilising external partnerships as an integral part of achieving Africa's objectives, as captured in Agenda 2063 and some of the regional indicative strategies adopted by the various regional economic communities.

Lastly, governance should also form part of the key issue area to develop mutual cooperation between Africa and the US. While governance, and more specifically democratic governance has

consistently featured amongst US priorities in Africa, it will be important to ensure that US cooperation and interventions are not only focused on increasing the agency of non-state actors to hold officials accountable, but that efforts are equally focused on interventions that seek to build the capacity of the state to deliver services at different layers of government. Indeed the building of effective and capable African states must remain a priority both in terms of country to country programs supported by the US, and in terms of support for the work of structures such as the African Peer Review Mechanism, which seeks to entrench good and transparent governance processes across the continent through the various peer reviews underway. Recent years have witnessed a renewed interest in the work of the APRM, and US efforts should thus also seek to complement this.

What role for South Africa in a changing global and continental strategic landscape?

With South Africa having been integral to African efforts to coordinate an effective COVID-19 response, it will be important for the country to build on this role. No longer being the chairperson of the AU, the country remains a champion of the African response to the pandemic in recognition of its role thus far. It also finds itself chairing the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Organ on Politics, Defence and Security while remaining the chairperson of the African Peer Review Mechanism, essential in addressing governance issues on the continent. It will thus continue to play a pivotal role in bilateral relations with the US and in coordinating how Africa relates with the Biden administration on a variety of policy areas in Africa and beyond.

In chairing the SADC Organ, South Africa will likely seek a holistic approach to peace and security, one that recognizes that in the absence of sustained development initiatives on the one hand, and good, effective, transparent governance on the other hand, the region is likely to be held back from contributing positively to shaping Africa's development program. The country will thus have to take an approach that encourages dialogue processes driven by the affected parties in

order to reach sustainable solutions while ensuring the implementation of development programs that improve people's lives and create the conditions for long term peace and security. The country will also have to promote dialogue initiatives at different diplomatic tracks between South African stakeholders and their regional counterparts in order to avoid a crisis driven approach and to ensure sustained and ongoing dialogues amongst regional actors. The country's ability to act in the interests of peace and stability in the region and to combat the advent of terrorism alongside the SADC standby force will be important in demonstrating the country's continued importance in Africa at a time when the US will be looking work with strategic partners on the provision of various global public goods^{xx}.

South Africa should also build on its leadership role in the World Trade Organization, where it is leading efforts for a waiver on the intellectual property rights related to the production of vaccines, especially during a pandemic. This would allow countries of the global South especially, to use some of their manufacturing capacity to upscale the production of vaccines in order to meet the current demand. While they are opposed by large pharmaceutical companies and some important developed countries, these calls are gaining momentum among state actors and non-state actors across the globe. It is thus important to ask whether this momentum can be harnessed for a leadership role beyond the pandemic. While South Africa has commended the US for its more proactive role in donating vaccines to countries that do not have enough for their populations, it will be important to ensure that the cooperation extends to the manufacture of vaccines within Africa.

South Africa will however have to acknowledge that ground has been lost in recent years, and refocus its diplomatic efforts towards Southern Africa, especially having chaired the SADC Organ for Politics, Defence, and Security since August 2021. Indeed, if South Africa loses any more ground in Southern Africa, it will make it much more difficult for it to play an influential role in the African continent and beyond.

The fact that democracy and governance continue to form important areas of focus for the Biden administration, the entrenching of

democracy and the strengthening of important democratic structures and an independent judiciary and ability to consistently hold credible elections in South Africa will bode well for efforts to strengthen and deepen mutual relations with the US at a bilateral level, but also in Africa and beyond. It will however be important for South Africa to tap into the networks established during the years of the anti-apartheid movement, harnessing them for a different context and reality. South Africa will also have to work with countries with a similar capacity in Africa in order to ensure that Africa's engagement with the US is reinforced by efforts at a country level and at sub-regional levels through the various regional economic communities. ◇

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US-Africa security relations: Toward new approaches and perspectives

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As the United States administration of President Joe Biden enters its second year in office in 2021, it is important to reflect on the security policies that need to undergird the US-Africa relationship. Although both bilateral and multilateral security cooperation feature prominently in America's engagement with African countries, these matters have always been shrouded in secrecy and opacity. This chapter suggests that there is need for a shift in US policy to emphasize transparency in security engagement with African countries as well as more selectivity in allocating security assistance. A transparent and selective approach needs to reinforce the democratic governance promotion posture of the Biden administration. On their part, African recipients of security assistance should also be transparent and accountable to their citizens on the purposes of security assistance and its implications on national budgets. After a broad introduction, the chapter discusses the US military infrastructure and approaches on the continent before dealing with the US ambivalence towards Africa in terms of the uneasy linkages between democracy and security imperatives. This lays the foundation for discussions specific to the Horn of Africa, the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin and a short comment on the Southern Africa region. The conclusion offers some thoughts on how the US and Africa should approach military and security issues in a manner that would be beneficial to both.

Introduction

Security cooperation benefits Africa and the US in three primary ways. First, there is broad consensus that secure states and societies are the foundations for democracy, development, and prosperity. The

legacy of civil wars in Africa reveals that once violence decimates the socioeconomic infrastructure that protects societies, it takes decades for recovery and reconstruction. Studies have emphasized the importance of security to recovery because without it, countries often revert to war in about five years. As Salomons notes: “Security – that is, freedom from violence and coercion – is the one absolute prerequisite to any effective recovery process after the intensity of armed conflicts. Without the prospect of security, there is no hope, there is no commitment to a common futureⁱ.”

Second, the majority of African states may, in the short-to-long terms, never mobilize sufficient resources to achieve security without assistance from external actors such as the US. While the Cold War heightened Africa’s dependence on military support from a wide range of external powers, the security needs have persisted as African countries and sub-regions confronted the spectre of civil wars starting in the 1990s. In the post-cold war period, the US, alongside its Western allies, took on an increasingly large burden of security assistance to African countries who sought to take advantage of the new aid opportunities. Third, new and emerging security threats such as terrorism and radical Islamism have arisen in the context of weakening state capacity and porous borders that require well-equipped and resourced security forces. As the US Institute for Peace Report observed:

Terrorism and violent extremism are arguably Africa’s greatest security threats in 2021. Local groups with international terror links are embedded in East, West, and southern Africa. Their activities foment local conflicts and enable organized crime rackets – destabilizing already fragile political landscapes. Meanwhile, years of government-led security force interventions, many supported by US and European governments, have not dislodged the insurgents. Unless local approaches that incorporate tactics beyond kinetic counterterrorism are included in strategies to prevent violent extremism, Africa’s many national and regional efforts will fail to deliver sustainable and credible peace.ⁱⁱ

The convergence of these factors compels the givers and recipients of security assistance to be more open and upfront about the purposes of security assistance. This is despite the dominant practice of most donors and African recipients concealing security assistance to their constituenciesⁱⁱⁱ.

US military policies, strategies, and instruments

Much of the US Foreign Military Financing for Africa (FMFA) covers a wide range of programs such as transfers of military materiel, tactical combat training, joint military exercises, military education for officers, and defence institution building^{iv}. The State Department runs most of these security assistance programs under the label of Peacekeeping Operations (PKO). Despite its designation, the PKO is the major vehicle for the State Department-managed security assistance to Africa and supports not only peacekeeping capacity-building, but also counterterrorism, maritime security, and security sector reform. In recent years, most of the PKO has gone to the African Union (AU) stabilization operation in Somalia and interagency counterterrorism programs in the Sahel and Horn of Africa^v. Apart from administering most of these programs, the Department of Defense (DOD) engages in security cooperation with African militaries and internal security agencies under the DOD's "Global Train and Equip" that authorizes, among others, capacity building to counter terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, drug trafficking, and transnational crimes^{vi}. Train and Equip is part of a long-term US policy to help partner nations take charge of their own security without direct involvement of US troops. Starting in 2005, some US National Guards have formed partnerships in capacity building with African countries. The most notable cases are South Africa with the New York National Guard and Rwanda with the Nebraska National Guard^{vii}.

Since the Clinton administration (1993-2001) advanced the policy of capacity building for African militaries to participate in peacekeeping, selected African militaries have received substantial US training and equipment through programs such as the African

Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI), the Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance program (ACOTA), and the Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI) funded under the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations. In the aftermath of 9/11, the US increased its counterterrorism footprints in Africa through the Pan-Sahel Initiative (PSI) and the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn Africa (CJTF-HOA), part of the US Africa Command (AFRICOM) in Djibouti.

With the exception of Botswana and Liberia, most African countries rejected the stationing of the AFRICOM when the US created it in 2007, igniting divisive debates about militarization of US-Africa policy^{viii}. Nonetheless, the majority of African countries have gradually embraced various forms of military cooperation with AFRICOM. Thus even though the CJTF-HOA is the only official base in Africa, there are as many as 60 smaller facilities in 40 African nations, serving as staging areas for joint special force operations, military exercises and other security cooperation activities. There are some current estimates of 7000 US military personnel on rotational deployment in Africa^{ix}. Even the most vociferous critics of AFRICOM such as South Africa have welcomed military engagements with AFRICOM. As Devermont and Steadman have shown, AFRICOM's senior leaders have had more interactions with African leaders than any other officials from the US government:

While US embassies in Africa have been woefully understaffed for decades, the US military presence has increased, serving as a crucial signal to African partners that the United States is a steadfast ally. For example, most African countries rarely receive visits from the president, vice president, secretary of state, or even senior officials from other departments. In fact, US presidents have visited only 16 out of the 54 countries in Africa, making repeated stops in a handful of countries. In contrast, AFRICOM's senior leaders travel to the continent more often and to more countries than anyone else in the US government. Interactions with US military officials are the key diplomatic relationships in Africa outside of the embassy. Such interactions are often an

African leader's highest-level connection to the US government, and they are what many African governments view as the most reliable form of US engagement^x.

Various US administrations have consistently allocated FMF to a majority of its African allies in response to need, absorptive abilities, and other considerations. The only change came when President Donald Trump (2016-2020) did not request military assistance for African countries, with the exception of Djibouti, which hosts the CHJTF-HOA^{xi}. Nonetheless, as a demonstration of the bipartisanship of security assistance to Africa, the US Congress rejected Trump's January 2020 proposal to draw down its military deployment in Africa. Two leading members from the Republican and Democratic parties warned that the move was "short-sighted and diminishes our overall national security posture and our ability to lead with American values and influence^{xii}."

The security-democracy conundrum

As democracy promotion and antiterrorism became central priorities in US policy toward Africa, various administrations-imposed sanctions, including withholding military support to countries they were accused of egregious human rights violations, support for terrorist groups, and where militaries overthrew civilian regimes. In the late 1990s, the US Congress enacted the Leahy Laws that prohibit the US Department of State and Department of Defense from providing military assistance to foreign security force units that violate human rights^{xiii}. In the Horn of Africa, the Clinton administration blacklisted Sudan because of its support for terrorist organizations and regional destabilization. Eritrea under the authoritarian rule of Isaias Afwerki was also targeted for supporting extremist groups in Somalia. In southern Africa, the US Congress imposed sanctions on Zimbabwe since the early 2000s because of gross human rights violations. Similarly, the US suspended military assistance to the Malian government following the military coup in March 2012 and August 2020^{xiv}.

Sudan, Eritrea, Mali, and Zimbabwe, to some extent, epitomize the US attempts to realign the values of democratization with its

military and security policies in Africa. But these are the exceptions to the broader policy that has departed from this realignment. Thus, for the most part, countries with authoritarian leaders and histories of human rights abuses have received military assistance especially when they are at the forefront of counterterrorism efforts. Typically, many US proponents of working with security forces in authoritarian countries have invoked the “socializing effect”, whereby the US military ostensibly inculcates the values of democracy, human rights observance, and professionalism in African militaries. In the long term, therefore, this inculcation helps these countries as they make the steady transition to democratic societies. As Watts and others observe, “by professionalizing and socializing partner security personnel, the United States can stabilize governments through improved civil-military relations and human-rights practices^{xv}.”

The record of socialization for better governance is decidedly mixed: while US military engagements with some African armies may have prevented them from disrupting the democratic transitions of the 1990s, there are also many cases of US-funded militaries that have been implicated in coup d'états and unconstitutional changes of government. Egypt's military stands out for its long-standing relationships with the US military and its perennial proclivity for denigration of civilian institutions. In addition, the Malian military that had received US training led the military coups that overthrew civilian governments in 2012 and 2020 ^{xvi}.

While most security cooperation programs by the Department of Defense are classified, the Congressional Research Service analysis found that some of the leading recipients over the past decade have been authoritarian regimes in Chad, Cameroon, Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Uganda^{xvii}. Djibouti, Ethiopia and Uganda were three of the top 10 recipients of US government Foreign Military Financing between 2016 and 2021^{xviii}. Such regimes have often used US support as an opportunity to run roughshod over domestic opponents. It is indisputable that terrorist organizations are a threat to the security and livelihoods that African countries cherish. This means that

counterterrorism is, at heart, an objective that both the US and Africa can collectively pursue without too much contestation. However, counterterrorism efforts that hinge on indiscriminate support for authoritarian regimes invariably undermine the legitimacy of these initiatives and, even worse, fuel the constituencies that provide succour and support to extremist organizations.

Years of US involvement with Uganda's military and security forces in counterinsurgency in the Horn and Great Lakes regions have not enhanced the country's respect for democratic norms nor its responsiveness to human rights. Between 2012 and 2017, the US Congress authorized additional security assistance to help Uganda combat the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) rebel group. For most of his 30 years in power, President Yoweri Museveni has relied on US security assistance and frequently used Uganda's participation in UN peacekeeping in Somalia to trample on domestic opposition. Following the highly militarized election of February 2021, the Biden administration, imposed visa restrictions on Uganda's security forces for their interference in the elections^{xix}. As perhaps the first major policy decision of the administration on Africa, the restrictions followed similar sanctions the Trump administration had imposed on Tanzanian officials who had botched the 2020 elections. These actions should signal the departure from blanket US military engagements with undemocratic regimes in Africa. But for the policy to be sustainable, the US will need to apply it consistently and impartially, particularly within sub-regions that face the same circumstances. Thus, once the US imposes visa bans on the Uganda military, there is every reason to do the same when the Paul Kagame regime in Rwanda uses the military against domestic opponents.

Sub-regional perspectives: The Horn

The Horn of Africa has always presented difficult dilemmas for US policy in Africa, particularly in reconciling support for democratic governance with the pursuit of counterterrorism strategies. In the case of Somalia for instance, this is also understandable in light of

the tremendous security implications of country's 30-year descent into anarchy; the emergence of Al-Shabaab in 2006 and its virulent Islamist agenda has compromised democratization and security as values that are important for long term stabilization of the region^{xx}. Regional actors including the AU have also prioritized the objective of military defeat of Al-Shabaab as an essential step in the creation of a functional state in Mogadishu.

Although formidable, the fight against Al-Shabaab's destabilization presents an opportunity for the US to support the fledgling government in Mogadishu as it rebuilds civilian institutions of governance and broadens popular support. Ultimately, the strongest weapon against Al-Shabaab's violent extremism is a functional, accountable, and representative Somalia state that returns to its past tradition of moderate Islam and social tolerance. Although the Trump administration had announced a January 2021 for the withdrawal of US troops from Somalia, the Biden administration has taken a more cautious approach as it reassess its engagement in the region^{xxi}. Equally critical, in addition to fighting terrorism, the stabilization of the Horn of Africa will require the gradual recognition of the statehood of Somaliland and international efforts to mediate outstanding bilateral issues between Hargeisa and Mogadishu. As a former US ambassador to Somalia, Stephen Schwartz, has argued, "the US should work with the African Union and others to resolve Somaliland's status by persuading Somalia's next president to undertake immediate and serious negotiations. Somaliland's stability and location . . . could give the United States strategically useful options, but only if Somaliland has international legal standing to negotiate agreements or consented to provisions of arrangements negotiated by the Federal Government of Somalia^{xxii}."

In the initial phase of the counterinsurgency strategies in Somalia, the US relied primarily on Ethiopia under Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, who did not have any pretensions to democratic credentials^{xxiii}. In the post-Meles period, the regime of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has remained a critical supporter of US policy while also promoting

fundamental reforms in governance at home. Before the disastrous Ethiopian military intervention to stop alleged secessionism of Tigray region in 2020, Ethiopia was on the trajectory of becoming a credible regional actor that the US could continue to depend upon on in efforts to stabilize Somalia. But Abiy's Tigrayan imbroglio is presenting additional dilemmas for the new Biden administration: if Ethiopia lapses into further civil war, it will cease to be a dependable US ally. In addition, the demise of Ethiopia as an anchor of stability will lead to more insecurity in the Horn. To be consistent in its policy focus on human rights, the Biden administration has, for now, opted to condemn Ethiopia's intervention in Tigray while holding the hope that the crisis may end without Ethiopia's disintegration. US Secretary of State, Antony Blinken captured these dilemmas by both decriing the worsening humanitarian situation in Tigray and threats to the sovereignty, national unity, and territorial integrity of Ethiopia^{xxiv}.

With Ethiopia engulfed into internal conflict, the US strategy on counterterrorism has fallen back increasingly to the CJTF-HOA based in one of the most undemocratic regimes in the region. In the April 2021 elections, Djibouti's President Ismail Omar Guelleh won a fifth term in office with 97 percent of the vote, after the opposition decided to boycott the election^{xxv}. Although Djibouti's authoritarian and clan-based ruling class has allowed the US easy entry into the region, in the long run, there needs to be debates on the sustainability of this engagement if there are no fundamental alterations in domestic politics.

In his last days in office, President Trump had signalled an eventual withdrawal of US troops from Djibouti. This move, however, was motivated less by concerns about the regime's authoritarianism and more about US withdrawal from endless external military forays. The Biden administration has the opportunity to demonstrate to Djibouti that in the changing context of balancing support for democratic governance and security cooperation, the US will no longer countenance authoritarian regimes that seek to play off big power against each to advance their own strategic interests.

Sub-regional perspectives: Sahel and Lake Chad Basin

The Sahel region also poses many challenges for coherent US policies in Africa. The destabilization of a whole swath of territory from Libya's borders into Chad has caused humanitarian misery and widespread poverty. The problems are compounded by the multiplicity of states, Islamist groups, regional institutions, and international actors that prevent consistent approaches. The core Sahelian countries – Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger – have been ravaged by several extremist forces such as the Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) that gained prominence after the collapse of Libyan government of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011 and the onset of the Malian civil war in 2012. In response to these security threats, these countries formed a platform in 2014 called the Group of Five for the Sahel (G5 Sahel).

Since the 9/11 attacks, US security assistance programs grew exponentially in the Sahel. Through the Train and Build program, the US assisted in the training of army units in Mali, Mauritania, Chad and Niger under the 2003 Pan-Sahel Initiative. With the creation of the Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Partnership, the group of countries receiving training expanded to Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Nigeria, Libya and Senegal. According to Security Assistance Monitor, between 2001-2019, the US gave at least \$1.44 billion in security aid to countries in the Sahel^{xxvi}. Despite US counterterrorism assistance, there have been many recent reports that suggest that these efforts have not improved security in the region. A scathing audit report by the State Department in September 2020 noted that inadequate oversight of contracts and activities had led to mismanagement of funds and complete inefficiency of the training programs. It further concluded that the over \$1 billion spent since 2005 had been “wasteful” and that there was no assurance that training would achieve its goals of building counterterrorism capacity and addressing the underlying drivers of radicalization in the Sahel^{xxvii}.

In the Lake Chad Basin region, the combination of food insecurity, conflicts, terrorism, displacement and climate change have spurred

Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria to coalesce into a regional Multinational Joint Task Force (MJTF) to launch military strikes against Boko Haram and other insurgents^{xxviii}. These countries have also been beneficiaries of US and Western military assistance. But the like the Horn and Sahel, critics have charged that military assistance to largely undemocratic regimes in Benin, Chad, and Cameroon has undermined the insurgency campaigns and emboldened terrorist groups^{xxix}. As a result, human rights organizations have called upon the US to prevail on its allies in the region to include rights-respecting strategies, public denouncements of serious human rights violations, and independent, and impartial investigations into alleged abuses^{xxx}. Chad, the star player in both the G5 Sahel and the Lake Chad initiative has been embroiled in a governance crisis since its long-serving dictator Idriss Déby was killed in April 2021 by rebel forces, enabling his son, Mahamat Déby to unconstitutionally take power^{xxxi}. While Chad has not descended into more instability under the new regime, the demise of Déby should have been a good opportunity for the US to rethink its partnership with Chad unless there are clear signs of reforms in democratic governance^{xxxii}.

In a stark acknowledgement of the failure of regional counterterrorism efforts in the Sahel, Nigeria's President Mohammed Buhari invited the US in April 2021 to consider moving the US Africa Command (AFRICOM), currently based in Stuttgart, Germany, to Africa in order to better support the fight against rising insecurity^{xxxiii}. This invitation was a radical departure from the previous position articulated by major African countries to oppose US military bases on African soil. Although most Nigerian commentators described the invitation as a precursor to US "recolonization"^{xxxiv} of Africa, it represents a remarkable shift toward transparency and honesty in the approach of African engagements to US military assistance. After all, African governments have routinely accepted US security assistance and AFRICOM has been visibly active in most African regions; the relocation of AFRICOM to the continent potentially gives African countries some measure of control on what it does and how it operates. As Fabricius has noted:

Given the reality of a large dependence on outside support, one can't help asking if moving AFRICOM to Africa would be more in the continent's interests than having it operate out of Europe or the US. It would certainly acknowledge the reality on the ground. Apart from shortening reaction times, it would also presumably enable the AU and African countries to manage and monitor America's sprawling military presence better if they had one contact point^{xxxv}.

Sub-regional perspectives: Southern Africa

In Southern Africa, where the US has had a relatively low military engagement since the end of decolonization conflicts, the crisis in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado that faces Islamist insurgencies has presented an entry point for US engagement. In March 2021, the United States formally designated the group, known locally as Al-Sunna wa Jama'a, as a global terrorist entity. Subsequently, the US sent a small group of Special Forces to train Mozambican to "prevent the spread of terrorism and violent extremism^{xxxvi}." Although modest in size, the deployment has the potential of growing in numbers if the insurgency escalates. But while it fits into the pattern of counterinsurgency efforts elsewhere in Africa, there have been concerns about the ability of the Mozambican military to respect for human rights and protect civilians, particularly in an environment of increasing numbers of foreign military forces^{xxxvii}.

Conclusion

Growing recognition within the Biden administration for a shift in security assistance stems in large part from the fact that US foreign policy has become highly militarized particularly since the 9/11 attacks and the counterterrorism and counterinsurgency postures that ensued. Militarization has, in turn, stymied congressional oversight of foreign policy and prevented better coordination between diplomacy and defence. Moreover, as the administration increasingly moves toward the promotion of democracy and governance as core values of US

foreign policy, there will be need to return these values to the forefront of engagement with the rest of the world. As some proponents of reforms have noted, a new realignment fundamentally means the restoration of “the State Department’s role, as originally intended under US law, as the overseer of all US foreign assistance. It also offers recommendations for expanding and training the security assistance workforce, improving interagency coordination, elevating human rights concerns in security assistance policy, and adapting best practices from the Department of Defense^{xxxviii}.”

Although the administration has yet to articulate a clear Africa policy, the imperative of linking security assistance to governance cannot be postponed because of the disappointments with the record of counterterrorism in the Sahel and Horn of Africa. In his virtual address to the African Union summit in February 2021, President Biden outlined what may emerge as the core features of US-Africa relations, calling for a shared vision of a better future with growing trade and investment that advances peace and security: “A future committed to investing in our democratic institutions and promoting the human rights of all people, women and girls, LGBTQ individuals, people with disabilities, and people of every ethnic background, religion and heritage^{xxxix}.” If more democratic African states can be rewarded with security assistance to deal with the mounting security challenges, this would contribute toward the longer-term mission of preventing conflict and fostering political stability. Furthermore, supporting both security assistance and democratization would be consistent with the broader yearnings for democratic governance by a majority of the African public. As demonstrated by various findings from the Afrobarometer surveys, Africans in large majorities overwhelmingly support democratic norms and accountable governance^{xl}.

For African countries, a new narrative on US-Africa security relations ought to be anchored on transparency in defence spending. While critical because of the growing security needs, defence spending in the majority African countries has always been controversial because governments often do not provide accurate and precise information

about it. Neither do they explain adequately the trade-offs between security and social investment. In the absence of this information, ordinary citizens tend to be sceptical about defence spending, deriding it as wasteful^{xli}. To get out of this problem, African governments need to sensitize their publics on the significance of defence spending, including how much security assistance they obtain from external sources. Open budgetary governance around defence and security allocations would do three things. First would be to strengthen civilian, particularly legislative oversight over the military, an essential component of democratization and stable civil-military relations. Second, enhancing accountability in defence spending helps the citizens appreciate why governments need to invest in well-resourced security forces, ultimately making them core stakeholders in defence and security. Third, it would enable the US to make better choices in the allocation of security assistance to African countries. By this logic, the countries that are making steady progress toward democracy and governance would deserve more security assistance than the laggards. ◇

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Rivalries, tensions and reversals in US peace and security interventions in Africa

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The US is a critical actor in peace and security interventions in Africa. While its interventions in Africa were initially largely intended at countering Soviet expansion, the end of the Cold War marked a foreign policy shift that attracted US multilateral action in the region. The US' inaction in Rwanda in 1994 at the backdrop of the Black Hawk Down incident in Somalia in 1993 however exhibited tensions and reversals in its interventions in the region. The unilateral action in the wake of the Global War on Terror as well as its renewed security partnerships in Africa, for instance, the Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Partnership initiative depicts US ambivalence in peace and security interventions in the region. This chapter reviews US interventions in Africa by analyzing its episodic multilateralism and reversals to unilateralism, and their implications towards peace and security, especially in the post-Trump era. The first section examines the US' unilateralism in its interventions in the independence era, while the second explores the US' shift to multilateralism at the end of the Cold War. The third section highlights the US' defiance of multilateralism in Africa in the era of the Global War on Terror, while the fourth prospects a return of multilateralism in peace and security interventions anchored within a revitalized African agency. In the end, the chapter highlights some gaps in US security interventions in the region and makes policy recommendations that would reshape Africa's agency in enhancing its security infrastructure with the view to repositioning Africa's role in securing the region.

Introduction

In the wake of growing multilateralism after the world wars, the US accentuated its dominance in the international system, principally

influencing the interactions of states, and non-state actors, through the UN system. While the US remained covert in its operations in Africa during the world wars, the period after WWII marked a shift in its foreign policy orientation in the region. In particular, the US' episodic involvement in Somalia's civil war, especially in the period after the ousting of Siad Barre, following decades of Cold War interventions in the central, southern and the Horn of Africa regions marked a re-orientation of its security interventions in the region. The intensified multilateral engagements intended to secure the Horn of Africa with the view to countering the proliferation of terror groups, especially after the embassy bombings in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam in 1998, and more so in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, further revitalized US interventions in Africa. Despite the continued security installations and surveillance targeted at securing the Horn which is an entry point to the Gulf and the Middle East, the region still poses a threat to global security, especially due to terrorism and violent extremism-related incidences. More so, the huge financial commitments to pacifying the region have, while strengthening the security infrastructure, attracted debates on the need for a re-orientation of US security interventions in the region. Calls by the President Donald Trump's regime to refocus attention to other emerging epicenters posing security threats in the region, especially in the Sahel, as well as calls to scale down operations and funding of security operations in Africa puts the US on the horns of a dilemma.

Unilateralism in US foreign policy orientation in the independence era (1950-1990)

The US' policy on interventions in Africa during the world wars remained covert, with minimal involvement, especially where its allies were engaged in imperial contests. At the end of WWII, however, the US built strategic alliances in Africa with its allies, especially the British and its imperial proxies. This was with a view to securing resources and preferential access to markets, for instance in its intended support of Egypt in the funding of the Aswan High Dam in 1952, against British and French interests in the Suez Canal¹. The US' setting up of

military bases in French Morocco was also viewed as an encroachment of French's interests in North Africa, especially in the control of oil deposits in Algeriaⁱⁱ. While avoiding antagonizing its allies, the US' interventions in Africa in support of rebel movements increased its military presence, which rather than alleviating conflicts tended to exacerbate them. In the case of Congo-DRC, the US, in support of Belgium, instigated regime change that led to a protracted civil war, after the eventual assassination of Prime Minister and independence leader Patrice Lumumba in 1961ⁱⁱⁱ. The Congo civil crisis, experienced between 1961 and 1965, signified a big shift in the US' involvement in conflict interventions in the region, this initially intensifying the Cold War rivalries with the Soviet Union and its allies such as Cuba^{iv}. Despite Belgium sending troops in Katanga and South Kasai, the belated deployment of the UN's peacekeepers to protect the interests of the Patrice Lumumba-led nationalists attracted the involvement of the Soviets. This occasioned the eventual military involvement of the US in 1964, when the Maoist-oriented militants proclaimed control over the eastern parts of the country proclaiming it as sovereign territory and a communist republic. As argued by Kaplan, the US' involvement in the Congo crisis initially demonstrated the ensuing dilemma in its foreign policy, especially in interventions against imperialist interests of its allies in Africa. While the US initially supported the UN in expelling Belgium from Congo in 1960, and in supporting nationalist interests, its support over Belgium later in 1965-1967 depicted its covert imperial and neocolonial interventions in Africa^v.

In West Africa, the US accentuated its strategic alliance with Liberia. This was in furtherance to their long-standing diplomatic relationships that were premised on the resettlement of freed slaves and African-Americans in Liberia, and elsewhere in the Sierra Leone, in the mid-nineteenth century^{vi}. Despite the atrocities committed, including public mass executions following the 1980 military coup, the US under President Ronald Reagan provided military and financial assistance to Liberia^{vii}. This was due to President Samuel Doe's open defiance against communist influence in the region^{viii}. The US established a military base

in Liberia, with a view to preemptively protecting its interests in North Africa. In addition, the US had in 1942 signed a defense pact with Liberia that provided for military installations for security surveillance^{ix}.

Elsewhere in southern Africa, the US covertly supported Prime Minister Ian Smith regime's white minority control over Zimbabwe, then Rhodesia^x. The US advanced its policy of free-marketism in Rhodesia against communist expansion that was championed by the Soviet Union. The US, and its British ally, supported Ian Smith in his suppression of calls for independence with military and economic assistance in exchange of unfettered access to mineral wealth and markets for its weapons to Rhodesia, and elsewhere in southern Africa where American companies were strategically located^{xi}. While the continued white minority rule in Rhodesia provided the Soviet Union a chance to align with the nationalists against imperial interests, the US' and its allies' counter-support of the Smith regime depicted its covert interventions in the region.

Besides its inclination towards white minority in Rhodesia, the US under President Reagan's administration also covertly supported the white minority rule apartheid regime in South Africa with a view to protecting its firms and securing its access to mineral resources and markets^{xii}. Despite the quest to end the apartheid regime, the Reagan administration vilified African National Congress loyalists who opposed apartheid and profiled nationalists seeking to end white minority rule as sponsors of terrorism, including the anti-apartheid icon Nelson Mandela^{xiii}. Besides Rhodesia and South Africa, the US provided military and financial support to the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) (UNITA) in Angola and the Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (Mozambican National Resistance) (RENAMO) in Mozambique^{xiv}. The US also funded South Africa's domination of Namibia with a view to protecting its companies involved in mining. Despite its defeat in Angola in the joint intervention with South Africa in 1975, the US' continued military and financial support to UNITA marked its quest to counter communist tendencies in southern Africa. In addition, the

US' continued support for UNITA despite the 1988 peace accords, and the withholding of recognition of the Angolan government, depicted its dilemma of the pursuit over liberal democratic ideals versus its material support to the UNITA guerrilla movement that served to counter communist interests in the region^{xv}. While RENAMO initially received military and financial aid from the Soviet Union, the US covertly supported it through its allies in South Africa and Rhodesia^{xvi}. Calls for support of RENAMO were initially opposed by President Reagan and the State Department due to the documented mass atrocity crimes it committed. Despite the dilemma in funding the RENAMO insurgents who were committing the atrocities versus advancing the Reagan doctrine that asserted anti-communism, the US nevertheless provided covert support to RENAMO that was initially meant to counter communist expansion in Mozambique. Elsewhere, the US' support of South Africa in its domination of Namibia – then South West Africa – depicted its covert interventions initially meant to counter communist interests championed by Soviet Union's ally – Cuba. As argued by Kaela, the US viewed the contest between South Africa and the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) in its quest for independence as a superpower Cold War rival and hence its intended delay of Namibia's eventual independence. This was with the view to tilting allegiance to new parties that would perhaps compromise SWAPO's dominance^{xvii}.

In the Horn, the US supported Ethiopia with military aid in the 1970s before switching alliance to Somalia after the Soviet-led Marxist regime change. The US had maintained close relationship with Ethiopia during the reign of Haile Selassie fortified by the military assistance that it offered, especially in the period following the signing of the Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement in 1953 up until 1974^{xviii}. While Baissa, and Diamond and Fouquet, argue that US interest in Ethiopia was premised on geostrategic interests, especially Ethiopia's location and proximity to the Middle East where the US had interests in oil, as well as its military intelligence surveillance interests, other studies including Schmidt and Cohen demonstrate that US interests in Ethiopia were intended at to counter communist interests in the region^{xix}. In a review

of US foreign policy toward Ethiopia, Mantzikos also argues that while the Cold War rivalries were driven by fear and balance of power, the US' presence in the Horn was necessary to counter the Soviet power in a situation of war, while protecting its economic interests in the Gulf^{xx}. After the 1974 coup that led to the overthrow of Haile Selassie, diplomatic relations were severed during the reign of Mengistu Haile Mariam, this symbolizing the reversals, tensions and dilemma that the US has faced in its foreign policy orientation in the Horn. After the coup, the US switched allegiance and in return supported Somalia by providing weapons to the Siad Barre regime^{xxi}. At the outset, the divergent approach of the US towards Somalia was hence characterized by tensions and reversals, especially after the reign of Mengistu who advanced communist ideologies in Ethiopia. While the US under the Reagan administration provided military aid to Somalia, and even engaged in joint military exercises with its armed forces, as stated by Schraeder and Rosati, its change of recourse from supporting Ethiopia in pursuit of its geostrategic interests accentuated the dilemma it constantly faces in the Horn^{xxii}. The US' eventual withdrawal of aid from Somalia during the reign of President George H. Bush, citing human rights abuses, further characterized these reversals and tensions, eventually leading to its involvement in the civil war after the ousting of Siad Barre in 1991^{xxiii}.

Besides the reversals and tensions in Ethiopia and Somalia, the US supported Sudan with a view to countering Libya's Muammar Gaddafi's expansionist interests in the Horn, as well as in suppressing the Soviet's expansion in the region^{xxiv}. Despite its policy of non-alignment, Sudan's initial alignment to Egypt, which had gained support of the Soviet Union in 1955, attracted mistrust and dissent from the US which was fronting Israel as a key ally in the region. In offering economic and technical support to Sudan in 1957, the US sought to contain Soviet influence, a strategic move that attracted internal dissent, especially after the coup in 1958 and during the reign of Sadiq al-Mahdi from 1967 to 1969^{xxv}. Jaafar Muhammad an-Nimeiry's – Sudanese President between 1965 and 1985 – reversal of Sudan's Soviet links following the

failed communist-supported coup in 1971 led to renewed US-Sudan strategic alliances, especially as a tactical affront to Libya's increasing influence. Despite their shared strategic interests during the Cold War, US support to Sudan was however suppressed due to Omar al-Bashir's alleged links with Islamist radicalists, especially the CIA protégé Osama bin Laden who had established al-Qaeda bases in Sudan, and elsewhere in the Persian Gulf^{xxvi}. Amidst these superpower rivalries, tensions and reversals, US' involvement in Somalia at the end of the Cold War stimulated its multilateral engagements in the region to the present day.

The US' ambivalent multilateralism in post-Cold War Africa (1991-2001)

The outbreak of the civil war in Somalia in 1991 following the ousting of Siad Barre revitalized the US' multilateral interventions in the region, specifically in the Horn of Africa. As a result of the security vacuum that ensued in the absence of a central government, various armed militia factions committed atrocities, especially in the south, that elicited the need for interventions, initially by the UN. Due to the hostilities and the atrocities committed in the south by the armed factions, the UNSC resolution 794 authorized the deployment of interventions^{xxvii}. This was with the view to securing operations in the delivery of humanitarian relief to the civilian population. The failure of UNISOM I – which was created in 1992 to re-establish order after Mohammed Farah Aideed defied the UNSC resolutions and further opposed deployment of troops elicited the need for interventions. The US' coordination of the United Task Force, UNITAF, which was a multinational force sanctioned by the UN in 1992 to intervene in Somalia, marked its foreign policy shift to multilateralism in the region. Despite its intervention under Operation Restore Hope, the use of force sanctioned under UNSC resolution 837 changed the recourse of the intervention from humanitarian action to a military one^{xxviii}. The US' involvement in UNISOM II renewed its impetus towards multilateral cooperation in state-building initiatives disguised as peace interventions.

While the US Central Command's coordination in Operation Restore Hope – with a US personnel strength of 25,000 – highlighted its lead in multilateral cooperation in Somalia, its intervention was at least however viewed as an attempt to protect oil concessions of US firms^{xxxix}. The US' leading role in coordinating the UNITAF operations based on its troop contribution elevated it to take command of the intervention, despite other significant troop contribution by Canada, France and Italy. The transfer of UNITAF's mandate to UNISOM II accentuated US interventions in enhancing stability in Somalia, until the Black Hawk Down incident in 1993 in the Battle of Mogadishu where 18 US soldiers who had raided the capital to capture allies of the Somali warlord Farah Aideed were killed^{xxx}. This incident ended US intervention in UNISOM II as it withdrew its troops forthwith and refocused its future interventions in the Gulf (in Iraq). In the case of Operation Restore Hope, however, critical questions were raised on whether US' troops should be deployed for humanitarian considerations. While such interventions could be explored from the perspective of advancing US foreign policy interests, their military deployment in the guise of humanitarian ends exhibited its covert state-building intentions of its interventions. As argued by Dotson, the perceived failure of the operation however impacted on US' foreign policy decision-making in relation to interventions – or non-interventions – as observed in the case of the inaction in Rwanda^{xxxi}.

Despite intelligence reports elsewhere in Rwanda indicating that Hutu and Tutsi militias were preparing for war, President Bill Clinton administration's failure to intervene, deliberately, perhaps retreating from the failed intervention in Somalia, depicted US ambivalence in multilateralism. As argued by Des Forges, intelligence reports shared to the UN both by the Rwandan Army officers and the CIA had indicated that Rwandan civilians were facing danger of possible atrocities as was equally reported by the then UN Commander in Rwanda General Romeo Dallaire^{xxxii}. The US nevertheless constrained the UN from taking preventive action against the impending danger. Despite not sending troops in the UN Mission in Rwanda – UNAMIR I – established in 1993,

the US voted in a UNSC resolution to withdraw troops from Rwanda, before the UN, in a compromise intervention, initiated a revitalized mission – UNAMIR II – whose troops arrived late when the genocide had been accomplished^{xxxiii}. Nevertheless, President Clinton's apology at Kigali Airport in March 1998 in response to the US' non-intervention in Rwanda marked a return to its earlier initiative of advancing multilateral interventions in Africa. The US' quest to withdraw UN troops who were deployed in Rwanda in UNAMIR I after the signing of the Arusha Accords in 1993, as well as its deliberate effort to block UNSC authorization of deployment of troops to counter the atrocities, had depicted a foreign policy shift, a complete reversal in its interventions for peace in Africa. Despite Clinton administration's impetus towards multilateralism in peacekeeping, the US' failure to strengthen UNAMIR-I's 2500 troops, with an open opposition to aggressive peacekeeping in Africa after the Black Hawk Down incident occasioned the US' inaction and non-intervention that enhanced the 1994 genocide.

Defiance of multilateralism in interventions in the Global War on Terror post-9/11

The President George W. Bush administration accentuated reversals to unilateralism in US foreign policy orientation towards Africa. Following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, well besides other earlier attacks elsewhere in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam in 1998, the US intensified its security operations in the Horn. Since the US has strategic interest in Somalia, it utilized its naval and air facilities installed in Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti to advance its operations in the Horn, and in the Middle East. The US military presence in Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti accentuated its quest to secure the Horn, which is a strategic launch pad for interventions on anti-terrorism, as well in protecting its energy interests across the Gulf. Camp Lemonnier – built in 2002 – is critical in the US' deployment of troops as well as drones in its interventions targeted at countering terror in the Horn and in the Gulf. Despite the military installations in Lemonnier which have accentuated defense cooperation – naval and military – the Bush administration's unilateral

action, especially in its defiance of the UNSC, and its Northern Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies, in its quest to wage the global war on terror, gave impetus to the emergence of Al-Qaeda affiliated agencies such as the Al-Shabaab that have accentuated insecurity in the Horn thereby revitalizing targeted interventions^{xxxiv}.

The US' multilateralism in the region was re-invigorated by the Obama administration, especially in Libya, in 2011. Following UNSC's resolution condemning Muammar Gaddafi's use of lethal force against civilians, the US, and its NATO allies, as well as South Africa and Nigeria, unabashedly, voted in affirmative in a subsequent resolution authorizing for military intervention^{xxxv}. In response, the US, Britain and France launched air strikes, eventually ending the operations in October 2011 after the eventual killing of Gaddafi^{xxxvi}. The US, again, waged an intervention that while premised on humanitarian consideration as was in the case of Somalia, and perhaps as possible deployment of the Responsibility to Protect regime, resulted in an unprecedented destruction. The US intervention in Libya attracted further discourses on the justification of the war, in its conduct – *jus in bello* – and after the war – *jus post bellum*^{xxxvii}. This operation occasioned devastation, especially in the destruction of civilian infrastructure and military installations, besides the mass atrocities committed by the Gaddafi regime in retaliation of the NATO US-led invasion. Although the intended aim of the intervention was to counter violent attacks on pro-democracy protestors, it occasioned further atrocities due to NATO US-led bombings, as well as the counter-attacks deployed by Gaddafi forces in Benghazi and Sirte. While the intervention was also targeted at countering Libya's supposed state-sponsored terrorism, and perhaps as a preventive mechanism against an impending massacre in Benghazi, it gave rise to new factional violence and violent Islamist militias that accentuated insecurity^{xxxviii}. In addition, the intervention in Libya attracted discourses on the Responsibility to Rebuild aspect of the R2P, considering that the bombings led to destruction of critical installations and destabilized the state in the guise of establishing a stable democracy via regime change^{xxxix}. Although the intervention

succeeded in toppling the Gaddafi regime, the US failed in the state-building experiment in Libya, as witnessed in Somalia in 1993 and in the eventual exit in August 2021 from the Taliban-ruled Afghanistan.

The US' continued surveillance of violent extremism in Africa stretched further throughout the President Donald Trump's era. The emergence of extremist groups in the Sahel as well as militants associated with the Islamic State extremist group in Mozambique revitalized US multilateral engagements in interventions in the region. While the French have directly intervened militarily in the Sahel since 2013, the US initially avoided direct combat and instead intervened indirectly by building the military and technical capacity for troops from African-led support missions, especially through the Combined Joint-Task Force-Horn of Africa that was established in 2002. Evidently, US interventions in the Sahel, especially in Mauritania, Mali and Niger are more targeted at militant groups with a view to countering the proliferation of violent extremism cells and networks in the region. Through the Pan-Sahel Initiative established in 2002, which transformed into the Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Partnership in 2005 and later integrated in the AFRICOM in 2008, the US has, for instance, equipped military forces and provided intelligence surveillance in responding to violent extremism in the region^{xi}.

The US has previously strategically restrained itself from military confrontations, for example in the case of its inaction in 2013 when jihadist groups took control over northern Mali^{xii}. The US' evident initial military inaction in the Sahel depicts a change of intervention strategy, considering its failed state-building enterprise in Libya in 2011, and the related sunk costs in interventions in Afghanistan (2001 to 2021), in Iraq (since 2003) and in Syria (2011). Despite the insurgency in the Sahel, the covert interventions through the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership initiative established in 2005 on the one hand demonstrates the US' continued multilateral engagement in the region. On the other hand, the Partnership initiative perhaps denotes the need to revitalize the African agency in securing the region.

African agency in reshaping multilateralism in US peace and security interventions

Although a complete withdrawal of extra-continental military in Africa is desirable, the interventions aforementioned demonstrate that on the one hand, the US plays a critical role in advancing peace and security in Africa. On the other hand, contending evidence elsewhere denotes the US' role in triggering conflicts in the guise of regime change thereby leading to further insecurity and instability for instance in the cases of Somalia (1993) and Libya (2011). However, the imbalances between Africa and the US, in terms of operations, demonstrate the region's weak leverage in deploying peace and security interventions. US has invested billions of dollars in strategic security installations in Africa. The AFRICOM-founded in 2007, with 29 military bases in 15 different states in the region in 2020, has remained central in peace and security interventions^{xliii}. With 6000 troops in Africa in 2020, the US has been critical in counterterrorism operations^{xliii}. In addition, the US military presence, military alliances and joint operation centers have increased intelligence-driven operations that have enhanced security in the region^{xliv}.

Besides strategic operations, imbalances in funding depict the US' leverage in peace and security interventions in Africa. While the AU envisages endowing the Peace Fund with \$400 million from mandatory member states contributions by 2021, the Fund had received \$55.9 million since 2017, thereby creating a gap that attracts foreign funding^{xlv}. Since funding of UN peacekeeping is premised on member states' GDP, the US is the largest contributor with an annual contribution of \$2 billion, and hence its apparent opposition over AU's quest for burden-sharing in peace interventions in Africa. In 2018, the US opposed a UNSC resolution on the financing of AU-led peace support operations on UN-financed contributions. The US opposed this resolution sponsored by Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea and Ethiopia on claims that AU-led peace operations should not receive more than 75 percent of overall cost of UN-funded operations^{xlvi}.

Despite the joint US-Africa Terrorism Task Force established in 2020, US' scaling down of operations in Africa, specifically Trump's order for withdrawal of troops from Somalia underscores the need for Africa to re-invigorate the Africa Peace and Security Architecture – APSA^{xlvii}. In addition, the US' intent to reduce its troops fighting extremists in the Sahel, as pronounced by Defense Secretary Mark Esper in 2020, reinforces the need for Africa to strengthen its counterterrorism strategies^{xlviii}. In response to Trump's order for scaling down US operations in Africa, President Biden nevertheless called for increased Africa-US partnerships. Addressing the AU Summit 2021, Biden argued that the US was ready to partner with Africa 'in solidarity, support and mutual benefit.' This partnership, Biden advised, would foster peace and security in the region^{xlix}. How then should Africa enhance its agency in fostering multilateralism in fostering peace and security interventions in the Biden era for posterity?

First, besides supporting US-led interventions, the AU should strengthen its infrastructure for peace in specific the APSA in order to ensure preventive diplomacy that would centrally place its agency in pre-emptive interventions. Second, the AU should deploy the principle of non-indifference, or enforce the R2P regime, in pre-emptive deployment of its forces to counter insecurity threats that attract foreign interventions. Third, the AU's Peace and Security Council needs to strengthen its intelligence-gathering capacity in the quest to counter violent extremism, especially in the Horn, and the Sahel, with renewed partnerships with key allies like the US who would provide strategic intelligence for interventions. Fourth, the AU should strengthen its peacekeeping capabilities. Strengthening of the APSA has for instance improved coordination between Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in peace and security interventions. The operationalization of the PSC, the Continental Early Warning System – CEWARN, as well as the African Standby Force, has improved the leverage of the AU in early warning and preventive diplomacy, as well as in initiating peacekeeping interventions, besides mediations led by the Panel of the Wise. Fifth, AU member states should lobby for improved burden-sharing in peace

interventions. The AU's deployment of interventions, for instance in Burundi (2003), Sudan (2004), and in Somalia (2007), as well as support in the UN-AU Mission in Darfur (2007), CAR (2013), and Mali (2013) demonstrates its renewed quest to effect 'Africa Solutions to African Problems'. It is in seeking further multilateral cooperation that the AU would build capacity to fill intervention gaps that attract external military interventions. Sixth, despite such operational capabilities, APSA suffers major inadequacies, especially in its financing. Besides the funding by the US, the EU has since 2004 funded the APSA through the African Peace Facility – APF, by channeling its funds – €2.7 billion – through the AU. The unpredictable funding of APSA occasioned by change of focus of major donors, for example the EU, and Congress' decline in funding peace operations in Central African Republic and elsewhere in Western Sahara, underscores the need for the AU to mobilize more funding for its peace and security interventions.

Conclusion

US interventions in Africa have been characterized by rivalries, tensions and reversals which have influenced its multilateral engagements in peace and security. Despite earlier interventions in the region that signified the Cold War rivalries, the US attempt to initiate regime change in Somalia in 1993 attracted tensions and reversals that have depicted its failed state-building interventions in the region. While the inaction elsewhere in Rwanda in 1994 demonstrated why preventive interventions by the US are critical in forestalling mass atrocities, the intervention in Libya in 2011 attracted further atrocities and hence elicited the need for a change of tact in the US' foreign involvements in the region. This, perhaps, led to the partnership frameworks of cooperation signed with African states in the military deployments targeted at countering violent extremism in the Sahel in 2013. The involvement of the US, and its allies in the region, however exposes the challenges of asserting the African agency in security interventions in the region. Despite the effort by the AU to deploy interventions, operational and financial challenges have however constrained Africa's

agency thereby creating imbalances in Africa-US interventions. It is in strengthening the AU's capacity for preventive diplomacy and in peacekeeping deployment – in terms of operations, technical expertise, and financing – that Africa will increase its leverage in reshaping multilateral engagements in peace and security interventions in the region. In failing to assert the African agency, cases of security vacuum in the region will either on the one hand attract episodes of inaction that accentuate the commission of mass atrocities, or foreign military interventions that attract tensions which accentuate insecurity on the other hand, thereby putting major interveners like the US on the horns of a dilemma. ♦

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Africa's insecurity landscape in the African policy framework towards the US: Should it be a policy priority, and can we speak of African agency?

SIVIWE RIKHOTSO

Since the dawn of independence and the subsequent decades of democratization and liberalization, security concerns in Africa have been a priority on the agenda for the continent and external powers. From issues of armed conflict because of political ethnic, religious marginalization, to issues of political violence against the state by rebel groups or state-sponsored violence towards the citizens, insecurity has been a threat to good governance, human rights and security, economic growth and development, and democracy in the continent. With this, the chapter highlights three of most prominent security issues in the continent, violent extremism, maritime security, and armed conflict and political violence, as key policy priorities for an African policy framework towards the US. This framework, from the chapter's perspective, contributes immensely to the growing literature of African agency or renewed active participation in international affairs by the continent, whether as individual nations, or as regional hubs through Regional Economic Communities (RECs), or as a continental group through the African Union (AU). Moreover, the chapter outlines the various levels that African agency manifests when engaging with external powers, and the possibility of some of these interactions, specifically between the US and Africa, producing benefits for the continent.

Introduction

The US' relations with Africa, like most of its relations with other international actors, have always been dictated and directed by the US

and its interests in the continent, whether bilaterally or multilaterally. This has been the nature of its international relations since the multipolar system of World War I, that the bigger, stronger power 'guides' the direction of the relationship with a smaller, weaker power. This has been the manner of engagements in a liberal, unipolar world orderⁱ. For as long as one can remember, relations between the US and African state actors have been on the US' terms to ensure that its national interests in the continent are met. Especially after the advent of the unipolar world order, relations between the US and African states have been unilateral in that the US will mostly achieve whatever national interest it has with African nations, and only after that can the latter survive on what is left from the 'partnership'.

However, one cannot blame the US for this because it always seemed that it was the one interested in Africa (not vice versa), the one with a foreign policy towards Africa, and therefore the one that would initiate relations between itself and Africa, even during the highly favoured tenure of president Barack Obama. Now that former president Donald Trump has left the office of the White House, there have been optimistic calls for renewed engagements between Africa and the US – relations that would be initiated by Africa, on Africa's terms, that would equally benefit Africa as much as the US.

This, however, requires African policy makers to have foreign policy ambitions towards the US, and the re-strategising of certain national interests to be directed at the US. To have relations (be they bilateral or multilateral) with the US (that will be of equal benefit to all partners) is an unofficial guarantee of access to the world economy. It is a mechanism to becoming an active participant in international relations of security, trade, politics, as well as climate and environment.

For Afrocentric scholars, this may be seen as exerting African agency – Africa's active participation in international affairs, even in the face of persistent structural constraints and external pressureⁱⁱ – with regard to a dominant power and in international relations generally. Questions are now centred on why develop an African foreign policy towards the US at this particular juncture in time? Should African policy

makers have foreign policy ambitions towards the US? Would the US be interested in an Afrocentric foreign policy framework, and why? All these are very important and straightforward questions that need answers, but the answers are unfortunately not so straightforward.

Africa's insecurity landscape: the Big Three Security Issues (B3SI)

Agency as an academic concept refers to the ability to exert influence and power in a situation that does not allow for it. From an African perspective, that is the ability of a weaker, smaller African powers to exert influence and power over a stronger, bigger external powerⁱⁱⁱ. African agency as the ability of African actors (whether state or non-state) to reap political, security and economic benefits from unequal partnerships with dominant powers in an unequal international system, is important in literature on African policy position towards the US. This is because in most cases where Africa and the US enter into engagements, the latter is the major beneficiary. This policy framework seeks to ensure a 'partnership of equals', where agency from an African perspective emanates from the inception of this partnership and not merely on what it has been able reap from the partnership.

Much like the argument above on the inception of new engagements between Africa and the US, which are proposed by Africans for the benefit of the continent, the very concept of African agency is rooted in the understanding that the post-independence African state surviving in a changing system is a manifestation of this agency^{iv}. African states have tried to assimilate Western notions and processes of state formation and security architectures into their societies and have had different outcomes from that of the progenitors of these processes.

Hence, one would be correct in arguing that African states have managed to assume a 'de jure' form of statehood as opposed to the 'de facto' nature, and this is due to their ability to maintain their existence and sovereignty to negotiate for a better position in international negotiations^v. In its weakened state and position because of its wealth and strength or size and collectivity (or lack

thereof), Africa's contributions to securing international peace and security cannot be overlooked^{vi}.

African agency manifests at four varying dimensions of engagement. The first dimension is a collective cohesion through intergovernmental forums like the African Union (AU)^{vii} and its engagements with external powers. For instance, AU – United Nations (UN) partnerships on peacekeeping missions in Burundi, Libya, Comoros^{viii}, Somalia and Sudan^{ix}, or the AU-EU-UN tripartite alliance or coordinated peace operations in Africa^x.

Subregional intergovernmental bodies or regional economic communities, such as Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Southern African Development Community (SADC), East African Community (EAC), either when enforcing the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) principle in Mali, Mozambique, Côte d'Ivoire, and Libya, (the triangle (AU-ECOWAS-UN) for peace and security in West Africa^{xi} SADC-minus negotiating an Economic Partnership Agreement with the EU^{xii}, convey how African agency manifests at the second dimension. However, the last two decades depict an entirely different picture about Africa's participation in curbing its security issues and security issues from abroad, framing it as a 'resurgence and renewal' of Africa's activism at the global level.

One example that comes to mind is how the UNSC – sanctioned military intervention in Libya by NATO to oust former dictator Muammar Ghaddafi shows how this agency at this dimension was curtailed as the AU's diplomatic efforts overlooked and opposed by the US – led P3 countries (Britain and France) in the UNSC^{xiii}. As much as the external powers pressured Africa's hand on the Libya situation, US-Africa relations through the UN and AU are visible.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, Africa's foreign policy towards the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has become just as important as its domestic policies, with many African states seeking active participation. This is true for the active advocating for permanent membership by the Africa 3, with Brosig^{xiv} terming it "the ultimate foreign policy prize" for Africa.

The third dimension of African agency manifests through individual state action. Heads of states and governments engage through their foreign ministries to achieve their foreign policy objectives and national interests. This type of agency is, within the African continent, commonly observed at the second and first dimensions given the limited hard power that individual African states possess. Where security is concerned, very few African states are capable of reacting to insecurity in the continent, and occasionally second and third dimensions of agency are displayed when continental and regional bodies cannot respond or is delaying an appropriate response.

An example is how the violent extremist attacks in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado region saw the response of the SADC mission^{xv} and Rwandan national force^{xvi} before the AU Commission's response and possible deployment of the African Standby Force. The fourth and lowest dimension of agency is that exerted by civil society organizations and advocacy groups. This is perhaps one of the most necessary types of agency that the continent should invest in considering that all the other three depend on the political will and funding from politicians governments. Some of the most commonly cited US-Africa civil society relations centre on violence and its impact on key issues such as democracy and human rights. Thus, organisations such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International are engaged in various theatres of operation in the African continent.

Recently, it seems that Africa, with the desire of ridding itself of military intervention from outside powers, has become very active on the international scene. Since the advent of the 21st century, Africa has joined various international organisations, proposing ambitious policy frameworks of what it should aspire to and leading the charge for institutional reform on multilateral and institutional forums like the UN Security Council (UNSC) and the International Criminal Court (ICC). Moreover, Africa has witnessed a small but notable rise in good governance practices and an increasing speed of democratization, which has attracted an interest in forging partnerships from external players.

While notable, US-Africa relations in both organizations have been rather fragile and dominated by rivalries in the UNSC where African nations, part of the non-permanent members demanding permanent seats and veto privileges, and the US, part of the permanent member states, showing reluctance towards the UNSC reform. As previously stated in the chapter, it is imperative to ask, “Is there a need, now, for an African foreign policy framework towards a global economic hub and a dominant power?” and the simple answer is yes. Moreover, now that the call for a policy framework towards the US has been answered, a more interesting question is what issues on the continent should be included as policy priorities.

In this chapter, security, whether continental, regional or national, from armed conflicts and civil war, to violent extremism and maritime insecurity, are important issues worth prioritizing. The rise of violent extremist attacks across the continent have come to signify a serious security threat born from common political or ethnic intolerance, for which the continent is infamous, and later being based more on fundamentalist religious beliefs^{xvii}. For instance, violent extremist groups in Nigeria and Somalia were at first ethnically harmonized organizations with a primary objective of overthrowing their respective governments. This changed over time as the organizations became more ambitious in their political objectives, resulting in a transborder active presence. Interestingly, the last decade and a half has seen an increase in national and international links between jihadist groups.

For instance, in 2012, al-Shabaab declared allegiance to al-Qaeda, but had recent infighting about this allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (Isil)^{xviii}. Isil popularity among jihadist groups grew over the next three years, during which the Nigerian group Boko Haram publicly declared allegiance to Isil leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. Sub-Saharan Africa’s regional hotspots of jihadist activity, which are home to some of the continent’s most prolific groups, include the Lake Chad region (Cameroon, Niger, and Nigeria) that is terrorised by Boko Haram; the Islamic Maghreb region, which is where the Ansar Dine and al-Qaeda have heavy presence; the Sahel region (Mali), under threat

from al-Mourabitoun activities; as well as the Horn of Africa (Kenya and Uganda), where al-Shabaab is heavily present^{xix}.

One of the most recent attacks coming from the Ansar-al-Sunna, also known as al-Shabaab to locals^{xx} in the northern part of Cabo Delgado Province, Mozambique has exacerbated the threat of violent extremism to the peace and stability of the continent.

In addition to political and ethnic intolerance, another often-cited reason for the rise in violent extremism in the continent, especially the recruitment of youth, is the declining economies and lack of employment opportunities to make ends meet. It is also necessary to note in this case that, the US has displayed commitment to fighting insurgency in Mozambique as a dozen Green Beret Special Forces trained the Mozambican marines^{xxi}. Countering violent extremism has been an uphill task for Africa as this requires a multipronged approach, from traditional military reaction to policing, legislation, which requires strong legislative apparatuses, to infrastructure protection, crisis planning and border security (whether physical or virtual) that require financial capital and expert technological enhancement.

In many respects, US-Africa security relations on combatting violent extremism are immensely impacted by what came to be one of the most popular terror attacks in the world, the 9/11 attacks on US soil by the Al Qaeda terror group^{xxii}. After the 9/11 attacks, the United States began to re-interpret problems in Africa from a security perspective. The thinking in the Bush administration was that African problems, such as poverty, poor governance, incapable militaries, civil wars, and corruption, were a national security risk to the United States. Hence, agencies such as the African Contingency Training and Assistance (ACOTA), African Command (AFRICOM), Foreign Military Financing (FMF), and International Military Education and Training (IMET), were set up to increase activity in the securitization and militarization of US policy towards Africa.

Apart from violent extremism and armed conflicts between government and rebel groups in central Africa, one other security issue that threatens the continent is maritime security and its impact on

maritime trade. Maritime insecurity not only threatens maritime as well as land-based trade, but also underutilised maritime resources, which could be instrumental in the continent's development agenda^{xxiii}. To continue with this line of argument, maritime insecurity threatens the possibility of peace and stability in Africa and Africa's shipping coast, particularly in such areas as the Horn of Africa^{xxiv}.

State failure, particularly in Somalia's case, can be cited as the main instigator for the maritime insecurity in that region; hence, whenever discussions on maritime security come up, the first point to take is that it is a land-based problem. Such state failure has created the opportunity in the Somali coast for pirates, and groups and individuals who are based and operate in that area to attack, capture, and hold ships, cargo vessels, and crewmembers for ransom, and further disrupting international shipping.

The absence of good governance, strong state institutions and the malfeasance of corrupt officials and private citizens – a recipe for state failure – have made possible the proliferation of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, dumping of chemical waste into the ocean, smuggling and the trafficking of arms, contraband, counterfeit currency and humans, on the Somali coast^{xxv}. Added to these maritime issues, Yemen's insecurity contributes to the unprecedented level of criminal activity in the Red Sea, which has recently been characterised by 'remote-controlled bomb boats and unmanned submersibles' that threaten commerce and the maritime infrastructure. These developments have implications for the entire region. Because issues of insecurity in the continent, whether maritime or land-based, are never accompanied by a singular causative but rather a number of interrelated and complex events, the issue of poor maritime governance in coastal states has indirectly added to the proliferated piracy and other types of maritime insecurity^{xxvi}.

Issues of an absence of a regulatory framework and governance system in the region to enforce the rule of international law in maritime domains are prominent in this discussion. This signals a greater need for foreign policies to focus on the security domains (land and maritime) and the requirement for security presence in the maritime

domain. Alluding to the point above on the absence of a regional or even continental body to govern the maritime domain is the understanding that there is currently no body assessing maritime resources available to guard against exploitation, overutilisation of, and disputes over maritime resources.

Demessie Fantaye highlights the importance of maritime security and governance for trade in the horn of Africa and continentally, Ian Ralby^{xxvii} notes that the maritime domain is not only integral for trade and the economy but also central to both food security and food sovereignty. Traditionally, Africa has been an exporter of raw gold, diamonds, minerals, fish, cotton, cocoa, timber, and other agricultural and extractive goods, but with expansion of manufacturing and exportable artisanship sectors, there is a demand developing for exporting finished products. Because of this, safe and secure maritime transit routes become pivotal for successful integration of these products into international trade and economy.

Fish is a major source of food in Africa, more than it is anywhere else as some countries have 90% of their dietary protein coming from fish, meaning that these countries depend on marine fisheries for the survival of their populations. Thus, maritime insecurities pose a significant threat to food security and survival in these countries.

In addition to these dynamics, the phenomenon of maritime ignorance or the maritime blindness contributes to criminal as well as legitimate actors seeking to take advantage of Africa's maritime resources, although a number of African countries have made strides in confronting this issue of ignoring their maritime domains. Perhaps more complicated here is that while doing good by paying attention to their maritime domains, African countries still do not know the value of their maritime resources – an issue known as maritime wealth — and thus still fall prey to criminal and legitimate efforts that seek to take advantage of this. With noting the above issues, it therefore becomes necessary to note some of the developments Africa has made in cooperation and coordination at government, regional, and continental level to quell the threats to the maritime domain.

With most North African countries collaborating with Southern Europe via the 5+5 Defence Initiative, the Djibouti and Yaoundé Codes of Conduct remain the pillars of maritime security architecture for the continent. With its establishment in 2009, the Djibouti Code has brought together countries from the Arabian Peninsula with all the countries from the Eastern, Southern and Indian Ocean Africa, from Egypt to South Africa, to coordinate efforts in combating piracy.

Inspired by this Djibouti initiative, and intent on confronting their own issues with piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, leaders of 26 countries from ECOWAS, ECCAS and the Gulf of Guinea Commission met in 2013 in Yaoundé, Cameroon, to discuss the regional maritime insecurity and launched the Yaoundé Architecture. Implementation of the code is enabled by an interagency information-sharing process between The Regional Centre for Maritime Security in Central Africa in Central Africa and the Regional Coordination Centre for Maritime Security in West Africa.

The Interregional Coordination Centre, based at Yaoundé, Cameroon, interlinks these. Along with these initiatives, the AU adopted the African Charter on Maritime Security and Safety and Development to combat piracy and robbery of ships and promote a thriving and sustainable blue economy, and enhance coordination efforts at continental level^[xxviii].

Towards a policy framework that can ensure and secure peace and stability in Africa

Prior to the Trump administration, US foreign policy interests in the continent dictated Africa-US relations. However, during the Trump administration, those relations were frustrated because the US' interests appeared to be elsewhere and it only looked to Africa to counter China's (and by extension Asia's) presence in the continent, bilaterally or multilaterally, such as with the Brics Development Bank.

In the past, Africa has often used superpower interest and rivalry to its benefit by pitting superpowers (the US and the former USSR) against each other while extracting aid. The above summary of the big three security issues that confront the continent dictates a serious as this is a threat to lives and livelihoods, contributing to further instability in

already fragile democracies by fuelling anger sentiments of resentment towards governments for failing to deal with these threats. These also contribute to the continental and global rise in migration and an increase in internationally displaced peoples and refugees seeking refuge in neighbouring countries, signalling a severe humanitarian crisis of poverty and health deficits.

Furthermore, trade, which is the talk of the continent with the now operational African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), is threatened by this level of insecurity. If the maritime security issues of piracy and hijacking of ships, the hijacking of humanitarian aid by insurgents and the damage caused to infrastructure and trade by violent riots and protests (in South Africa), are anything to go by, then it may not be farfetched to say that insecurity threatens the very development that is the ultimate objective within the continent.

Owing to the 1998 bombings of two US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania by Isis and al-Qaeda, followed by the tragic 9/11 event of 2001, the US has since the Bush administration had as a foreign policy priority the global fight against terrorism and counter-insurgency and counterterrorism efforts in the middle, north and west Africa. A case in point is Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti, which is critical to US counterterrorism efforts on the continent, including operations against al-Shabaab in Somalia and al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula in Yemen^{xxix}.

Furthermore, because the threat to maritime trade, mainly in the Horn of Africa by hijackings of American cargo ships as well as terrorist threats to US citizens on African soil born out of the Jihadists' ideological war on Western democracy has made Africa quite important to US national security to the extent that the then US president Bush established AFRICOM in 2007 to help counter transnational threats in the continent, again because of the growing strategic importance of the continent to the US.

Headquartered in Stuttgart, Germany, the Africa command was initially meant to be hosted by an African country, but African heads of state rejected this on the grounds of intervention and infringement on African sovereignty^{xxx}, perhaps displaying African agency in this case.

Whether or not Nigeria's head of state, Muhammadu Buhari, will succeed in his call to have AFRICOM relocated to 'the theatre of operation' (Africa) is another matter entirely, but it should be noted that with Trump's cutting back on US troops in Germany, the command will need a new home. Considering above statement, compounded by the unceremonious withdrawal from Afghanistan, the perception more likely appears that Africa is the new theatre of operations in combatting insurgency and violent extremism (the new frontier for the US' Global War on Terror) looks more accurate than ever and thus the new home for AFRICOM may well be its theatre of operations. More than anything, Djibouti is a testament to how an extroverted country in Africa that is to diversify its portfolio by leasing land for foreign military to build their bases, thus benefitting economically (\$300 million annually^{xxxii} while guaranteeing safety and security, but most importantly this acts a guarantor of stability in the country. The country has used its geostrategic location to its advantage by being home to a number of foreign military such as the US, France, China, Spain, Italy, Japan, and Germany^{xxxiii}.

Not all other African countries are as geostrategically inclined and stable as Djibouti, but they possess resources that would satisfy the national interests of external powers and now require the agency to use them to their advantage. Perhaps one of the prime problems with this is that African leaders have to omnibalance against internal and external threats, particularly in those regions where there mass dissatisfaction with the governing regime and where the influence of the governing regime does not extend to the hinterlands, and the government has lost control. With much regional and continental efforts to quell this scourge of land-based and maritime insecurity, one thing is clear, and that is the fact that Africa lacks the political will from above to fully commit to these initiatives, as well as the financial capital as their economies continue to shrink (either because of mass corruption and instability in those countries or neighbouring countries which spills over to their borders), without any prospects of recovering in the short term.

Moreover, the US, with the efforts it has invested into securing Africa's stability, perhaps has an opportunity to increase its efforts and secure strong relations with the continent that move beyond economic means but towards deeper integration into Africa's security architecture in the sense that it can support regional and continental coordination efforts not just through the UNSC or AFRICOM (a traditional military response), but through supporting local processes of peacebuilding and conflict prevention that can ensure peace at the deepest and lowest of society (ethnically, ideologically, and religiously).

An opportunity presents itself to do this, mostly because, with the US' renewed interest in the continent, the incumbent president, Joe Biden, seems to be in favour of a "mutually beneficial" partnership with Africa, as expressed in his virtual meeting at the AU headquarters in January 2021. This – unlike the last time there was superpower rivalry over Africa and only aid (financial or military) was provided to African countries – puts Africa in a position to propose and leverage long-term policies that would benefit Africans greatly and see African countries taking part in the continent's security architecture and trajectory.

The need for an Afrocentric foreign policy framework towards the US also arises out of the observation that there are some domestic priorities that the Biden presidency has to tend to before giving priority to US-Africa relations and partnerships. It is true that Biden inherited a deeply broken and partly collapsed democracy in the wake of Trump's rule from 2016 to 2020, and hence may need to focus inwards, restoring the integrity of America's democratic system and institutions before focusing on global issues.

Thus, Africa must take this opportunity and initiative to develop and draft a policy framework detailing its interests in the US. This policy is an important instrument for deflating the insecurity within the continent, summarized under three broad categories of armed conflicts, terror attacks, and maritime insecurity, or the Big Three security issues confronting the continent. At the heart of these issues is the dilapidated state of governance as well as the lack of transparency, accountability, adherence to the rule of law, and economic decay.

African agency has been greater when the continent acted as a cohesive unit in its relationships with the rest of the world, and this time would be no different. While bilateral relations may offer the best benefits, regional agreements, through the AU, can guarantee the most success. This has been, for the most part, Africa's preference in engaging with the rest of the world. With this new policy framework towards the US, states like Nigeria, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana and Kenya, may be helpful (with respect to the experience as international players, foreign policy resources, as well as being of geostrategic importance to their regions) in leading the charge on this policy framework.

As with many other regional agreements, this too would require significant aligning of national interests, compromise, and notable commitment to the policy framework. More than anything, this policy framework should go beyond proposals for economic trade agreements, but should also encompass environmental treaties as well as cultural, educational, technological and policy exchanges that are regional.

This proposed policy framework may well be the next chapter in the realization of Agenda 2063, Africa's blueprint for transforming the continent into a global powerhouse. Obviously, whether this policy will happen while Biden is still in office is a matter for another time, but it can and should be hoped that this new 'mutually beneficial' engagement between the US and Africa can outlive the Biden administration well into the new administrations that will succeed it, and hopefully see a rare foreign policy continuation towards Africa. African agency is possible with an Afrocentric policy – or rather, an Afrocentric policy towards the US would epitomize African agency.

Conclusion

From the period of independence in the 1960's and the subsequent decades of democratization and liberalization 1980's – 2000's, security concerns in Africa have been a priority on the agenda for the continent and external powers. Concerns on the increase of armed conflict because of political ethnic, religious marginalization, to political violence against the state by rebel groups or state-sponsored violence

towards the citizens, and the threat the insecurity problems pose for good governance, human rights and security, economic growth and development, and democracy in the continent, are valid and relevant for the future of the continent.

Three of most prominent security issues in the continent, violent extremism, maritime security, and armed conflict and political violence, as key policy priorities for an African policy framework towards the US, should be noted by both African and American policy makers as these could guide the future engagements between the US and Africa. Thus, a call for an African policy framework towards the US is certainly ambitious but not impossible. It would no doubt contribute to the growing need for Africa to become an influential global player, to be an active as opposed to a passive international actor. Looking at how the US is invested to combatting one of the three security issues, namely violent extremism, accompanied by the fact that the US' Global War on Terror (GWOT) campaign took a huge knock when the US retreated from Afghanistan in August of 2021, it makes some degree of sense wonder whether the continent may well be the new frontier and face of the US' GWOT.

This framework, from the chapter's perspective contributes immensely to the growing literature of African agency or renewed active participation in international affairs by the continent, whether as individual nations, or as regional hubs through Regional Economic Communities (RECs), or as a continental group through the African Union.

As noted above, whether this policy will happen during Biden's time is another discussion, and there are no certainties that the US will accept the policy framework. However, nothing in history, at least in Africa's history, was accomplished without application and hope, and it can be hoped that such a foreign policy framework will be developed and will be beneficial for Africa. Africa needs to engage the new administration in the US – the country with the most powerful military force in the world – about the arms race in the Indian Ocean, as well as how to contain the challenge of radical Islam and authoritarianism that in part contributes to the emergence of radical movements. ◇

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A new administration in the US and a new political environment in the Horn of Africa: Time to reinvent the region

TEMESGEN T BEYAN

The political change in Ethiopia in 2018 harbingered a new era in the Horn of Africa. This coincided with the coming of a new administration in the United States. The change in Ethiopia removed the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) from state power, a major political actor that applied a strategy of ethno-nationalism as a mode of political management in multi-ethnic society. In pursuing the agenda of ethno-nationalism, the US was a major ally of TPLF through its strategy of counter-terrorism in the region. This paper argues that this alliance did more harm to the region than good because the alliance treated terrorism, not inter-state conflict, as a major security threat to the regional and US' interest in the region.

From the regional interest's standpoint, inter-state conflict was the critical factor in the instability of the region, which allowed itself to be a back door for different warring factions. Hence, the new administration in the US and the political change in Ethiopia is an opportunity to reinvent the region if the US makes the following reforms in its policy in the region: first, the US has to recognize that terrorism has never been a fundamental threat to its national interests in the region; second, the US must avoid special treatment of member states in the region; third, the US must acknowledge change in Ethiopia and respect popular demands; and fourth, the US should look beyond the region's security dynamics and support national and regional development initiatives. These may pave the way to the emergence of internally stable regional states that would replace conflict with regional integration as their mode of survival.

Introduction

Three years have passed since the arrival of a populist government in Ethiopia in 2018. This transformation has brought about two contradictory outcomes. On one hand, as a consequence of this development, Eritrea and Ethiopia have settled their long-standing border conflict, and a new tripartite relationship between Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia has been forged. On the other hand, the removal of the TPLF from state power, which was one of the main actors in the region, has lost legitimate political power in Ethiopia and turned into a guerrilla organization. While the former has heralded a new era of regional integration, the latter plunged Ethiopia into a civil war which attracted multiple regional and international actorsⁱ. In short, the civil war became a regional political showdown that caused a serious humanitarian and political crisis in Ethiopiaⁱⁱ.

However, the contemporary crisis is a minor issue given the ethno-nationalist tendencies that the TPLF initiated can potentially do to Ethiopian. A deeply rooted ethno-nationalist identity, which developed at the cost of pan-Ethiopian identity with a prolonged civil war in Tigray, might be the recipe for the disintegration of the Ethiopian stateⁱⁱⁱ. Now Ethiopia is at a crossroads as the TPLF's legacy has left it between renewal and disintegration^{iv}. Regionally, this phenomenon constitutes both challenges and opportunities. Nevertheless, there are internal and external factors that determine whether the transformation in Ethiopia is an opportunity or a challenge. Chief among the external factors is the reaction of the US, specifically the reaction of the Biden administration. Previously, the US has been in close ties with the TPLF through the counter-terrorism agenda. While this friendship allowed the TPLF to act freely in Ethiopia, it underrated the inter-state conflicts in the region, which have been the major reason for instability in the region.

The unfolding change in Ethiopia that has removed the TPLF, the trusted ally of the US in the region, from state power, has coincided with the arrival of a new administration in the US. Knowing that the US invested immense energy and resources to maintain Ethiopia as a

state in the image of the TPLF, its removal as a major political actor in the region has definitely caused inconvenience that may force the US to reform its policy in the region. The question is, what should this reform look like? In other words, how should the new administration in the US act in the new political environment in the region in general and Ethiopia in particular? Would it be better if the new administration seizes this opportunity to begin afresh in rebuilding a new state in Ethiopia and a new peaceful region, or stay with the miscalculation of the post-9/11 US in the region. This chapter interrogates the above questions by historicizing the problems inherently in the mode of US intervention in the Horn of Africa.

The US and the Cold War in the Horn of Africa

The US arrived in the Horn of Africa during World War II. When the British defeated Italian forces in Eritrea in April 1941 as part of World War II military campaign, Britain occupied a huge area which it had neither the desire nor the capacity to manage effectively. As part of the allied forces, the US was in search of a strategic location to monitor the war outside Europe mainly the Middle East and Far East. Once occupied, Eritrea offered a solution to this problem, which led to the signing of a secret deal between the British and the US to establish an aircraft repairing station in the highlands of Eritrea at a place called Gura and the setting up of a radio station in Asmara^v. This communication base began operating on a small scale in 1943, when a team of communication experts of the US army produced a report that recognized that the highlands of Eritrea^{vi}, particularly of Asmara, happened to be one of the best locations in the world to install signal instruments. Rightly so, the radio station in Asmara intercepted a communication between Germany and Japan in October 1943 that played a crucial role in gaining the allied forces' upper hand during the landing in Normandy in 1944, which was the beginning of the end of WWII^{vii}. This historic event paved the way, at least in the view of the then leadership of the US, to the establishment of one of the biggest military bases of the US in the world in 1953 by signing a deal with Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie.

Ever since, the US has remained actively involved in the affairs of the Horn of Africa during and after the Cold War.

After the end of WWII, the US expanded its radio station to a multi-million dollar budget communication and intelligence base^{viii}. As the US interest in the region expanded, so did the interest of its partner, the Ethiopian monarchy. The base served as an important bargaining tool for the emperor over the US. However, why did the US choose to sign a deal with Ethiopia instead of Eritrea, given that the location of the military base was inside Eritrean territory, in the first place? The decision was not just a matter of political option. Rather, it was a realists' interpretation of the 'might is right' principle. Then, Ethiopia was the only independent African country with an established government with which the West could be willing to strike a deal^{ix}. This strength has enabled Ethiopia, at least in the view of the US, to constitute another defense line that was craved to protect from any Arab infiltration in the region. To Ethiopia, particularly the emperor, the deal went beyond a survival objective. It was a chance to satisfy his expansionist desire over Eritrea and the Ogaden region in neighbouring Somalia. Through this deal, the emperor sought to integrate Eritrea and Ogaden as part of imperial Ethiopia. Consequently, the unfettered alliance allowed the emperor to gain Ogaden and Eritrea by imposing US pressure on Britain and abusing the United Nations treatise respectively^x. The infamous statement by John Foster Dulles, the US secretary of state, implies the distortion of international law by the US with regards to the future of Eritrea.

From the point of view of justice, the opinion of the Eritrea people must receive consideration. Nevertheless, the strategic interest of the United States in the Red Sea basin and consideration of security and world peace make it necessary that the country has to be linked with our ally, Ethiopia^{xi}.

But ensuring the expansionist interests of Ethiopia could have been a hollow plan without a strong army. Hence, in order for Ethiopia to accomplish its expansionist interest, the emperor had to first built a modern army. In line to this agenda, he initiated a modern military

build-up by manipulating the US' Cold War threats in the region. The support of the US in accomplishing the military build-up would not have been a problem had the emperor applied this force in building a modern state. However, the US did not care much about how and to what purpose the emperor applied the military aid so long as he allowed the US a sovereign right in the leased land. The outcome was the establishment of a feudal state with a modern army. In other words, the support of the US built not a modern state, but a modern army with a feudal political system. This state began to use its oversized army to expand its territory. Fearing that Ethiopia, the biggest state with at least an established government and recorded history of resistance against colonialism, might fall into the hands of the communist, the US preferred to let the emperor do as he wished without any accountability. This free reign allowed the emperor to pursue his expansionist interests towards Eritrea and to aspire for a hegemonic status in the region.

Despite the US' success in making its existence assured in the region by satisfying the emperor's expansionist desire whatever the cost, it was inflicting injustices across the region for a long period of time, being the source of conflicts and disagreements. While the ceding of Ogaden to Ethiopia led to a hostile relationship between Ethiopia and Somalia throughout their modern history, the federal arrangement between Eritrea and Ethiopia brought about a spiral of misfortune to the people of both countries. When Somalia gained independence in July 1960, it claimed Ogaden was involved in conflict with Ethiopia. In 1961, as the emperor violated the federal arrangement with Eritrea, the Eritrea people organized a revolution that brought about three decades of armed struggle. In a nutshell, US policy enabled the emperor to grow an insatiable appetite for expansion on one hand, and promoted injustices in the region on the other hand.

The strong presence of the US in the region via the military base in Asmara encountered serious challenges when the aging monarchy could not maintain its system. In 1974, the army that the US spent so much on to build, overthrew the emperor and established a socialist state which favoured the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR). Following this

incident, the US lost the monopoly of influence in Ethiopia and was forced to look somewhere else, such as Sudan and Somalia, on a much smaller scale to what it had done in Ethiopia. Nevertheless, the US did not completely cut assistance to the new pro-USSR military regime in Ethiopia. In the US' view, cutting assistance could make the Ethiopian state vulnerable, and that would allow the independence of Eritrea^{xiii}; if Eritrea gained independence due to the lack of US support, US experts believed, it would not only erode the credibility of the US in Africa, but Eritrea would fall to the influence of strong Arab countries such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia which threatened Israeli interest^{xiii}. This mixture of overlapped geopolitical interests in the region resulted in a dilemma for the US during the Cold War.

Owing to this dilemma, the US remained very reluctant to provide any assistance to Somalia and Sudan throughout the remaining Cold War period. Whereas US aid generated a pathological expansionist desire in the emperor, it brewed public dissatisfaction and anger inside the society, which received no sufficient transformation under the modernization project. Much of the fund was swindled by the aristocracy who had no real sense of public interest, while the historical inequalities remained pervasive in the society^{xiv}. Having stayed in the region for a quarter of a century in monopoly, confusion became the reflection of US policy in the region when it lost Ethiopia to the USSR. Since then, US support to Somalia and Sudan became a tool to counterbalance the presence of the USSR in the region. During the 15 years of the Derg regime in Ethiopia, the USSR monopolized the political landscape of the region by providing unconditional military support to the Derg. The outcome of the competition between the US and the USSR was that it turned the region into a political marketplace where getting funds not only for war, but also for signing peace deals, became the habit of political forces^{xv}.

Throughout the Cold War, two conditions drove US policy in the Horn of Africa: one, strategic and geopolitical interests, and two, aggressive USSR policy in Africa^{xvi}. During the monarchy's rule, Ethiopia served as an irreplaceable ally in both interests. However,

after the arrival of the Derg, and US' forced withdrawal from Ethiopia, the US struggled to maintain Ethiopia as an ally in the interests of the former condition, it chose Somalia and Sudan in the interests of the latter condition. Hence, Ethiopia remained a core ally to the US, without which, in the view of the US, US interests in the region would always be fated to be compromised.

The US and terrorism in the Horn of Africa

After a few years of break from the Cold War, terrorism became the major threat to US interests globally. Consequently, the Horn of Africa was viewed as one of the potential terrorist breeding grounds. Such transformation, in the view of the US, had altered the nature of its interaction with the countries in the region since the end of the Cold War. The end of the Cold War resulted in the departure of major Cold War powers from the region, and seemed to bring an era of cooperation and development. The two countries which supposedly spearheaded such changes were Eritrea and Ethiopia, led by the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) and Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), dominated by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF).

Motivated by the new changes in the region, the US, triumphant in its neoliberal victory, encouraged the leaderships of the two countries and hailed them as the bright future of Africa. However, two historical events changed this situation. While Eritrea and Ethiopia got back to fighting in 1998, terrorists attacked the US in 2001. When the national security agenda of the US transitioned into terrorism, it had to choose one ally from the two countries in the Horn of Africa. As in the Cold War, Ethiopia was selected again. The reselection of Ethiopia as core ally disregarded some facts on the ground, which did not exist during the Cold War. These were the emergence of Eritrea as a sovereign state capable of challenging Ethiopia, and the disintegration of Somalia. The condition of the region was totally different from what it had been when the US left in mid 1970s.

Even though the US appeared to have been committed to equal treatment of Eritrea and Ethiopia in the beginning of the 1990s, its

commitment failed to hold water as it gradually sided with Ethiopia when a war broke out between Eritrea and Ethiopia in May 1998. Initially, the US played a pivotal role in stopping the war in June 2000^{xvii}. However, it remained silent on the matter, despite one of the disputants, Ethiopia, refusing to comply with the peace deal signed by five international actors, including the US and the UN. As soon as 9/11 happened, the US reinstated its Cold War-designed friendship with Ethiopia, which meant that, whatever happens, Ethiopia comes first in the region. This was part of a new global security strategy. The 9/11 terrorist attack changed the US' security strategy globally. The event took place a decade after the end of the Cold War and before the US and its allies in the West had truly enjoyed the triumph of neoliberalism. Nevertheless, the attack bestowed on the US a new purpose as a global leader: in its view, world states were now either friends or foes, and in extreme cases, were listed as an axis of evil or good. This labelling forced several countries to choose on which side they would stand. Driven by wrath and neoliberalist adventure, the US designed a new security strategy, creating anchor states as its core objective.

In line with this strategy, the US appointed Ethiopia as an anchor state in the Horn of Africa, to act as a trusted ally whenever the US' interests in the region were at risk. It consulted with Ethiopia in bilateral venues, even when the matter at hand was relevant to other regional states. This included issues that had serious direct implications for national security. It enabled Ethiopia to enjoy special treatment, and allowed it to pursue its own interests in the name of preserving the interests of the US. The border conflict with Eritrea and the Somalian civil war have been serious matters, harmed by the US' counter-terrorism strategy in the region. By choosing Ethiopia as its anchor state, it bestowed on Ethiopia the opportunity to have free reign in the region, and the TPLF regime in Ethiopia became the face of US foreign policy in the Horn of Africa. Choosing one country as an anchor might be an unreliable approach, but choosing Ethiopia under the TPLF regime made the choice more devastating, because it was a leadership group that had lost the basic elements of nationalist

character^{xviii}. Allowing this group to police the region meant unleashing untamed authority.

The consequences of this strategy have been enormous over the last two decades. First, the strategy allowed the TPLF to consolidate power in an ethno-nationalist federal arrangement that led to the dominance of the political economy of Ethiopia by a small clique from one ethnic group. It gave the TPLF regime a free hand over the people of Ethiopia. Its government designed a counter-terrorism policy that complied with the US counter-terrorism policy in the region, and began to earn political and financial gains^{xix}, and using it as a front, attempted to purge all internal dissent in the name of terrorism. Subsequently, leaders of opposition groups, journalists and activists were accused of terrorism and were sent to prison, where they faced torture. Some of them were forced into in exile. This political strategy became an important instrument to reproduce despotism and authoritarianism in Ethiopia. In the meantime, development and democratization processes became the casualties of the security crisis, largely because of perceived risks of terrorism. Like the monarchical system during the Cold War, the TPLF manipulated the US to fund anti-terrorism efforts in Ethiopia and the US poorly accounted TPLF's actions over Ethiopian society.

Second, the US strategy delayed a solution to the Eritrea and Ethiopia border conflict. When the war commenced in May 1998 between Eritrea and Ethiopia, the Clinton administration tried to settle the conflict according to international custom: it sent a special envoy to mediate between the parties^{xx}. In spite of this effort, the war continued for two years of carnage and destruction. Nevertheless, the US was proactive and became one of the guarantors of the agreement. However, following 9/11, the US changed its strategy, choosing Ethiopia to be an anchor state in the region. Using this privilege as leverage, Ethiopia began to alter its commitment to the final and binding agreements, and to the implementation of a border decision by an internationally recognized boundary commission.

Third, it prolonged and complicated the civil war in Somalia. The US' counter-terrorism strategy had devastating effects on Somalia:

it worsened the state of war instead of improving it, and thus, the approach again proved to be largely futile. When the long-standing civil war in Somalia took a different shape under the Islamic Courts in 2006, the US allowed Ethiopia to act in Somalia in the name of its interests, and as Ethiopia saw fit^{xxi}. Knowing that Ethiopia and Somalia had been enemies historically evolved from the acts of US intervention during the Cold War, so sending Ethiopia to Somalia was not a smart decision if the intention was to pacify Somalia. Inevitably, the result was that the suffering of the Somali people was doubled, and the regional security crisis was made worse. As a result, Somalia became a breeding ground for anti-foreign intervention resistance, which further increased the harm caused by Ethiopia's and the US' policy in the region.

What went wrong in US policy in the region

It is worth noting that the TPLF has been the embodiment of the US' counter-terrorism strategy in the Horn of Africa for the last two decades. Such representation indirectly made the US' strategy the main reason for the peace and security of the region being compromised, and hampered its development project under these adverse conditions. First, in attempting to save the TPLF regime in Ethiopia, the US inflicted much harm to the popular struggle in the country over the past two decades. When internal and external oppositions fought to overthrow the TPLF regime, the US did not only disregard their struggle, it became the regime's ally in silencing them. Ethiopia was one of the countries that benefitted most from the \$100 million US-financed East African Counter Terrorism Initiative^{xxii}. Second, US policy in Ethiopia went wrong with its approval of the counter-terrorism alliance with Ethiopia, as practically, this alliance served to designate anti-state social forces as terrorists and subjected them to state punishment. This was encouraged by the pledge that president Bush made to Meles, that the US would work tightly with Ethiopia to disrupt any terrorist action targeting Ethiopia^{xxiii}. In other words, terrorism served the regime as a Trojan horse to win the support of the US in its move against internal dissent in Ethiopia and external competition against Eritrea and Somalia. The

attack against the Somalia Islamic Court movement in 2006^{xxiv}, the UN sanctions on Eritrea in 2009^{xxv}, and the muting of the Ethiopian popular uprising were some of the outcomes of the irresponsible TPLF-initiated measures that the US allowed to take place.

Understandably, the US' approval of Ethiopia's counter-terrorism policy presupposed that there was a real terrorist threat in the region. However, terrorism had never been a security threat in the Horn of Africa that required this much engagement. Claims regarding threats of terrorism seem to have been built more on a misconception, fuelled by the US' failure to clearly identify the difference between true terrorism that threatens its interests in other regions, and a form of resistance in the Horn of Africa. The latter is a condition that emerged in response to the lack of legitimate political platforms. The real security threat in the region is an expansionist state in Ethiopia, as its desire for dominance over the region has resulted in recurrent crises for centuries^{xxvi}. This imperialist legacy has remained and still causes political and security threats in the region. When terrorism appeared as a global security agenda, it supplied the TPLF regime in Ethiopia with the perfect ulterior motive. And this became the source of despotism, authoritarianism, and recurrent economic crises in the region. This approach, instead of solving the problems, has reproduced the crisis over and over again.

Historical and current miscalculations of the security strategy of the US in the region are an aggregation of three factors. First, for the past 80 years of intervention in the region, the US always underestimated the local dynamics. Preoccupied with the assumption that the history of the region has been largely determined by factors related to the intervention of superpowers and powerful regional states, the US preferred to deal with governments. In the process, it factored out the non-state local political forces. This was the fact during the monarchy regime in Ethiopia and in the post-Cold War deal with the TPLF. Second, the US has failed to appropriately grasp the growing consciousness of the local people against western countries. For the past two decades, the local people have acquired a great deal of understanding of how Western

powers operate in the world. In some cases, public understanding of Western power might be exaggerated because governments in the region may use propaganda tools to undermine the superiority of the West. Nevertheless, US policy experts must consider that the change in global communication systems have allowed a significant size of the population access to information, whereby they are aware of the actions of the US outside the region.

Third, in the last three decades, the US has lost several playing cards because of growing global stakeholders in the region. The region seems to attract the eyes of the emerging 21st century powers such as China, India, Turkey etc., who want to refurbish regional security architecture. These intervention dynamics have seen local states able to find possible alternative allies, which could give them relative freedom to experiment with home-grown policies and leave room to learn from their mistakes. In such changing conditions, the US cannot afford to lose its basic historical position in the region in favour of impractical principles being advocated, nor will its coercive manners such as sanctions etc. overpower the other alternatives offered by emerging global powers.

The way forward

How should the US then act in the Horn of Africa now? The arrival of Joe Biden as president of the US and the new changes in Ethiopia present a golden opportunity for the US to devise a more mutually beneficial policy. To this end, four points would assist the process:

First, the US has to recognize that terrorism has never been a fundamental threat to its national interests in the region. The issue in Somalia has been less to do with terrorism and should not be treated as such. In fact, its legitimate grounds as a form of resistance against foreign intervention in a globalized world should be recognized. Actually, the fundamental threat to the US' security interests have been the conflicts between Eritrea and Ethiopia, and between Somalia and Ethiopia since World War II, all related to Ethiopia's expansionist ambitions. The US' efforts must focus on settling

these conflicts and encourage a gradual state-building process that involves all actors indiscriminately.

Second, the US must avoid special treatment of member states in the region. Instead of treating them collectively and appointing just one anchor, it should recognize that the region accommodates more than one state actor, and it must apply an egalitarian approach. The US' insensitive foreign policy in the region has damaged its relationship with Eritrea, for example. Once it decided to administer Eritrean affairs through Ethiopia and let Ethiopian interests outweigh those of Eritrea, the latter has painstakingly worked for the failure of the US in the region. Now, with the fall of the TPLF, the US' most favoured political group in the region, Eritrea has remained a critical actor with which the US should deal carefully if its interests in the region are to be protected.

Third, the US must acknowledge change in Ethiopia. In 2018, a popular uprising overthrew the long-standing TPLF government in Ethiopia. This change may have a trickle-down effect in regional security and development progresses if it is well managed. As the change emerged through a gradual process, speeding it up now may lead to an unprecedented scale of disaster nationally and regionally. Hence, for the sake of Ethiopia and the region, the US should encourage the relatively new government, as well as the people of Ethiopia, to have faith in the change and allow it to increase socio-economic transformation. In considering this occasion as an opportunity, the US can redeem itself of its misdeeds in the last two decades; it must use this chance wisely if the future is to be prosperous.

Fourth, the US should look beyond the region's security dynamics and support national and regional development initiatives. Despite interstate and intrastate ethnic conflicts having overshadowed the potentials for development, initiatives like the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam will reinstate public confidence in the future. How the US views this matter will always have a determining effect on how its interests are accommodated in the region. Supporting the construction of the dam does not imply embracing a new ally. Nor does

it mean abandoning an old one. Owing to the magnitude of the matter, the US cannot afford silence or alignment to one side. This is because, firstly, from a geostrategic point of view, the Horn of Africa is a political and cultural border where the Arab and African worlds meet, thus it is an Afro-Middle East region where the interests of the two regions converge, not to mention that it is a Christian-Muslim fault line. Choosing sides does not only have implications for the relationship between regional states, but also the relationship between the Arab and African states. Secondly, the region is becoming increasingly attractive to newly emerging global powers. The US is no longer viewed as the sole global power, as alternative powers are evolving with which regional states can choose to align themselves.

In a nutshell, the above four propositions call on the new US administration to abandon the security strategy it adopted in the region post-9/11. Instead, it should devise a new policy that acknowledges the presence of different state and non-state actors with vested national and regional interests. Such change in foreign policy will not only rejuvenate the popularity of the US in the region, but also arm it with essential stratagems in the competition against other desperate global powers. But the policy must go beyond acknowledgment. Hearing the voices of the local forces, which were suffocated because they had been perceived as having anti-US attitudes, can bestow the US with an advantage, as they would now be helping the people to carry out their development plans.

Conclusion

The current changes in the Horn of Africa, much of it related to the transformation in Ethiopia, demand serious revision in the US strategy towards the region. Terrorism has been the preoccupation of US strategy in the Horn of Africa since the end of the Cold War. Such focus has downplayed the inter-state conflict which has been the major sources of insecurity in the region. Seeking to benefit politically and diplomatically, the TPLF government in Ethiopia manipulated the US anti-terrorist agenda. By giving them full support on the

international stage, the US made them look like deft rulers of their countries, despite the TPLF failing to complete the business of state-building in Ethiopia. So far, the enterprise of state-building in Ethiopia has remained a side-lined and unfinished project, despite the country being older than all African countries. Consequently, the people of Ethiopia and the region have become victims of this process because the US absolutely prioritized its national interests and shunned the public interest of the region.

Now, with the arrival of a new populist government in Ethiopia and the resolution of the Eritrea and Ethiopia conflict, the core regional source of insecurity, the region appears to have arrived in a situation that allows to reinvent itself. Unless US policy in the region is designed in a way that strives to promote the resolution of inter-state conflict in the region, the future of US influence will always be against the public interest of the region. In fact, the settlement of the inter-state conflicts and the strengthening of the US' security apparatus would automatically be regarded as an instrument of US' anti-terrorist strategy, including in the presence of real terrorist threats in the region. Hence, US' interests in the region will flourish when it strikes the balance between its interests and the interests of the people of the region. ◇

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US-Africa cooperation in advancing women, peace and security in Africa

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While the US-Africa engagement on women's peace and security has long existed, the African continent still faces widespread political instability and conflicts which continue to adversely affect women and girls. Recognising the strategic importance of US foreign policy in the creation of sustainable peace and security on the continent, the chapter examines how African states can engage the Joe Biden and Kamala Harris administration to foster the attainment of peace and security through women empowerment initiatives, especially in countries affected by political instability, civil strife, protracted violence and insecurity. To do so, the chapter draws resources such as books, journal articles, policy reports, government reports, media reports and conference papers. The chapter ruminates on the following issues that need to be reconsidered by African countries, even as they engage the Biden-Harris administration on matters women, peace, and security. They include reimagining Afrocentric security and peace, redefinition of women participation in matters peace and security that goes beyond the 'add and stir' practice, as well as adopting an Afrocentric approach as a means of attaining lasting peace and security for women on the continent. Ultimately the chapter reflects on these questions through the overarching issue of Africa's foreign policy towards the US regarding peace and security.

Introduction

Women, peace, and security are arguably a major area of concern on the African continent. Historically, the African continent has experienced violence emanating from factors including but not limited to: colonial resistance movements, slave trade, intra and interstate wars,

political instability, civil strife, and currently violent extremism and radicalizationⁱ. The intensity and magnitude of the violence, coupled with the patriarchal nature of African society, has immensely affected women. As Kezie-Nwoha rightly puts it, the violence has shifted from the battlefield to communities hence impacting people and especially women and childrenⁱⁱ. While it is important to recognise that violence impacts both genders, the way women experience violence or insecurity uniquely differs from men. In addition, when men go to war or are killed in wars, women are left to take care of the households as the main breadwinners. These changing dynamics of conflicts, especially with the rampant radicalization and violent extremism in the wake of the 9/11 era, have made attainment of sustainable peace and security elusive.

As aforementioned, while the US-Africa cooperation on women peace and security has long existed, the African continent still faces widespread political instability and conflicts which continue to adversely affect women and girls. This chapter ruminates on the following issues that need to be reconsidered by African countries, even as they engage the Biden-Harris administration on matters women, peace, and security. They include reimagining Afrocentric security and peace, the redefinition of women's participation in matters of peace and security that goes beyond the 'add and stir' practice, as well as adopting an Afrocentric approach as a means of attaining lasting peace and security for women on the continent. Ultimately the chapter reflects on these questions through the overarching issue of Africa's foreign policy towards the US regarding peace and security.

US-Africa relations

Even with its varying geographical and political diversity, US officials and analysts generally view the continent in terms of the global strategic situation. Until the 21st century, the US had no particular security policy towards Africaⁱⁱⁱ. Walton et al notes that, historically, "American foreign policy in Africa remained indifferent to Africa except when a threat to its commercial and economic interests prevailed"^{iv}.

However, after the 9/11 attacks and the continued Chinese and Indian economic expansion on the continent, the resurgence of Russia and the entry of emerging powers such as Turkey and Middle East powers, the US has intensified its involvement in Africa. Since then, the US has become a strategic partner in supporting the creation of sustainable peace and security on the continent^v. Over the years, the US has worked with the African Union (AU), individual member states and regional economic blocs to foster the attainment of peace and security through women empowerment initiatives, especially in countries affected by political instability, civil strife, protracted violence and insecurity. US-African cooperation on matters women, peace, and security have also intensified in the last two decades. For instance, the establishment of the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) in 2008, which works closely with African and European partners to shape the African security environment through information sharing and response to crisis^{vi}. The Command has also played a critical role in the training of women in African militaries, organizing and co-hosting seminars and workshops on women integration, training of women in peacekeeping and responding to gender-based violence^{vii}.

During his Cape Town, South Africa visit in 2013, former president Barack Obama had this to say: “We support societies that empower women because no country will reach its potential unless it draws on the talents of our wives and our mothers, and our sisters and our daughters... You can measure how well a country does by how it treats its women”^{viii}. For the US, women, peace and security agenda has become an integral part of its foreign policy towards Africa. As such, in 2017 the Women, Peace, and Security Act was adopted and signed into law, which was a major milestone in recognizing the link between gender equality and the security of states. The Act mandates the US government to promote the meaningful participation of women in all aspects of overseas conflict prevention, management, and resolution, and post-conflict relief and recovery efforts, reinforced through diplomatic efforts and programs^{ix}. The Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017 recognizes that women are on the front lines of international

security challenges, as powerful agents of change to create stability and peace.

Earlier on, through the AU initiative dubbed “African Women’s Decade” the US worked with African governments to prioritize women security issues by advocating for the promotion of good governance and the rule of law, economic development, food security, access to social services and the respect of human rights^x. In addition, through the Global Peace Operation initiatives, the US trained thousands African women to enhance their peacebuilding capacity^{xi}. On matters Gender Based Violence (GBV), the US launched the “Safe From the Start” initiative whose aim was to address the needs of women and girls facing or at the risk of GBV, especially in emergency contexts. The initiative worked with USAID to ensure access to safe channels for survivors of GBV to access to livelihoods, psychological support and safety^{xii}. These and many other initiatives have been key in capacity building of women and women’s organizations on the continent.

With the Biden-Harris administration entering its second year, African leaders need to strategize on maximizing the already existing commitment and cordial relations between Africa and the US in the creation of lasting peace and security. The Biden-Harris campaign’s “Agenda for the Diaspora” promised a paradigm shift from its predecessor’s preoccupation with weakening China and Russia’s influence on the continent, to a ‘mutually respectful engagement’ that aims at adopting an Afrocentric approach to violent extremism on the continent^{xiii}. Biden’s commitment to women’s empowerment was recently buttressed in his speech to the Congress on 29th June 2021, where he reiterated that;

“My Administration is committed to a simple but profoundly meaningful proposition – all people, everywhere, are entitled to be treated with inherent human dignity. Yet, in far too many places, women and girls are denied their basic rights, cut off from opportunity, subjected to violence and abuse, or prevented from pursuing their dreams and ambitions. And, in conflicts around the world, rape and sexual violence are used systematically to

terrorize civilians – not as incidental to conflict but as a weapon of war itself. It’s an atrocity, meant to destabilize nations and dehumanize communities, and it is intolerable”^{xiv}.

Through this landmark speech, the Biden-Harris administration assures its commitment to prioritizing women and girls who are still economically disadvantaged and caught up in the violence that continues to ravage the continent. In the subsequent sections, the paper will explore ways in which the African states can engage the Biden-Harris administration through reimagination of the women peace, security issue.

Reimagining security and peace in the African context

Reimagining war, peace, and security entails the recognition that the insecurities that women and girls face go beyond the direct violence to further include both national and international social, political and economic structures of oppression^{xv}. Oppressive social and economic structures can ‘render women insecure through the gendered division of labour, the discounting of work in the home, the dictates of structural adjustment programs, the ravages of poverty, and the violence of sexual tourism and trafficking of women – all issues that generally do not get the attention of orthodox practitioners’^{xvi}. An Afrocentric definition takes into consideration women’s agency as far as being part of the solution to their issues is concerned. On February 7, 2019, President Donald J. Trump established the Women’s Global Development and Prosperity (W-GDP) Initiative through National Security Presidential Memorandum-16 (NSPM-16). W-GDP is the first-ever, whole-of-Government approach to global women’s economic empowerment, which seeks to reach 50 million women across the developing world by 2025 through US Government programs and partnerships.

W-GDP focuses on five foundational areas of legal reform: 1) Lifting restrictions on women’s authority to sign legal documents, such as contracts and court documents; and addressing unequal access to courts and administrative bodies for women, whether officially or through lack of proper enforcement; 2) Ensuring women’s equal access

to credit and capital to start and grow their businesses; and prohibiting discrimination in access to credit on the basis of sex or marital status; 3) Lifting restrictions on women possessing and managing property, including limitations on inheritance and the ability to transfer, purchase, or lease property; 4) addressing constraints on women's freedom of movement, including restrictions on obtaining passports on the basis of sex; 5) eliminating barriers that limit women's working hours, occupations, or tasks on the basis of sex.

Thus, the W-GDP initiative, African women and organizations should work around restructuring oppressive patriarchal economic structures. African governments need to offer the necessary infrastructure and political support to this initiative so as to allow women, who constitute more than half of the continent's population, opportunities to participate meaningfully in the economy and advance both prosperity and national security. The W-GDP's three pillars, namely, women prospering in the workforce, women succeeding as entrepreneurs, and women enabled in the economy, is a good starting point insofar as economic restructuring and elimination of exploitations is concerned. African leaders should come to terms with the fact that insecurity and violence is not gender neutral. In fact, women are affected disproportionately by violence and insecurity, 'especially in developing countries where the link between poverty, women's status (or lack thereof), imposed development policies, and environmental degradation is a complex but intense one'^{xvii}.

Reimagining peace and security also calls for a more holistic view of security, which takes into consideration the non-conventional security threats. By so doing, it allows for a more comprehensive approach and adoption of the appropriate initiatives to eradicate protracted violence. Reimagining peace and security is a long-overdue yet critical endeavour that would bring African women more purposefully into the social and economic structures, address some of the legal gaps, norms and challenges that perpetuate violence against women, and encourage a novel way of thinking about how to create an evidence base of what really works to attain sustainable peace and security

that benefits women^{xviii}. While US-Africa cooperation has come a long way, a lot of focus is still on the hard security threats such as political instability and civil strife, while giving less attention to soft security sectors such as violent extremism, family planning and access to livelihoods, among others.

To begin with, African governments need to do some introspection to understand why non conventional security threats like terrorism are becoming a pressing concern on the continent. More young men, women and girls, for instance, are being recruited into violent extremism. The global Terrorism Index concludes that the centre of gravity for Islamic State (IS) has now moved from the Middle East to Africa, and to some extent, South Asia. It reported that 982 people were killed by IS in Africa last year, 41% of the global total, and there was a 67% increase on the 2019 figure for the continent^{xix}. To reiterate the United Nations Secretary General, Antonio Guterres' sentiments, "the creation of open, equitable, inclusive and pluralist societies, based on the full respect of human rights and with economic opportunities for all, represents the most tangible and meaningful alternative to violent extremism"^{xx}. Statistics show that between 2011 and 2016, approximately 33 000 fatalities were caused by violent extremism in Africa^{xxi}. Even more dispiriting is the fact that violent extremism continues to ruin all the progress of the US-Africa peace and security initiatives on the continent. The skyrocketing numbers of youth who are getting radicalized is symptomatic of their drained confidence in what governments' can offer to them as far as securing the future.

Continuously, many African leaders are focused on changing constitutions to remain in power, conducting violent elections that discriminate and marginalize women, and using state military machinery to attack opposition and dissenting voices mostly from civil society organizations. In countries that lack strong and coordinated opposition political parties such as Uganda and South Sudan, civil society organizations become the alternative that then become victims of state repression^{xxii}. Uganda's January 2021 presidential election process has been defined by the increasingly blatant use of violence

by Ugandan police and armed forces to ensure that President Yoweri Museveni retains his 35-year hold on power. Hence, the militarized nature of states has led to more attacks on civil society organizations including women's organizations, and increased abduction and killing of women. In 2015, the Kenyan government received intelligence information on some 1500 youth who had returned from Somalia where they had been recruited and trained by Al-Shabaab, then sent back to Kenya as agents.

Further investigation into the issue revealed that the youth were disgruntled with the government. Many who hail from the coast and the northern part of Kenya felt marginalized and targeted by the police through extra judicial killings. Even with the promise of an amnesty and rewards of livelihood opportunities by the government, a greater number of the young men and women remained adamant in their decision to join terror groups. Kenya is one of the strategic US partners in combating terrorism in the Horn of Africa. Through the most extensive and longest running US-funded counterterrorism program in Kenya – the State Department's Anti-Terrorism Assistance Program (ATA) – an undertaking by the Bureau of Diplomatic Security that promotes cooperation with foreign law enforcement, through the counterterrorism training and equipment grants^{xxiii}. This program, although present globally since the 1980s (and in Kenya since 1998), gained operational momentum in 2005, when Kenya was “one of only five states to receive specialized training”^{xxiv}.

In sum, an Afrocentric redefinition of peace and security entails an interrogation of the abstractions of strategic discourse, an awareness of the connection between women's everyday experience and security, a critique of the state, and the recognition of the effects of structural violence with a strong normative and transformative vision, evidenced by its focus on inequality and emancipation. For Brown, the goal should be “the identification and explanation of social stratification and of inequality as structured at the national and global relations^{xxv}. Most importantly, social and gender justice must be at the heart of any enduring peace; political, economic, and ecological relationships characterized by

domination and subordination cannot coexist with authentic security^{xxvi}. Espousing empathy, mediation, and sensitivity, presently devalued as feminine principles, could play an important role in building alternative modalities for tackling insecurity on the continent.

Beyond the 'add and stir' approach

Inclusivity of all segments of a society is an important requisite in attaining sustainable peace, security, and development. The many challenges bedeviling the African continent are, to a large extent, due to the exclusion and or marginalization of some segments of the society, especially women. African leaders need to come to the realization that the achievement of durable solutions to violence and insecurity will only be possible when women are included. Through partnership with USAID, African governments need to understand that participation of women in matters peace and security goes beyond the 'add and stir' approach. Reimagining the women's role in peace and security implies rethinking about which societal institutions wield the greatest power. For instance, while the international community hails Rwanda as a "success story" because women are well-represented in Parliament, the legislature is not necessarily the most powerful institution in Rwanda. So while better representation may reflect growth, it is not as progressive as it may seem. Additionally, in many countries, violence against women in politics is exacerbated by police. A potential area of collaboration between Africa and the US would be to initiate and implement projects that involve women in the police force and increase their representation in more powerful institutions in society. One of the basic principles of these efforts is the recognition that peace and security cannot be achieved without the meaningful participation and leadership of women.

Meanwhile, the African continent takes a leaf from the international community's book by adopting most of the international women's rights and women, peace, and security frameworks, to ensure the protection of women during and after conflicts, as well as to ensure their participation in peacebuilding processes. Yet the adoption of

these frameworks has not necessarily led to action in reality beyond the rhetoric. In fact, a significant numbers of countries in Africa are currently either in conflict, experiencing post-war tensions, or are in post-conflict reconstruction processes^{xxvii}. Over the last few decades it has become apparent that supporting women's capacities to participate in peace processes is a crucial part of their advancement and ability to contribute to peace, development and security. The changing nature of conflicts, where war has moved from the battlefield to the communities, has also led to increased impact on civilian populations, with women and children bearing the brunt.

The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda that was adopted by the UN Security Council in 2002 highlights two important points^{xxviii}. First, sustainable peace and security entails the participations of all people in the society including women. To do so, the Agenda recommends that policy makers need to espouse a 'gender perspective' in order to reveal how gender inequality impede access, opportunities, and well-being for certain people, as well as ultimately impeding peace^{xxix}. Inclusive peace-making must involve the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in conflict prevention, peace-making and peacebuilding efforts. In the face of persistent and complex violent conflicts and a rising backlash against women's rights, African leaders need to commit to keeping the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda at the core of its peacebuilding work. The WPS is indeed a powerful framework that needs to be embraced holistically as opposed to the cherry picking by African states that tend to only focus on what suits their interests. Meanwhile, close to 50 percent of African Union states have created national action plans to implement the WPS agenda, which is progress; however, implementation remains problematic. Of the 24 plans, only 14 are still active^{xxx}. Much like their global counterparts, African politicians are really good at talking the talk, but not very good at walking the walk.

Closely related to the above, development agenda focusing on women should be conceived and executed within a sustainable security context. Many African governments have separate departments for

security and development matters. The same has been replicated in the peace and security initiatives that are implemented in the community. Even so, there is a growing awareness within the security community that we can and must continue to deal with the hard security threats. But in order to be sustainable, there needs to be greater investment in development, or we will ultimately need to invest in more bullets. Key points to note are that;

- Gender equality is the primary predictor of peace.
- Inclusion of women in peace and security initiatives as initiators and implementors allows for the realization of their human rights.
- Having women at the peace and security table enhances sustainability and ownership of the initiatives.
- Sexual violence in the context of war not only affects the individual women but undermines peace efforts overall.

Adopting Afrocentric approaches

There are many projects and initiatives started and funded by the US and other international actors that seek to help eradicate the political, material and knowledge related challenges that impact on peace and security. The downside of this approach is that many of these international actors lack the local knowledge and lived experience to fully address the dynamic, yet complex, peace and security issue on the continent. African leaders should learn to walk the famous AU's mantra of 'African solutions for African problems'. The Biden-Harris administration should work with African states in mobilizing resources and creating platforms for African leaders to spearhead the discourse and practice that is responsive to African needs. African leaders should embrace the fact that African solutions to violence and insecurity cannot be exported, mimicked or created by other actors except Africans themselves. Allowing 'foreign' solutions to African problems degenerates the agency of Africans in the long run. Sustainable peace and security is an outcome of the recognition of indigenous knowledge as well as the agency that African researchers and practitioners have. For instance,

the women's organizations working on WPS Agenda need to own the process and initiative to promote gender equality on the continent.

Next, Africa-US relations should focus on rethinking the current development models that drive the peace and security agenda on the continent. Many times, the projects are implemented as a response to a crisis or emergency. As aforesaid, many of the initiatives tend to lean toward the hard security threats such as war and conflict. There is a tendency to rush to the scene and save the sinking boat. However, this kind of approach may not be appropriate for soft threats which continue to ail the continent, albeit in a steady yet subtle way. For instance, how can women and girls be sensitized about recruitment into violent extremism, human trafficking or sex tourism, among others? How can we empower women so that they can actively and meaningfully participate in the economy? To attend to such issues the Biden-Harris administration needs to work with African governments in adopting long term projects that will transform communities for the better. Sustainable peace and security demands that Africans themselves take the driver seat in advocating for change and owning the transformation process through innovative ideas, building strong and reliable institutions, and embracing transparency and integrity in the implementation process. Africa has its own destiny in its own hands. By framing a foreign policy plan around domestic realities, Africa can legitimately bridge the gap between the array of policies and the implementation of commitments that strengthen the role and leadership of women in peace and security.

Moreover, African policy makers should desist from the urge to mimic a Eurocentric version of security, because that would result in the adoption of misplaced initiatives that perpetuate the cycle of violence. Africa-US relations should focus more on strategically placing both state and non-state actors within the architecture of solving soft security threats, where they can play an integral role in the elimination of the same threats. The Biden administration can reach out to its partners to mobilize resources that will enable African governments get training and resources to address the structural drivers, support

communities in implementing de-radicalization initiatives, and also help with the reintegration of former members of violent extremist organizations, and ensure they are socio economically reintegrated. There is already some effort regarding this but the major area of concern is how to effectively respond.

It is also important to pay attention and be guided by the perspectives of grassroots women who have, over time, built peace informally and kept communities intact when men have been away fighting. Grassroots women provide practical support to communities such as food, shelter, healthcare services, education, and economic empowerment, and ensure that victims of sexual and gender-based violence receive psychosocial support and medical treatment^{xxxii}. These activities contribute to meaningful peace for women. Yet these approaches are not reflected in the regional and national frameworks that detect how peace is built on the continent. Furthermore, the way that women's informal peacebuilding is accounted for on the continent is problematic, because it does not fit the description of the formal peace tables and peacebuilding itself. This calls for improvement on the current low percentage of women at the peace tables, by redefining the peace table to take into account women's informal peacebuilding efforts. For example, African leaders may want to count the number of conflict incidences that women peace committees mediate at community level, or the number of meetings held with conflicting groups and the outcomes of such meetings. In so doing, they may be able to account for higher numbers of women in peacebuilding and mediation than is currently being recorded.

When it comes to the inclusion of women in peace processes, there is a need to increase, in rosters, the number of qualified women to complement the number of capacity building measures for women in leadership, mediation, negotiation, and election observation, to promote women's contribution to peace and security. African governments can petition the US-Africa Command to help in the development of such rosters at national, regional, and continental level to ensure that Member States, RECs, and the AU have access

to qualified women that they can deploy as part of their conflict prevention, management, and resolution efforts. In its 2020 report, the African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS) notes that many African countries have been slow with adoption and implementation of the 1325 Resolution. African countries can also look into information sharing and documenting good practices, regional training, as well as monitoring and reporting on progress in the implementation of the resolution.

Next, the US-Africa relations should focus on supporting national statistical bodies in incorporating the WPS agenda into existing national surveys or data collection mechanisms, providing wider national-level data for monitoring and reporting purposes. This would allow countries to streamline and harmonize data for various national reporting requirements, as well as assess the impact of interventions. Increasing documentation on good practice on WPS nationally will also promote women's participation in promoting peace and security in other parts of Africa. Supporting the development of regional plans which not only mainstream gender internally within the AU's peace and security architecture, but also emphasize coherence and synergy with National Action Plans, and implementing regional level programming through identification of high impact flagship projects, will increase women's involvement in peace-building.

Conclusion

The paper concludes that the women, peace, and security agenda is critical to the overall development of the continent. It is becoming increasingly apparent that an Afrocentric approach will go a long way in developing holistic solutions. In its engagement with the US on matters women, peace and security, African states need to exercise agency in steering this initiative as well as take advantage of African indigenous knowledge and approaches, in line with the mantra of 'African solutions to African problems'. ◇

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African agency, human rights and issues of homosexuality: Biden and Africa

CHARLES PREMPEH

Homosexuality is a very contentious subject in many African countries, where several people frame it as taboo. But the practice received widespread media attention in 2015, when as a result of the US legislating same-sex marriages. Since then, the US has adopted the strategy of entangling aid with the decriminalization of homosexuality. When Joseph Robinette Biden Jr, became the 46th president of the US in 2020, his first foreign speech in February 2021 included an order to all US government agencies active abroad to promote the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTQI+) people and come up with plans within 180 days. This order could potentially fracture the relationship between Africa and the US, especially as evangelical Christianity and reformist Islam continue to influence state-sponsored legislation against LGBTQI+ – indicating a reverse of expressive individualism and sexual revolution in the US. In this chapter, I look at the US and Africa, by drawing from the role the US' old ally Britain played in establishing anti-homosexual laws in colonial Africa and how the US is seeking to decolonize the practice. Deploying a critical analysis and online reports on the subject, I argue against belabouring the ahistorical and perceived nativeness or alienness of homosexual act to Africa, but rather advocate the need for America to desist from tying aid to the liberalization of homosexual acts in Africa as it would undermine human flourishing on the continent and smack of neocolonialism which Africans have always dreaded.

Contextualizing the homosexual debate

In this chapter, I discuss the administration of Joseph Robinette Biden Jr, the 46th president of the US, and his call for developing countries

to liberalize and decriminalize their laws against homosexuality and the broader members of the LGBTQI+ community. In his first foreign speech in February 2021, Biden ordered all US government agencies active abroad to promote the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTQI+) people and come up with plans within 180 days. This policy is likely to affect many countries in Africa where the law works against the LGBTQI+ community. In this chapter, I discuss – through critical reflection and a review of extant literature and online news – the complex issues of homosexuality in Africa, focusing in my conclusion on what needs to be done.

The general concern of the US is that homosexuals across the globe, and particularly in Africa, have suffered virulent attacks from mainstream conservative society for not conforming to the conventional construction of heterosexual social order. Often homosexuality is seen as an affront to hegemonic masculinity in Africa. In popular and academic discourses, entrenched positions, sometimes backed by polemical books, have confused the discussion on the subject. Religious leaders have parted company because they seem to have different ideological inclinations about homosexuality. Homophobia has received greater attention in the 21st century because many of the homosexual advocates argue that such homophobia could potentially lead to stigmatization and social exclusion.

Discussion about homosexuality has always been subdued due to the threats of America's neocolonial tendencies as it seeks to decriminalize the practice in Africa as well as society's hostility towards its homosexual cohort's demand for decriminalization. It is a very contentious subject in many African countries. In Africa, the practice is almost a taboo to the extent that most Africans are reticent about discussing it. This feeds a public perception where the mere mentioning of it is likely to attract reprehension from the larger conservative religious groups in the country. However, in 2006, the subject gained national attention in Africa, including Ghana as a group of people who identify as homosexual decided to host an international conference on LGBT in the countryⁱ. The intended conference attracted

comments from many Ghanaians, and particularly religious leaders. Conservative religious leaders, both from Islam and Christianity, called on the Ghanaian government, under the presidency of John Agyekum Kufuor of the New Patriotic Party, to reject the idea of leasing the land of Ghana for such a conference. There were back and forth discussions but eventually, the religious community prevailed, insisting that the government deny its permission for the conference to go aheadⁱⁱ.

In 2011, the issue of homosexuality re-emerged. This time, then UK prime minister David Cameron sent a caution to all African leaders to liberalize their legal stance on homosexuality or risk losing British aid. The issue once again spurred Ghanaians on to debate homosexuality. Here, too, then president John Evans Atta Mills of the National Democratic Congress, stated publicly that he was not going to compromise Ghanaian culture and religious sensitivity to liberalize or legalize homosexuality in the country.

In 2014, there was a renewed discussion on homosexuality following the trial of a senior medical practitioner, Dr Sulley Ali-Gabass, who was accused of sodomizing a minor. The case dragged on for a year, until he was eventually slapped with 25-year jail term after the trial concluded in July 2015. In 2018 and 2021, the current president of Ghana, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, also stated his resolve to keep Ghana's "nebulous" law against carnal knowledge – used against homosexuals. These incidences show that while the subject of homosexuality is usually suppressed in the margins of public discourses – while retaining its status as a criminalized practice – it is common in provincial towns and communities, particularly in urban Accra, Kumasi, and Takoradi that cuts across socioeconomic, political classes and ages of the Ghanaian public.

In this chapter, I will discuss African leaders' rhetoric about homosexuality that intermesh with the complexity of the formation of a secular state to analyse Biden's international relations with Africa. The chapter is structured as follows: I will discuss the counternarratives about whether homosexuality is native or a foreign importation to Africa – I will also discuss how, inspired by Christian

sex ethics, Britain, an old ally of the US and an active participant in the Trans-Atlantic slave trade exported anti-homosexual legislation, which was also operative in the early histories of America, to Africa. I will later look at the reasons why most post-independence Africa after their encounter with Christianity and Islam have been unrelenting in their condemnation of homosexuality. This will lead to my discussion of the rights of homosexuals. I will then conclude by pointing out the complexities of the homosexual issue in Africa and the need for Biden and other western leaders not to punish African states because the states fail to decriminalize homosexuality.

In all this, while my focus is on the US, my main argument is that the discourse on homosexuality is based on the complexities of secularism, US notions of expressive individualism, and how the colonial history of the British imposition of Christian sex ethics and anti-homosexual law in colonial Africa remains a major challenge to homosexual advocates. These complexities expose the simplicity of homosexuality and homophobic laws as foreign or native to Africans. It rather reifies the failure of secularization thesis of the 1960s in Africa, following the resurgence of evangelical Judeo-Christian values since the 1970s – a major impediment to the decriminalization of homosexuality in Africa. Consequently, I suggest that the west, currently led by Biden, should not re-colonize Africa through the imposition of a certain type of secularism that only incriminates the political elites and states in Africa. Just as it took the west centuries to liberalize their stance on homosexuality in the 1960s, African sex ethics should be contextualized. Similarly, more should be done to ensure that homosexuals are not maimed. The basic question shaping this chapter is: in what ways do the idea of secularism shape the debates about homosexuality in Africa and the west?

Rhetoric about homosexuality

The rhetoric around homosexuality centres on a debate about whether it is indigenous or foreign to Africans. This chapter acknowledges the tension surrounding the homosexual debate. All the leaders of Africa who have bared their teeth at homosexual people have done so with the

justification that the practice is un-African and an antithesis to African culture. Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe also considered homosexuality to be very un-African and said that homosexuals were worse than dogs and pigs, who couldn't differentiate between male and female. He considered the tolerance of homosexuality a new form of cultural imperialismⁱⁱⁱ.

In 2009, a marriage relationship between two gay people, Stephen Monjeza and Tiwonge Chimbalanga, was contracted in Malawi. However, the two were immediately arrested for breaching the country's anti-sodomy law, and sentenced to 14 years in prison. After intense pressure from international bodies and civil society, the Malawian president, Bingu wa Mutharika, was compelled to extend a presidential pardon to the two men in May, 2010. But, because he did it under duress, he stated on the day of their release that: "These boys committed a crime against our culture, our religion, our laws"^{iv}.

In a Muslim-dominated country, the Gambia, the former president of the country, Yahya Jammeh, framed homosexuality as the antithesis of Islamic sexual ethics as follows: "(It) is anti-god, anti-human, and anti-civilization"^v. Condemning homosexuality from the perspective of Christianity and indigenous African religions, the former president of Kenya, Daniel Arab Moi, claimed that the practice is against indigenous religion and biblical teachings^{vi}.

The above rhetoric against homosexuals is based on its perceived incongruity and alienness to African traditions, Christianity, and Islamic cultures. But all these emphasize the role of religion in shaping sexual desires and the homosexual discourse in Africa. Nevertheless, the problem with this rhetoric is that it presents African sexuality as static, uniform and fossilized in history. More so, it sanitizes the African sexual culture, as it externalizes perceived perverse sexual practice to the west – usually framed as morally depraved. It further creates the impression that African leaders are simply against homosexuality without any political expediencies. But it also indicates that, even if homosexual practices existed in Africa, beyond its location in ritual context, there was hardly any sociogenic activity that supported the practice in pre-

colonial or post-colonial Africa. Given this rhetoric obfuscates the complexities of African sexuality, in the next section, I will discuss the contradictory narratives about the historicity of homosexual practices in Africa.

Homosexuality: African or un-African?

From the above, it is obvious that anti-homosexual rhetoric is to a large extent state-sponsored, with homophobic speeches often underscored by the assumption that the practice is un-African, anti-religious, and illegitimate. By claiming that homosexuality is un-African and a demonstration of the cultural imperialism that came with the Western hegemonic wave, these politicians are assuming, however tacitly, that homosexuality is a European invention that has been transposed to Africa to dilute African culture.

Even so, some scholars have challenged the premise of some homophobic speeches. Pro-homosexual advocates, including Reddy, Nyanzi, Dlamini, Murray and Roscoe, and Mbisi, to mention but a few, have argued that it is homophobic tendencies that are foreign to Africans, not homosexuality^{vii}. They assemble evidence from different countries in Africa to assert that homosexuality has always been indigenous to Africans. They asseverate that Africans had always tolerated homosexuality until the advent of European colonizers. Dlamini argues that the colonialists did not introduce homosexuality to Africa, but rather intolerance of it together with systems of surveillance and regulation of its expression. Msibi argues that homophobia is used as a front to entrench patriarchy and heteronormativity as legitimate and fixed in African societies. He argues that 'the renewed efforts to label same-sex desire as un-African represent a façade that conceals neoconservatism and resurgence of patriarchy, coated in the constructs of religion, nationalism, and law'^{viii}.

Similarly, Dlamini argues that homosexuality has always been part of African culture, and that the practice is consistent with African spirituality, cosmology, and culture. He argues that homosexuality is not an invention or introduction of the West: the practice both

preceded and survived the difficult times of colonialism, thereby discrediting the idea that it is a colonial import. Dlamini also affirms that the fact that we might not have an indigenous word to describe homosexuality does not mean that the practice never existed in Africa before colonialism. He thus argues that we should distinguish between practice and precept, arguing that homosexuality is not an affront to African traditional religions. Accordingly, he says, experts on ritual in traditional religions attach spiritual significance to sexuality. He argues that African traditional religions believe there is spiritual power in sexuality, with different types of spirituality associated with each of the biological sexes. It is, therefore, argued that it was Judeo-Christian sex values that suppressed homosexuality in Africa – shaping the passage of anti-homosexual laws.

The above follows that observation of many scholars that the law against homosexuality that favour heterosexual relationship is part of the extension of colonialism over the sexualities of Africans. Homophobic laws are, therefore, considered part of British imperial legal instruments that shaped the sexual conscience and morality of the colonized people^{ix}. It is argued that countries that were colonized by the British tend to have stringent laws criminalizing homosexuals than countries that were colonized by the British^x. Nevertheless, as Dlamini observed, the homophobic laws of the British imperialists that framed homosexuality as sodomy reflected Judeo-Christian biblical influences^{xi}.

The contrasting narratives about homosexuality are not unique to the continent. In England, in the 14th century, the English treated homosexuality as a foreign importation^{xii}. This then reinforces Havelock Ellis's observation that, "The people of every country have always been eager to associate sexual perversions with some other country than their own^{xiii}."

Nevertheless, counternarratives about homosexuality complexify the simplicities of either accepting it as African or rejecting it as un-African. More importantly pro-homosexual advocates hardly provide any evidence of sociogenic structures that supported the public

celebration of homosexuality in Africa. So, it is important to go beyond just the colonial and anti-colonial debate and focus on the genealogy of the modern state in Africa. This is because, while the British repealed its homosexual law in 1967, most of the erstwhile British colonies, including Ghana, Uganda, and Nigeria, retain laws against homosexual practices. More importantly, the role of religion, particularly American evangelical Judeo-Christian values in the homosexual debate invites an analysis of how religion shaped the imposition of anti-homosexual laws^{xiv}. With this, the next section will discuss the evolution of the modern state in Africa – considering the role of religion. This is because homophobia in Africa is state-sponsored and inspired by American evangelical Christianity and Islam (both sharing the similar Old Testament sex ethics), as opposed to English culture^{xv}.

The modern state in Africa and homosexual rights

Before the advent of Arabs and Europeans in sub-Saharan Africa in the 11th and 15th centuries respectively, the political regime in the various societies in Africa was such that there was hardly any bifurcation between religion and politics. This included centralized and non-stratified societies. Religion was a lived reality that led to a creative interweaving of religion into the socio-cultural and political institutions of life. In centralized political societies like the Asante in Ghana, the chief was responsible for performing both religious and mundane activities that bridged the gap between the spiritual and material realms of life. This was also because the spirits and humans crisscrossed the boundaries at will. As non-revealed, non-dogmatic traditions, indigenous religions are pragmatic and highly integrative religions that incorporate beliefs and ideas from other traditions to support human flourishing^{xvi}. It is that that makes African cultures highly adaptable to homophobic rhetoric, even if some societies in Africa retained a cultic-related practice of homosexuality.

This holistic view of life in pre-colonial societies was disrupted with the advent of Arab-Muslims and European Christians. Islam and Christianity, with mission-motive, looked down on indigenous

religions as inauthentic and an adulteration of God's revelation to humanity. So, they launched attacks on indigenous religions and cultures. Over time, the Arabs receded and handed over the mission of proselytization to black Africans. With black Africans in charge of proselytizing Islam, they were quite considerate in accommodating some indigenous practices. This partly explains why some chieftaincies in Northern Ghana, the predominantly Islamised part of the country have creatively fused indigenous traditions with Islam. But this was also because the earlier type of Islam that penetrated Ghana and other West African societies was Sufi Islam with a predisposition towards spiritual advancement – a practice that correlated with indigenous religions. Also, since most of the black African carriers of Islam were traders, their primary occupation was economic rather than political^{xvii}.

The overwhelming economic interest of the black Muslim evangelists meant that they did not carry the same zest that the Arabs had invested in conquering North Africa in the 7th century and extended to the Sudanese Empires in the 11th century. Consequently, Islam in West Africa was quickly overrun by European Christians who were decidedly interested in proselytization, especially in the 19th century.

The missionaries who ventured into Africa in the 19th century did not necessarily identify with colonialism, as there were three categories of Europeans in Africa. These were the missionaries – who were interested in Christianising Africans (especially since the beginning of the 19th century), merchants – who were interested in trading, and mercenaries – who were administrators. But these divisions are not necessarily to be treated as mutually exclusive. In many cases, all these Europeans had their interest converging in carrying through with the idea of civilizing mission – particularly imposing Judeo-Christian values. But they differed on the approaches. For example, whereas the aftermath of the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 that ushered the partition of the continent denied Africans the capacity of self-determination, the Church Missionary Society argued that Africans had agency of their affairs, focusing on their interest in implanting Christian morality^{xviii}.

It was, however, the outcome of the Berlin Conference that marked the high point of colonialism. After the Berlin Conference, the European colonisers became more virulent in colonizing Africa. Given that one of the rules of the Berlin Conference was for any European colonizing power to demonstrate effective occupation of a piece of land in Africa, European powers planned about how to govern the colonies^{xix}. It was at this point that most of these colonizing powers made an incursion into the interior of African societies, after their long-term engagement with coastal communities.

With such exiles, the British imposed their secular political regime on the native population. Two main reasons informed British adoption of secularism. The first was the ethnic and religious plurality of the native population. The second was that the British had by the 19th century embarked on cultural secularization, which implied that religion was not as important as museums in England^{xx}. Nevertheless, given that this era coincided with a Victorian religious revival in England, the missionaries became conveyors of Judeo-Christian values that sought to remedy moral 'anarchy', including homosexuality, in England and the colonies. So, while the British adopted "secular" governance, they allowed the various religions to exist. But this was more in favour of Islam and Christianity. The British interfered with indigenous religion, forcing them to abandon some practices that the British considered at odds with English Christianity morality. For example, in the case of the Gold Coast, the British passed the Native Customs Ordinance that proscribed the practice of Dipo among the people of Krobo^{xxi}.

The bastardization of indigenous tradition resonated with the British imposition of Judeo-Christian sexual ethics on their colonies. As I have mentioned above, while the British had significantly secularized their culture at the height of colonialism, they had not secularized their morality – which had to wait until the 1960s. One moral issue that the Victorian era had to deal with was homosexuality. So, while homosexuality had been treated as a crime in England since 1533, its resurgence in the 19th century compelled the Victorian regime to tighten its law against the practice in 1885^{xxii}. It is reported that some

of the English and European travellers and explorers transported homosexual practices to the colonies^{xxiii}.

Following the extension of homosexual practices abroad and its prevalence in India where it had flourished before colonialism^{xxiv}, the Victorian regime extend the law against homosexuality to India. The law, incorporated into India's Penal Code in 1860, proscribed all, "carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animal". It later spread to most of the British Empire, including Africa. It is still unclear how pervasive and public acceptance of homosexuality was in different societies in Africa. But it is possible that the British misconstruing of Africans as having depraved, hyper-sexual instinct might have influenced their imposition of the anti-natural sex law universally (Jarosz, 1992)^{xxv}. It may also be an attempt at deploying a uniform law for effective governance of the colony.

The British succeeded in imposing these Judeo-Christian laws on the colonies mainly because of two reasons. First, the law reflected Christian morality (not necessarily English culture), so the missionaries who were instrumental in colonial education incorporated sex education into the curriculum. This contributed to canonizing the law as religious, not political. Second, which I have mentioned before, late colonialism was based on violence. This violence helped in the enforcement of colonial order was based on the divide and rule tactics^{xxvi}. These two reasons mean that for African leaders to ward off homophobic laws, religion must be liberalized, while African leaders must have enough power to enforce their laws. But given the resurgence of religion and the enforcement of liberal democracy in Africa since the 1970s and 1980s, it is difficult to tell whether the political elites can easily pass laws – decriminalizing homosexuality – against the collective interest of Africa's religious constituency.

The British use of force to cow the native population into submission to colonial order starting receding after the end of World War I and crystallized at the end of the so-named World War II. Given the socio-economic and politically difficult consequences of the war, militant nationalism in the colony forced the colonial powers to grudgingly

retreat. At this point, the British were compelled, especially after the First World War, to introduce elective politics that would allow the native population to be represented in the governance of the colonies.

All this was important in constituting a kind of Judeo-Christian morality, including the enforcement of heterosexual laws, that underpinned colonial order. Because Muslims and Christians tend to converge on sexual ethics, the colonizers in the Gold Coast and many African countries succeeded. Indigenous religions that were losing grounds had to acquiesce through the invention of homophobic rhetoric.

As the British creatively imposed homophobic laws on Africa through secular governmentality on the colonies, most of the first-generation African nationalists, including Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, inherited the British legal regime. They also inherited the administrative structures that undergird colonial rule. While they inherited the late “democratic” aspect of colonial administration, they did not inherit the brute force to push through their ideas. Nevertheless, these African leaders had a choice to reverse the colonial structure. But that choice was difficult to take, because a particular order had been established that had ushered Africa into modern state governance. Also, most of these nationalists had an elitist interest to enjoy the privileges the colonizers enjoyed^{xxvii}.

Similarly, given that most of them were educated by the Christian missionaries and had either become Christians or shared Christian values, they kept the moral laws around sexuality^{xxviii}. They also continued with the idea of a “secular” state – allowing all the major religions to operate. Their notion of “secularism” was not the absence of religion in the public sphere or “naked public square”, but the absence of a state religion^{xxix}. Nkrumah articulated this creative religious eclecticism well in his philosophy of consciencism – the creative synthesis of Christianity, Islam, and indigenous religions in Ghana’s public life^{xxx}.

While American evangelical Christianity, in a form of “civil religion” assumed increasing importance in shaping public morality in post-independence Africa, the opposite happened in England and America. In England and America, by the mid-20th century, religion had

significantly lost its control in shaping morality. The secularization of morality marginalized the role of religion in the public sphere. The 1960s and 1970s have been described as a “permissive society” that loosened religious moral code about sexual conduct^{xxxii}. So, while homosexuality has been part of the history of Roman-Greco civilization, from which Euro-America claims its ancestry, it was in the 1960s that Euro-Americans began decriminalizing homosexual practices^{xxxiii}. Religion significantly lost its control over sexual values because of a combination of factors such as science and technology, the impact of capitalism and the market economy – all contributing to the retreat of religion in the public sphere of Euro-America.

As Euro-Americans pushed religion to the margins of public life, Africans in the 1960s discussed how to incorporate religion into their public life^{xxxiii}. The increasing presence of religion in Africa’s public sphere crystallized in the late 1970s when after the Iranian revolution, a global resurgence of religion in the Middle East affected the religious landscape in Africa. Many of the Muslim world sponsored Muslim youth in Africa to study in Islamic countries as part of intensifying Islamic evangelism in Africa^{xxxiv}. The 1970s also witnessed the sporadic rise of American evangelical Christianity which featured strongly in the neo-Pentecostal movement in Africa^{xxxv}. In contrast, during this time many evangelicals were not active in politics^{xxxvi}. Consequently, the late 1970s marked a de-secularization of the African public sphere with religion intensifying its role as a moral compass to shape life, including homosexuality that is profiled as demonic possession – hence the importance of healing and deliverance^{xxxvii}. This constrains the political elites who for pragmatic and political expedience have to follow religious sensitivity in their comments on homosexuality.

The discussion so far points to a complexity that entangles with local and cultural globalization which the US, under the Democratic leftist party, is a chief promoter, using the threats of aid starvation to compel countries in Africa to decriminalize homosexuality^{xxxviii}. Given the political polarization between the Democratic Party and Republicans over the issues of homosexuality, evangelical Christians in America

who largely identify with Republicans and anti-LGBT+ rights have been instrumental in extending their contention against homosexuality in America to Africa^{xxxix}. This demonstrates the extent to which the colonial incorporation of anti-homosexual law as a religious ethic into Africa has been consolidated as evangelical Christian and reformist Islamic religious resurgence on the continent^{xl}. Religion, not politics, has become a bulwark against the decriminalization of homosexuality in Africa^{xli}. Thus, leaving the debate over the origin of homosexuality aside, the issue that is worth considering is the rights of homosexuals in Africa. In the next section, therefore, I will look at the different nuances of the secularization of religion in Euro-America and Africa that shape the discourse on homosexual rights across the world, including Africa.

Walking the tightrope of human rights and African agency

While it is not farfetched to state that cultic-related homosexual practices predate the irruption of colonialism in Africa, it is true that the promotion of heterosexuality has become keenly associated with “African culture” and “African values”. This is contrasted with the narrative that homosexuality is a foreign import. That most Africans take this view is routinised by the attempts by foreign diplomats in Africa and Western governments to directly encourage the decriminalization of homosexuality. For example, on January 31, 2021, the LGBTQI+ community in Ghana opened an office to advocate for change in the anti-homosexual laws in Ghana. The event was attended by some foreign diplomats, including Tom Nørring, the Danish ambassador, Andrew Barnes, the Australian high commissioner, and the European Union delegation in Ghana. While these Western political elites may consider it justifiable to promote the rights of homosexual people, they regard it as important for them to be strategic by staying away from reifying the assertion that homosexuality is a foreign import.

However, it is important for the West to understand the current socio-cultural and religious spaces in Africa. Africa is largely a religious continent where the secularization of politics has not gone hand in hand with the secularization of the public sphere. This implies that

the African public sphere – where laws governing sexuality are made – is not a neutral sphere. It is infused with religions that seek to shape popular and private discourses.

It is also necessary for the West to understand how the idea of human rights operates in Africa, where “primitive” solidarity is very strong. In Africa, the idea of human rights is deeply rooted in human relationality, i.e. in communitarianism. The individual is not an individual *qua* individual. This is captured in the Ubuntu philosophy: “I am because we are; and since we are, therefore, I am”. It is also reiterated by the British philosopher, Isaiah Berlin, who stated that ‘Men are largely interdependent, and no man’s activity is so completely private as never to obstruct the lives of others in any way.’ All this points to the fact that the rights of homosexuals – while their assertion may appeal to the West and Biden – need to be situated in context, since rights must be communally shared. The construction of human rights as a social construct is reinforced by the construction of sex as a medium of recreation and procreation. So, many Africans – backed by Christianity and Islam – frown on sexual practices used solely for recreation (as homosexuality is profiled) without eventual procreation (considered a divine-cultural mandate on human beings).

The religious ethics of Africans that shape the discourse on the rights of homosexuals are different from the ethics of humanistic rights in Euro-America. In Euro-America, the current idea of human rights is informed by the enlightenment logic of freedom that is constructed as one’s right to do as one pleases. It is essentially based on individual autonomy. The enlightenment notion of freedom that informs the discourse of homosexual rights in the West is succinctly articulated by John Stuart Mill that the individual has freedom “Over himself, over his body and mind, the individual is sovereign^{xliii}.” This implies that “there must be complete freedom to do and live as one pleases – up to the point where one’s conduct directly and palpably harms identifiable and nonconsenting persons^{xliiii}.” Specifically to the US since the end of the World War II in 1945, identity construction has significantly shifted from political expression to expressive individualism – leading to

individual interest outweighing the interest of groups. This led to the sexual revolution in the 1970s (including the American Psychiatric Association removal of homosexuality from its official roster of mental illness in 1973) where individuals have sex as part of identification, as opposed to pre-modern (still in Africa) notions of having sex for procreation^{xiv}. All this has been made possible by material prosperity and technological advances that have characterized post-World War II American cultures^{xiv}. The culmination of this led to the US Supreme Court's legislation of same-sex marriage on June 26, 2015, authorizing the licensing and legal recognition of gay and lesbian marriages^{xvi}. It must be stated that inspired by Christian sex ethics, homosexual acts have historically been capital crimes in all the 13 Colonies of the US^{xvii}.

The western humanistic sexual identity based on individual's absolute control over how they use their sexuality runs at odds with the African enchanted sexual moral values. Impliedly, both Africans and the West depend on different philosophical bases to frame the debate around homosexuality. While the religious basis of African sexual morality implies freedom to choose what one should do to sustain the social order of procreation – deconstructing secularism and sexual pluralities, the western humanistic value of freedom to do as one pleases. Also, African sexual ethics is about responsibility culture, as opposed to the right culture of the west, which leads to victim culture. Consequently, African anti-homosexual rights are stimulated by a recapitulation of Judeo-Christian sex ethics.

As the US intensifies its fight to spread the decriminalization of homosexuality in Africa, Africans need to take charge of their development, fashion visions of development that destabilize development as westernization – a situation that leads Africans to perpetually ape and mimic western patterns of development. Similarly, Africa needs adaptive leadership to pursue moral revolution that would discourage political and moral corruptions that burden the continent's development. Equally important is the fact that Africans need to take responsibility of their destinies. It is not enough blaming the West for every misfortune on the continent. Africans need to reinvest vigour into

the idea of sovereignty by reincarnating the enthusiasm and zest that animated the decolonization of the continent in the 1950s. This implies the need for Pan-Africanism as a formidable tool in uniting the front of the continent against neo-colonial tendencies from the US. This time the vision of Pan-Africanism should be clearly articulated from the perspective of economics, incorporating homogenization without hegemonization, where trade among Africans would help the continent to overcome unreasonable terms of trade from the west.

As part of exercising agency, Africans need to decolonize the universities, by incorporating the traditions of knowledge of its ancestors – an important channel to upsetting epistemic injustice that peripherises traditions of knowledge from the sages of Africa. It is not just enough for African students to master theories brewed and developed from the West, some of which may be irrelevant to the continent. This means that Africans need to polish the pearls of ancient wisdom in areas, including technology and conviviality to advance human flourishing. Africans must see the continent as an opportunity, not a burden to be delivered from with the aid of the US, Africa's quest for development should simultaneously imply the decentralization of the development agenda, by incorporating religious and "traditional" leaders, as well as civil society groups. With such an inclusive approach to development, Africa could harness from a diversity of epistemic bank to consolidate its sovereignty and development. Finally, Africans need to engage in a home-based dialogue, informed by home-based human rights ethics to disentangle itself from the complexities of the homosexual discourses.

Conclusion: Critical reflections

It took centuries of secularization, beginning in the 17th century – the secularization of knowledge – to the mid-20th century – the secularization of morals – before homosexuality was decriminalized in the West. This was against the background that the practice was common in the Graeco-Roman civilization – the acclaimed source of Western civilization. This implies that the decriminalization of

homosexuality in the West evolved over time and converged with the scientific revolution, which significantly shaped its socio-religious landscape and sexuality.

Against this background, it is necessary for the West to allow Africa's sexual ethics to also evolve, as both the West and Africans strategically discourage the abuse of homosexuals. The Democratic Party of the US making the decriminalization of homosexuality a precondition for aid will only deprive the continent of much-needed socio-economic development. For example, Susan Walsh stated that "the US has deployed its diplomats and spent tens of millions of dollars to try to block anti-gay laws, punish countries that enacted them and tie financial assistance to respect for LGBTQ rights^{xlvii}." As it is the continent displays the impacts of slavery and colonization in poor sanitation and squalid living conditions, poverty, conflicts, partisan politics, and corruption. Amid all this, it is important for dialogue, tact, and wisdom to be employed about the complex issues around homosexuality. ◇

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From Trump to Biden: The perils of the US' 2020 election meltdown and the implications for American democracy promotion and influence in Africa

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The Biden administration will be confronted by the simultaneous challenge of growing scepticism over American democracy promotion, a key pillar of the US-Africa relations, and the extensive competing Chinese authoritarian influence in Africa. The unfavourable attitude of the Trump administration towards Africa, growing scepticism about American democracy which was worsened by the disputed elections and the growing influence of China in Africa are the two biggest challenges faced by the Biden administration in bolstering US-Africa relations, traditionally rooted on democracy promotion. The attitude of the Trump administration towards democracy promotion abroad, and elections disputes at home dented the US' image as a global model for democracy in Africa, in the face of the rising dominance of China across the continent. The roll-back in US-Africa relations under the Trump administration opened a wider gap, allowing China to assert its influence on the African continent, threatening historical prospects for democracy and governance reforms in the face of growing Chinese foreign patronage and authoritarian influence.

This chapter briefly highlights the dual challenge of diminishing credibility of American democracy, signified by the 2020 election disputes and its implications for democracy promotion in Africa. The chapter argues that the decline of American democracy promotion under the Trump administration, and the 2020 election disputes, dented the role of the US in promoting democracy in Africa, at a time when China is solidifying its relations across the continent. The implications of the

2020 US elections disputes reflected a persistent pattern towards the erosion of democracy under the Trump administration, which generally discredited democracy promotion in Africa, parallel to the competing authoritarian influences emanating from China-Africa relations. This both challenges and introduces new opportunities for the Biden administration to reboot democracy promotion centred on home grown and owned democratic reform processes to isolate and insulate authoritarian consequences of growing Chinese influences.

Introduction

Successive US presidents from Clinton to Obama popularized the promotion of democracy and an aversion to authoritarian rule as a major pillar of their foreign policies and diplomatic engagement with Africa and China. Joe Biden assumed office as the 46th President of the United States succeeding Donald Trump, following one of the most tumultuous and raucous elections contests in recent American history, discrediting American democracy at home and abroad (Burnell, 2008)ⁱ. Biden, a member of the Democratic Party, formally served as the 47th Vice President from 2009 to 2017 under the Obama administration. Given the divergent competing influences between the American and Chinese foreign and diplomatic policies on Africa, the Biden administration should rethink its democracy promotion policies and strategies coming out of the most controversial and disputed American election, and the threat of the Chinese authoritarian political socialization in Africa. The new US administration should fundamentally consider multilaterally and bilaterally reconnecting with Africa to bolster its democracy promotion and its waning influence across the African continent, and to shield democracy and good governance, given that it has fallen behind China's growing diplomatic grip in Africa. As the hallmark of US foreign policy in Africa, the promotion of democratic ideals, institutions and good governance which were downgraded under the Trump administration, left shambolic strategic and policy interventions, deepening scepticism and distrust of the US in many African countries, particularly where China has a strong grip.

The adversity and mixed electoral demonstrative effects from the last US 2020 elections presented new opportunities for authoritarianism in Africa, in competition with liberal democracy, parallel to a global authoritarian system championed through growing Chinese economic and political influence in the continent (Kneuer and Demmelhuber, 2021)ⁱⁱ. A parallel global wave of authoritarianism embedded in the rising Chinese economic and political influence is taking root in much of Africa, mainly characterised by democratic rollback, unfair, disputed elections, and a re-emerging pattern of coups, a common phenomenon in the 1970s and 1980s, which seemed to have dissipated since the rise of the third wave of democratization in the late 1990s in Africa. Coinciding with the retreat of US democracy promotion under the Trump presidency, China accelerated, broadened and deepened its relations and influence in African countries, providing easily accessible aid and business partnerships, leaving the US disconnected, if not detached from much of the fastest growing economies in the world (Lande and Matanda, 2017)ⁱⁱⁱ, and Africa in particular. The considerable slowing down of the pace of democratic transitions and reforms, particularly in Africa, reflect the threat facing democracy around the globe (Lührmann, et al, 2019)^{iv}. Although the number of democracies continue to grow, democracy faces a threat from global autocratization, authoritarian rule (Sassen, 2007)^v, and persistent de-legitimation of elections in many African countries, as consequence of disputed electoral outcomes which undermine the free choice of leaders by the citizens, and their trust in public institutions.

The growing wave of democratic deficit extended to the US under Trump, manifested in the populist, polarizing, xenophobic Brexit campaigns in the UK, and in parts of the European Union countries such as Belarus, where democratic systems already existed (Sassen, 2007)^{vi}. This trend set far-reaching implications for emerging democracies in much of Africa, which have relied on Western donors to support much of the domestic democratic reforms and good governance. The adversities of the 2020 election further compounded the US' declining influence in Africa, increasing scepticism and criticism of democracy promotion,

as China solidifies its grip on African countries, providing much needed aid, and mitigating the costs of regime choice amongst African countries which opted to forego Western aid by forging repressive regimes with the solid support of China. For example, Zimbabwe was slapped with US and European sanctions since 2002 over its failure to embrace political reforms, however, its adoption of a Look East policy deepening relations with China since 2000, has made it the biggest recipient of Chinese investment and aid in Southern Africa for over two decades (Ojakorotu and Kamidza, 2018).

Democracy promotion, implementation and gaps in Africa

While the definition of democracy is as contestable, democracy promotion can be summed up into policies, strategies and activities underlying democracy support abroad (Burnell, 2008)^{vii}. As a policy package, democracy promotion, which can be variously referred to as democracy assistance, democracy support, or democracy building, is a strand of foreign policy adopted by governments and international organizations that seek to support the spread of democracy as a political system around the world (Burnell, 2008)^{viii}. This idea and its resultant policy packages are variously informed by the democratic peace approach to democracy. The democratic peace model suggests that countries with a democratic system of governance are less likely to go to war, have better economic prospects and are socially more stable (Burnell, 2008)^{ix}. Democracy promotion therefore focuses on the process of democracy building and promotion to create stable democracies abroad. Democracy promotion entails building and strengthening democratic transition and the consolidation of democratic institutions and rules such as rule of law, elections processes, police forces, parliaments and constitutions, as well as democratic rules and procedures to foster democratic norms and values. However, in practice, processes of democracy promotion are largely dominated by support towards democratic elections since elections are viewed as the centre-piece of democracy. Liberal democratic thinkers consider elections as probably the major defining feature of democracy and democracy promotion (Elliot, 1994).

Democracy promotion is a form of power that is exercised to influence the domestic dynamics of targeted countries, either coercively or through the use of a carrot and stick, to change their domestic politics from within towards a democratic regime (Koch, 2015)^x. As a form of foreign policy it entails a range of complex official activities conducted by a state with the objective of influencing the domestic environment and the behaviour of other actors within a targeted state. Although in its reading, democracy promotion represents a constitution of liberal democratic norms and values, as well as procedures and rules, its critics argue that the US has used democracy promotion to justify military intervention abroad, resulting in conflicts and illegal regime change, which in turn can undermine self-determination and national sovereignty (Meernik, 1996)^{xi}. Whether it is conducted coercively or through peaceful diplomacy, democracy promotion goes beyond interstate relations and includes the attempt to change the very constitution of the recipient or target country from within, to a democracy (Wolff, 2015)^{xii}. Democracy promotion combines foreign policy efforts to influence the attitude and behaviour of other actors, as well as the relations with and between other actors. Democracy promotion therefore aims at sustainably influencing or shaping the political, legal, economic, social, security and other structures of a targeted society or state into a democracy.

Democracy promotion is an issue that has been at the heart of US national identity and foreign policy since the end of the Cold War, and no US president can afford to ignore or disregard it completely. The post-Cold War democracy promotion debate has drawn attention to the fine-tuning of policies and programs through which a liberal democratic model could be successfully encouraged (Kurki, 2010)^{xiii}, generating policies and strategies which have come to characterize and define democracy promotion as American policy.

The rise of the US as a liberal democratic hegemony, post the Cold War, blazed the way for the universalized institutionalization of democracy promotion. Post the 1980s, democracy promotion was adopted by the US, European countries and other emerging democracies

as partners in supporting liberal democracy abroad, in contestation to the state-centric authoritarianism exported together with Chinese diplomacy, particularly to Africa (Bautman and Yan, 2008). Where Western powers, led by the US adopted democracy promotion as a pillar of their foreign policy and diplomacy, structuring socio-economic and political conditionality to stimulate political reforms, China pushed non-conditional partnerships and investment which resonated extensively with many African states, bolstering growing China-Africa relations, leaving the US behind. Growing Chinese developmentalist strategies, aid and investment to Africa have been widely criticized for supporting authoritarian rule and overlooking human rights excesses (Ambrosio, 2012)^{xiv}. Critics of the growing influence of China in Africa, as opposed to democracy promotion and Western conditionality, correctly note that its non-interference posture in domestic politics in Africa renders a blind eye to authoritarian rule, violations of human rights and democracy (Ambrosio, 2012)^{xv}. Given that US democracy promotion became a major distinguishing pillar of relations between the US and Africa on one end, and an important contentious policy in the US-Africa-China diplomatic contestation, the comparatively extensive Chinese diplomatic reach in Africa poses a threat to democratic gains in the continent.

Democracy promotion has faced much criticism, growing hostility and resistance from observers concerned with its faltering impact in the face of growing democratic rollback in many parts of the world (Carothers, 2006)^{xvi}. On the other hand, authoritarian and semi-authoritarian governments opposed to Western, especially US democracy promotion programs, policies and strategies reject its policies and underlying assumptions as intrusive, violating their national sovereignty and self-determination (Carothers, 2006)^{xvii}. Countries such as Zimbabwe, Eritrea and the Sudan under al-Bashir, accused the US of festering regime change. Some governments that once allowed external democracy assistance in their countries, have shifted to restrict democracy promotion activities, while others which never paid much attention to the possibility of such activities on their territories, suddenly are taking steps to block it by tightly regulating the activities of NGOs (Hofisi and Hofisi, 2013)^{xviii}.

African governments opposed to democracy promotion have introduced a raft of punitive regulates to insulate their countries from US funded policies and activities in support of democracy by legislating tough laws to regulate the activities of NGOs. The authoritarian regulation of the civic space, the exercise of freedoms and rights range from the imposition of tough legal restrictions on democracy aid workers, restrictions on the funding and activities of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and political parties and/or elections, blocking and or harassment of external democracy aid groups, violence targeted at domestic democracy activists and their partners, as well as strident public criticism or denunciations of democracy aid groups, their work and home countries, particularly the US, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, China and Russia.

China, like other authoritarian regimes share a universally generalized antipathy towards democracy promotion, viewing it as intrusive in the domestic affairs of sovereign states. Accordingly, China, Russia and some African countries proactively took a position to oppose the invasion of Libya at several United Nations Security Council meetings citing the manipulation of norms of democracy and protection to violate national sovereignty (Brockmeier, Stuenkel and Tourinho, 2015)^{xix}, but also based on subtle geo-political reasons (Garwood-Gowers, 2012). These authoritarian regimes also revile the exportation and universalization of liberal democratic norms, arguing that it undermines the independent development of more socially responsive political systems, norms and values culturally suited to their sovereign domestic aspirations. Critics further suggest Western duplicity and presumptuous self-importance, as well as the manipulation of democracy promotion to advance Western, and American self-interests, in some cases triggering violent conflicts. However, it is the recent 2020 US elections which have made a mockery of democracy amongst its critics who have used the resultant dispute to argue that democracy is failing in the US, the mother of democracy, therefore it cannot be viable elsewhere. The Biden administration is therefore facing serious challenges to redeem the global faith in the US in particular, and its role

to ensure democracy is fostered and protected at home, globally, and Africa in particular, where the preeminent growth of Chinese presence poses a major threat to democratic installation and rule.

Democracy promotion under previous US presidents and its rollback under Trump

Democracy promotion is one of the major geo-political frontal lines between Western global powers and China. Western powers have criticised China over authoritarianism at home, and propping dictatorships in Africa. Former US presidents Clinton, Bush and Obama made remarkable but varied contributions towards popularizing and enlarging the democratic community (Rieffer and Mercer, 2006)^{xx}, and making democracy promotion increasingly acceptable as a foreign policy goal throughout most of the international community (Mcfaul, 2010).

Other than George Bush, Democratic presidents, more than Republicans, are mostly associated with coercive aggressive democracy promotion abroad. However, for a Republican president, George Bush took a radical departure from the Republican common practice of posturing democracy promotion with the invasion of Iraq, Libya, Sudan and Afghanistan amongst other countries in his controversial fight against terrorism (Litwak and Litwak, 2007)^{xxi}. Bush may have embarked on an adventurous proselytizing about democratic political and economic reforms, but this does not detract from the fact that the Democrats more than the Republicans are associated with a more pragmatic albeit robust push for democracy promotion (Serafino, Epstain and Miko, 2007)^{xxii}.

In line with this tradition, the Biden administration has a huge opportunity to recondition US-Africa relations, resetting bilateral and multilateral relations towards mutually beneficial trade and investment, and sponsoring homegrown political reforms in Africa at the Summit for Democracy of October 2021. The Summit for Democracy offers the Biden administration an important opportunity to reset US-Africa relations, strengthening and expanding mutual cooperation away from its declining influence in Africa, which was markedly eroded during the tenure of the Trump administration. As Biden stated, “Democracy

doesn't happen by accident, we have to defend it, fight for it, strengthen it, renew it" (Biden, 2021)^{xxiii}. To elevate these aspirations, the Biden administration should learn from Africans themselves, embracing their broader participation, agency and voices to foster self-empowerment in defending their own democracies, with other parties only helping them. The Biden administration should use the Summit for Democracy to engage with government, civil society and private sector to set an affirmative agenda for democratic renewal and to tackle the greatest threats faced by established democracies and democracies in transition through collective action (Biden, 2021)^{xxiv}, through an approach focusing on bolstering domestic capacities and empowering Africans to protect democracy from domestic and external threats emanating from in and outside Africa, rebooting home grown pan-African agency to foster and protect democratic norms and institutions in Africa.

There is no doubt that the Trump administration degraded democracy promotion and diminished formerly growing diplomatic ties with Africa, exposing budding democratic reforms to authoritarian machinations. On taking power, Trump uncritically embraced many nondemocratic leaders, among them Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte, while openly showing his admiration for strong leaders, a common euphemism for dictators (Carothers, 2017)^{xxv}, wrongly sending a global message that the US would tolerate dictators. Trump chose one of the least democratic countries in the world, Saudi Arabia, for his first international trip as president, and received lavish attention from Saudi Arabia's repressive leaders (Carothers, 2017)^{xxvi}. His raucous right-wing election campaign and hostile rhetoric against the US' democratic institutions and political system, dented the standing of the country as the main torch-bearer for liberal democracy. At the same time, his elections shenanigans emboldened authoritarian critics of American democracy promotion and liberal democracy in Africa and other parts of the world. As a presidential candidate, Trump repeatedly signalled a lack of interest in, or concern about violations of democratic norms and rights in other countries. His administration demonstrated

a strong disinclination to prioritise democracy support in US foreign policy and an admiration for repressive strongmen, from Russia's Vladimir Putin to Iraq's Saddam Hussein and Xi of China. The gaps left due to the US recoiling from support for democracy building and its evident shift towards authoritarian, right-wing populist posturing at home, left democracy dangerously exposed abroad, particularly in Africa (Mounk, 2021).

Trump rhetorically and practically emphasized American economic interests in line with the slogan, 'Make America Great Again'. The Bush administration pushed a normative dogmatism and unilateralism centred on its aggressive push towards democracy promotion. Where past US administrations under Clinton, Bush and Obama, demonstrated consistent practical, if not rhetorical commitment to supporting democratic rule abroad, and deep conviction to upholding rule of law at home, the Trump administration was inside looking, seeking to propagate American national interests first. The Obama administration initiated a more sober and pragmatic approach rooted in the assessment of democracy promotion's chances and a foreign policy valuing partnership and engagement – even with authoritarian governments (Poppe, 2010)^{xxvii}.

Under the Trump administration, the significance of the African continent further diminished, as evidenced by the withdrawal of aid towards poverty alleviation, health and support towards individual rights. A matter that comes to mind is Trump's policies on issues such as abortion and gay rights where the US stopped funding African NGOs which had relied on American aid in their work to protect individual rights and freedoms of choice and association in African countries. The Trump administration mainly focused on economic liberalism, with little attention to traditional American democracy promotion towards Africa, the most defining American foreign policy approach towards Africa. The Trump administration also rolled back donor support to African countries, much of which was tied to supporting the democratic rights of minorities, civil liberties and constitutional rule in African countries, further diminishing the importance of the African continent

as a priority for US foreign policy. Accordingly, the Biden administration faces a herculean task as a consequence of diminished democratic rule and probity under Trump, the spectre of disputed legitimacy, and the shadow of a chaotic, if not haphazard foreign policy towards Africa.

In the view of the Trump administration, Africa was of little significance in the bigger geopolitical picture as epitomised by Trump's slight against "shithole countries", a disparaging reference to less developed countries, including ones in Africa and other parts of the world (Westcott, 2019). Despite crafting a new US-Africa strategy, Trump's administration continued to overlook obvious democratization opportunities. Trump's rhetorical praise of authoritarian leaders wrongly signalled US his personal admiration of oppressive political systems and US support for dictatorship. In spite of being home to some of the fastest growing economies in the world, sub-Saharan Africa became less of a priority for the US. To demonstrate, Trump did not visit Africa during his tenure of office, and his administration went as far as blocking funding to some African countries, paralyzing their ability to bankroll their struggling healthcare systems and to provide other much-needed services, including support for the institutionalization of democracy. Africa fell into the lowest priorities for US trade and investment as American aid to the continent dropped to less than 1% of total US foreign direct investment (FDI) and 1.2% of all US exports in 2017 (Signé, 2019). Between 2014 and 2017, US goods exports to Africa fell by almost half, from \$25 billion to \$14 billion (Signé, 2019). In addition, the Trump administration also cut important health programs related to Africa, including annulling \$252 million in funding for Ebola containment and prevention, and in 2018 dissolved the National Security Council Directorate for Global Health Security and Biodefense (Signé, 2019).

The Biden administration inherited a poisoned chalice characterized by a chaotic Africa policy, diminished optimism in the US as a partner for Africa and disputed domestic legitimacy which diminished international democratic credibility, undermining the role of the US as a global example of liberal democratic rule in Africa and the world.

Conversely, as the US became more inside looking, China expanded its role and grip in Africa, strengthening its partnerships as a solid ally of authoritarian regimes in Africa.

China's expansion into Africa: A threat to democratic reforms and good governance

There is no doubt that China has solidified its position as the major diplomatic and development partner in Africa, leaving the US far behind. However, the policy posture of the US to view Africa as merely a geo-political theatre and front to contain Chinese expansion has weakened its ability to foster deeper consistent ties and relations with African countries. A consistent democracy promotion approach rooted in the domestic conditions and dynamics in Africa could therefore strengthen long term US-Africa relations by fostering democratic transition and consolidation rooted on broad based African agency.

The changes in US administrations since George W Bush affected the US commitment to democracy promotion, with the Trump administration rolling back on its financial and political-diplomatic commitments to Africa. As reported by the *Financial Times*, where the previous US administrations took a liberal democratic posture in defining its geo-political relations and interests, the Trump administration cosied up to autocratic regimes forging especially closer opaque relations with Saudi Arabia, Russia, opening unconditional dialogue with North Korea, and insisting on talking to China, openly downgrading the role of democracy promotion, political conditionality and reforms as the basis of geo-political engagement with the US amidst a growing global wave of democratic regression and diminishing trends towards democratic reforms.

The Trump presidency muddied American democracy promotion, rendering political capital for African countries to justify and legitimize the spread of authoritarianism, the reversal of democratic reforms in Africa and ties with China which are inimical to democratic reform. More importantly, democracy promotion continues to be driven from outside, hence it looks like an external foreign agenda, quite often

detached from the intricacies of contemporary obtaining challenges amongst Africans.

Alternatively, China is involved in extensive development projects more visible and closer to human needs and livelihoods of Africans, particularly through its infrastructure development projects. Secondly, Beijing has taken advantage of the US retreat from Africa to intensify and accelerate its diplomatic grip on the African continent during Trump's tenure in Washington, focusing on infrastructure development partnerships fronted by both private and state-funded investments. The eighth convening of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) marked more than 20 years of high-level and institutionalized dialogue between high-level Beijing and African leaders. The forum shifted from a platform where the Chinese government merely announced pledges to Africa to serve as a joint platform allowing Chinese and African officials to formulate how Chinese engagement can support African development goals and other ongoing initiatives. China-Africa cooperation has resulted in the building of railways, train stations, ports, airports and roads all over Africa, developments which are closer to the African citizens, leaving the US to play catch-up in its trade rivalry with China on the continent. Conversely, US-Africa relations have mostly remained hung at policy level, with comparatively marginal or less visible benefits to African citizens who face combined challenges of poverty, authoritarian rule, corruption and poor governance. More broadly, US-Africa relations should evolve beyond creating a buffer in its geo-political rivalry with China, to pursue a vision rooted in fostering home-grown socio-economic benefits, democratic installation and consolidation in Africa, to enhance domestic capacity for good governance.

The expansion of China in Africa has come with the exportation of its authoritarian state-centric political system which threatens political liberalization and reforms in Africa (Halper, 2010)^{xxviii}. The wave of democratic rollback and autocratization fronted by countries such as China seems to have broadened the criticism of American democracy promotion, widely legitimizing varieties of authoritarian political systems including in Africa. The Chinese authoritarian political system

appeals to many African dictatorships who view it as an alternative stable developmentalist political model in comparison to intrusive liberal democracy as promoted by the US. The waning trade relations between the US and Africa left China to fill the gap, entrenching its economic and political grip together with its political culture, which is rooted in authoritarian politics, while eroding liberal democratic norms and values. Evidently, as the US stepped back from Africa, China stepped up its presence along with exporting its illiberal practices and ideals, which were easily embraced by authoritarian and semi-democratic regimes.

The growing influence of China in Africa is often described as a major challenge to the US' democracy promotion policies. China continues to provide important volumes of loans, development aid, trade and investment to African countries without political strings attached, thereby undermining the US' abilities to set material incentives for economic and political reforms, mostly based on aid conditionality (Tull, 2006).

Chinese cooperation and influence have made it difficult for the US to effectively support and incentivize democratic reforms in many African countries, for example Ethiopia, Angola and Zimbabwe among others. The US faces substantial difficulties to make these respective governments address governance issues as a result of its weakened political and economic leverage, which has whittled its ability to exercise any meaningful diplomatic influence (Hackenesch, 2014). For example, China has become by far the most crucial silent since the Zimbabwe crisis began in 2000, gradually insulating the Zimbabwe government from Western pressure for political reforms as a result of Western sanctions which has diminished US access and contact with Zimbabwe. The increased economic pressure and consequent domestic political challenges to regime survival on many African governments have pushed them closer to China, which readily offers cheaper and more accessible loans and aid without political strings, thus rendering China more influential than the US in the continent.

While sub-Saharan African countries face more economic downturns as a result of the US-China trade war and the geopolitical and ideological

divide, it is China that is coming out on top as its growing influence is indirectly undercutting US goals to enhance US-Africa relations while countering Chinese influence (Hackenesch, 2014). The US should prioritize relations with Africa centred on bolstering African agency, informed by African conditions beyond geo-political contestation with China, based on home grown sustainable institutionalization of democracy which broadens domestic political participation and accountability in Africa.

The US elections dispute and implications for democracy promotion in Africa

Amidst the complications posed by US-China geo-political contestation in Africa, the US 2020 elections further dented the credibility of American democracy and its already strangled democracy promotion agenda in Africa. Democracy promotion has assisted to enhance elections and democratic institutions in Africa. Elections play important roles in African democracies by helping the continent build and sustain effective democratic institutions, providing the people with an effective legal tool to constrain and guard the government and minimize impunity, and enhancing the ability of the people to change their government to bring new public service which is more energetic and effective political leaders (Mbaku, 2020). However, for elections to contribute such functions effectively, they should be held regularly according to the constitution, be free, fair, competitive, inclusive, transparent, and credible to be able constraint governmental tyranny. Admittedly, elections are a necessary but not sufficient condition to guarantee and guard liberty and democracy. While elections can help African countries consolidate, deepen, and entrench democracy, Africa has recently witnessed circles of disputed elections for examples in countries such as Zimbabwe and Kenya. A fairly new phenomenon of the constitutional coup is on the rise, threatening nascent democratic reforms, and a new wave of military coups couched in democratic disguise is sweeping through the continent.

US elections generally play an important role as a model for Africa and democracies in transition. However, the US elections exposed the

contradictions of democracy and elections in the US, undermining the credibility and role of the US in promoting democracy abroad and in Africa. Coupled with the growing influence of the Chinese alternative political system and its broad influence in Africa, the Biden administration faces critical challenges to robustly reposition US-Africa relations fostering democratic reforms in a more sustainable way.

Since the end of the Cold War, democracy promotion, which evolved from a growing normative consensus in support of democracy directed primarily at multiparty elections and political parties to broader approach of good governance, democracy and human rights, became the most defining anchor of US-Africa relations. The 2020 US elections disputes triggered unprecedented political uncertainty and crisis which threatened to undermine the legitimacy of the incoming Biden administration, leaving the image, integrity and credibility of American democracy battered. In the view of many Africans, the elections dispute undermined US democracy promotion policy in Africa. The elections process and outcome between Trump and Biden was one of the most controversial contests in the recent history of American liberal democracy.

The elections raised major domestic issues about American democratic institutions and processes. The pervasive historical spectre of racism, and a campaign based on racial-nationalist rhetoric invoked by the Trump administration disenfranchised many non-indigenous Americans, denying them the right to vote and free participation in the political process, elections violence, addition to disputes over the outcomes. The Trump camp adopted an audacious drive threatening to derail the peaceful transfer of power to the new Biden administration. The heightened domestic partisan and foreign policy polarisation between the Democrats and the Republicans, and the consequent democratic roll-back in the US under Trump cast a dark shadow over American support towards democracy in Africa, dimming US-Africa relations. African authoritarian regimes which questioned American liberal democracy pointed to the elections disputes to frown at the US' commitment to democratic norms and values, and its democracy promotion in Africa.

Democracy is anchored in the practice and norm of regular free and fair elections, which are vital for political legitimacy, peace and stability. The deep racial and partisan polarization that characterized the presidential elections and the long disputes over the process and outcomes of elections, divided African opinion and attitudes towards the role and the influence of the US as a major liberal democratic arbiter that could influence democratization in Africa. While democrats in Africa were alarmed, authoritarian regimes celebrated the unprecedented crisis of democracy in one of its oldest and chief promoters abroad. The live-streaming of the chaotic violence, deep partisan polarization and persistent aberrations from the democratic process far detached from the rule of law, human rights and democracy underlying the US foreign policy towards Africa, raised a lot of scepticism abroad, subsequently battering the reputation of the US as a leading global democracy.

To sceptics of American democracy promotion, the 2020 election meltdown provided evidence of a political system in crisis and facing failure, generating international anxiety among its citizens and partners abroad, as well as a 'We told you so' satisfying moment. Fundamentally, calls by Democrats and moderates from the polarized Democrats-Republican divide reinforced opinions in Africa and abroad that the US was less concerned with democracy at home, simply manipulating it instrumentally as a foreign policy tool abroad, thus legitimizing authoritarian blow-back against democracy promotion.

American opinion makers and political actors called for political reforms in the US to insulate its democratic-political system from new or emerging right-wing populist domestic threats to democracy, restoring its credibility as the chief liberal democratic influencer abroad. They called politicians to adjust the political system to new realities to mitigate the deep societal polarization at the heart of the explosive political demonstrations that characterized the Black Lives Matter movements and later the violent attacks on the Capitol on 6 January. Trump's rejection of the election outcomes, which undermined the legitimacy of the American political system, its electoral process and Biden administration, calls for rethinking of

American democracy at home, a model which underlies democracy promotion in Africa and abroad.

As the US is a global power, the state of its democracy, the manner of its elections, their outcomes and processes of transfer of power, are important to transitioning and consolidating democracies, as well as ambiguous regimes in Africa struggling with democratic change. However, the 2020 US election exposed the fragility of American democracy, and democracy in general, something the West thought it had long gotten past and which may only be a major problem abroad, particularly in Africa. The captivating optics of the US democratic process captured the attention of both critics and proponents of US democracy, as many Africans followed the processes and political rituals of US democratic contestation – from the campaigns and voting to the announcement of the election results and transfer of power to the new regime.

The US election campaigns are viewed by many Africans as democracy at work. The public debates on national media, reflecting contestation over ideas and policies, are an important socializing effect for many African proponents of democracy. Learning from the US free market of ideas, Africans have started to demand official presidential debates between the main candidates vying for national office as competitive elections become a norm. At the same time, pressure is mounting for more policy and political accountability, as well as for leaders to display political maturity.

The 2020 presidential election were plagued by long queues, ballot-counting delays, disputed election results and recounts, which are regularly witnessed as part of electoral fiddling in Africa. Even after the recount and official reconfirmation of Biden's victory, Trump refused to concede the race or recognize the president-elect, leaving a cloud of disputed legitimacy hanging over the new administration. Furthermore, the Trump administration refused to help with an orderly transition and transfer of power while his supporters pulled every stunt to drag out, frustrate, block or even overturn the results, widening adversarial domestic political division and polarization in the US. The

unprecedented partisan belligerence and the deep political polarization triggered domestic partisan violence, culminating in the attack on the Capitol by a mob backing a faction of the Republican Party. The US faced the real possibility of a blocked transition and transfer of power as the former president refused to concede. Through this action, Trump exerted intense pressure on US democratic institutions, exposing the country's political system and the basic machinery of its democracy as dysfunctional and broken.

The anarchical attack on Capitol, just as Congress was in the process of certifying Biden's victory, made a mockery of the rule of law and jeopardized the peaceful transfer of power, the most challenging aspects of democratic transition in many African countries. Where many African regimes have not brazenly rigged elections, thereby triggering post-election violent conflict, incumbent authoritarian regimes have simply blocked the transfer of power, impeding any process of political change to retain the incumbent or enable a faction to remain in charge of the state. An example is Kenya in 2007, 2013 and 2017 and Zimbabwe in 2008, 2013 and 2018. The obstruction of the process towards a peaceful, democratic transfer of power continues to be a major problem in Africa and a major source of political violence, political uncertainty and instability. The chaos of the US election therefore undermined its global influence and right to continue to weigh in on cases of disputed legitimacy in Africa. This left the main sponsor of democracy reeling under aspersions that chaotic authoritarianism was undermining its role as the global torchbearer of democracy.

The state of democracy in Africa is worrying, and democratic actors, drivers and proponents require legitimate moral and political support to deepen democratic reforms (Freedom House, 2019). The *Freedom in the World 2019* report flagged the widening global onslaught on democracy and pluralism, and the spread of harmful influence to new corners of the world (Freedom House, 2019). It also described how business leaders in the US, the world's largest democracy, were willing to break down institutional safeguards and disregard the rights of critics and minorities in favour of populist agendas. African countries

continue to experience extensive cases of democratic backsliding centred on disregard for the rule of law, the violation of human rights, flawed electoral processes and shrinking democratic space. While countries such as Ethiopia have made some progress with regard to political reforms, the majority of African countries, including Benin, Senegal, Nigeria, Guinea, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Sudan, Uganda, Ivory Coast, Malawi, Burundi, Cape Verde, Chad, Djibouti, Gambia, Libya, Niger, Republic of Congo, São Tomé & Príncipe, Somalia, and Zambia are facing declining prospects for democracy as their leaders apply various authoritarian strategies to entrench their hold on power (Freedom House, 2019).

The Biden administration therefore faces huge international expectations and obligations with respect to protecting democratic norms and practices in Africa that will compel the US to continue to support democratization in the continent. But how and with what leverage can the new US leadership strongly back democratization in Africa? Although the US institutions demonstrated themselves to be resilient and a strong anchor to unprecedented pressure on American democracy, insulating the country's political system from direct assault by the former incumbent regime, the new administration should re-establish the lost credibility to strengthen its democracy promotion role in Africa. The Biden-Harris administration should therefore rethink democratization in Africa from mere regime change to domestically driven medium- to long-term institutional reform more commensurate with genuine multiparty politics, political accommodation and inclusive democracy.

Conclusion

While the Biden administration should strengthen democracy at home to strengthen US democratic credibility, it could strengthen US-Africa relations, and win Africans' support by helping democracy and transparent government through enhanced democracy promotion executed through the agency of Africans. US diplomacy continues to be fragmented, largely influenced by fear, suspicion and anxiety about

Beijing's role in deepening China-Africa relations in a variety of areas, including trade and commercial ties, military-security relations, and technology. Where China has developed a broader coherent strategy in dealing with African countries, the US has not prioritized African countries when it comes to US foreign policy plans, only dedicating a poorly coordinated marginal focus towards the continent based on an ill-defined concept of "Chinese influence", framing Africa merely as a venue for geo-political competition with Beijing. The US will therefore need to forge a comprehensive consistent framework and strategy centered on a positive vision, and building policy on a full appreciation of local conditions, to reinforce the ambition of Africans to build their futures by democratic means informed by their local conditions. US-Africa relations under the Biden administration should focus more on democracy and less on its rivalry with China, which reduces the African continent to a mere theatre of US-China geo-political contestation. Accordingly, the Biden administration will therefore need to reshape US-Africa relations, and its democracy promotion towards Africa to regain credibility and influence to ensure sustainable home-grown democratization in Africa. ◇

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Emotionalized politics and worldwide desires: The US-Africa semblance in social media (mis)use

JOB ALLAN WEFWAFWA

This chapter is motivated by the notion of the “African public sphere”. The chapter transposes the notion onto social media use in African electoral politics. It investigates how and why dominant African social actors use reward systems to subtly shape how African people use social media in electoral politics, using the platform to replicate a virtual version of the same old African politics of tokenism on the African continent. The chapter draws a comparison between social media use in the US and Africa; singling out interesting semblances such as the indigenous African tribal/clan violence that resembles the US’ neo-nationalist violence. The chapter further analyzes how the two forms of violence are perpetuated by social media, realistically demonstrating the platform’s multifaceted transnational influence on electoral politics. The thesis in the chapter is a critique of the popular assumption that social media is transforming electoral politics across the globe, especially in Africa, and suggests ways through which US and Africa stand to gain from social media use.

Introduction

The appropriate point to begin this chapter is to ask why, during the 2014 Africa-US summit, African presidents were queueing to meet the then US president Barack Obama in the White House, allegedly to explore how they can “partner with the US” to enable them to acquire the needed capital for development. This is despite the African continent’s vast mineral reserves available to enable African countries raise their own capital for economic development. From this starting point, I argue that these African governments were “intercontinentalizing”

their peculiarly Afrocentric tokenistic electoral politics that they employ to ascend to and stay in power. This form of electoral politics emphasizes the monetary rewards to the people, to influence their voting decisions. Such monetary rewards could also include food stuffs, branded items such as T-shirts, cap and scarves, among others. The tokenistic electoral politics inhibits genuine development agendas because it preoccupies people with a focus on political candidates with more rewards, at the expense of logical development debates. These African leaders are reluctant to abandon the culture of tokenistic electoral politics because it is the single most popular method they use(d) to ascend to and stay in power. This chapter contends that the African continent's dominant social actors, including the incumbents, the leading opposition parties, and business leaders, among other influential individuals who have hijacked social media and diverted it from the inventors' original good intentions and instead, allow for the platforms to be used to advance Afrocentric tokenistic politics. For instance, when Tim Berners-Lee invented the World Wide Web (www), his intentions were humanitarian. However, dominant social actors have "hijacked" the platform leading to the deprivation of this humanitarian intention.

In Kenya, the invention of M-Pesa money transfer via mobile phone is perceived to have humanitarian intentions. However, like the www, there are many commercialization entities associated with the invention, including the use of the M-Pesa platform to pay bills, buy goods, and fundraise, among others. Kenya's dominant social actors use the platform to fundraise for political campaigns, subjecting the invention to intense commercialization activities not associated with the perceived original humanitarian intention. That said, both the www and M-Pesa technologies have changed many of the US and African people's experiences in relation to technology. This is even as the dominant social actors' interests in both continents lead to the (mis)use of the technologies by deploying these technologies to enhance the "politics of affect". This chapter defines "politics of affect" as the recycling of emotions into politics at the expense of logic.

The invention of the www led to the invention of social media, because the former provided the framework upon which the latter sits. This chapter compares how social media is deployed in Africa and US electoral deliberations, with a view to suggesting how the two continents can benefit from the comparison. Just over two decades ago, Mark Zuckerberg, Andrew McCollum, and their two roommates invented Facebook as a friendship-building site at Harvard University. Arguably, they may have envisaged that their invention would lead to the “slay” kingdom and queendom culture. Slays refers to the self-appointed social media trend setters; usually, in terms of looks rather than content. Although initiated in the US, the slay culture has taken Africa by storm. Many African people have sprung to celebrity status because of slaying on social media. Similarly, Brian Acton and Jan Koum’s idea of WhatsApp was to enable people to post their status on phones to let others know they were available for chats. They may have envisaged that their technology would enable people to connect across the globe. However, they did not envisage that their invention would be the most used platform to enable for the “politics of affect” across the world. As we shall see in this chapter, US and African electoral politics are characterized by affective politics.

In Africa, social media was adopted as socialization platforms, to enable people to get in touch with their friends and family. That was until influencers across the continent deployed it into politics, to meet the needs of the political class at play. The technology skepticsⁱ agree that, when the question of increased unintended consequences of social media arises, we need to ask ourselves how inappropriately we use them, rather than how inappropriate they are. That said, any legitimate consideration of regulation on the impact of social media in Africa and the US must be situated in the specific cultural and political-economic contexts. As we shall see in this chapter, both the US and Africa struggle with regulatory issues around social media use. In Africa, the biggest problem associated with social media use, besides enabling for virtual forms of the tokenistic electoral politics, is that African people do not notice the disadvantageous perspective of the platform during

electoral deliberations. This is due to two major reasons: first, social media's ability to arouse emotions allows people using it to adopt more emotions than logic during political engagements. This facilitates affective politics, whereby insults, intimidation and open threats, among other evils, are employed as tools of the trade during electoral deliberations. As we shall see in this chapter, this trend is similar to the US, where during the 2020/2021 electoral deliberations, the supporters of the then incumbent Trump and Biden were more emotional than logical in their exchanges.

The second reason that social media is disadvantageous lies in its ability to enable co-production of content. The idea that people become content producers and audience at the same time gives them the illusion that they decide what they want to produce or view on social media. This brings about the feeling of impartiality and "meaningful" participation during electoral deliberation. Yet, as long as the dominant social actors own and subtly control the platform, they decide how and why people use it in electoral politics. In the US, the dominant social actors shape the social media market through endorsements, among others, to influence how people use the technology. For instance, endorsement more than technology has made Twitter more popular than WhatsApp in the US.

Since technological development is always faster than the legal frameworks, these evils often go unabated during election campaigns in both Africa and the US. Countries such as Kenya, with a well-developed social media infrastructure that enables large-scale deployment of technology into electoral politics, still struggles with the development of legal and regulatory frameworks that would enable the curbing of social media (mis)use during electoral deliberations. Phrases such as "hate speech" are popular in the country's ICT legal statutesⁱⁱ, but they lack the legitimacy, public goodwill, and the constitutional framework to enable it to tame the (mis)use of social media. Other popular phrases that connote untamed social media use in Kenya includes the "Keyboard Warriors" – a phrase used to describe young entrepreneurial Kenyans who (mis)used social media, including WhatsApp groups, by collecting

phone numbers of members of the public without their consent to allegedly sell them to political parties in the run-up to 2017 elections. The dominant social actors buy the contacts to access the electorate during political campaigns.

The legal framework in the US is more developed because of her 250+ years of independence, which has allowed for more legislative experience to curb social vices that people engage in. However, the case of social media (mis)use is relative, because as we shall see in this chapter, the US people (mis)used social media to misinform and disinform during the 2020/2021 electoral deliberations. Former president Trump openly used Twitter to incite his supporters into violence. This logically leads to the conclusion that technological advancement is faster in society, and that the legal framework only plays catch up.

Africa-US and the insecurity on social media

In Africa, insecurity can be philosophically located in Mbembe'sⁱⁱⁱ description of the indigenous Africa as "chaotic, volatile and full of surprises". He draws from Comaroff^{iv}, to argue that Africans are naturally emotive and dramatic. Scholars such as Papachariss^v, argue that the ability of social media to actualise affective politics, referred to as "evoking affective reactions", popularized the platform. Therefore, the deployment of social media in African electoral politics has facilitated the "politics of the affect", which involves recycling emotions into politics as new voices render old ones inaudible Mbembe^{vi}. The platform's ability to enable the users to relay their emotions virtually makes it popular during electoral deliberations. Since emotions are heightened during electoral deliberations, as seen in both Africa and the US, insecurity is also highest at the period. In Africa, ethnic associations^{vii} perceived as oppositional to the incumbent are usually among the vulnerable groups. In the US, black minorities are the most vulnerable.

Comaroff, argues that the politics of affect is further compounded by African people's belief that "politics, governance, and public debates are rooted in a world of invisible powers – of witches, spirits, and demons". Therefore, politics is often considered more instinctive than logical. To

most African people, it is acceptable to loot the state to reward one's political supporters, even if it is detrimental to a country's economic development. It makes sense to them that since ethnic associations enable one to ascend to power and stay in power, they need to be rewarded monetarily. Therefore, African people's spirituality, more than logic, informs how and why they use social media in electoral deliberations. The platform's popularity lies in its ability to fuel people's emotions and keep logic waning during electoral deliberations.

If Mbembe's description of Africa in the paragraph above is read in a contemporary way, it would indicate that there was the presence of the space for public expression in indigenous Africa. Today, many nations across the globe with the most "progressive" constitutions that allow for public space, exemplify his description – chaotic, volatile, and full of surprises. The citizenry is discernibly intolerant of others on the basis of race, with renewed energy to express explicit rejection of conventional notions of reason, in what some scholars associate with the rise of nationalism. The tensions and confrontations witnessed in Africa during social media electoral deliberations, as well as in real life, can therefore be attributed to the presence of public space. The US is rife with the racial tensions and confrontations, reminiscent of Africa. The conspiracy theories about devil worshippers and other spiritual debates, linked to the US presidential candidates are not different from the Comaroff's description of Africa above. Although Mbembe cautions against direct comparison of global parallels with African contexts, there are direct comparison that can be made between African electoral politics and US electoral politics. First, in both cases, there is violence occasioned by the majority of people seeking to deny public space to the minority. Second is violence by the state apparatus, perceptibly used by the incumbents to deny public space to people based on their ancestral origin.

Comparatively, African and US use of social media during electoral deliberations is similar. Both African minorities, including ethnic associations critical of the incumbents, and black Americans are constrained from social media deliberations. They fear being singled out for unjust treatment, such as indiscriminate attacks by intolerant

majoritarian groups. On the other hand, the central government apparatus, who themselves perpetrate violence^{viii}, would be watching over in readiness to punish sections of the public perceived to be either anti-incumbents in the case of Africa, or racially stereotyped individuals perceived to be criminals in the case of US. This would be under the pretext of keeping law and order. The case of the police killings in Kenya and the George Floyd killing in US serve as good examples here.

Consequently, in both the US and Africa, there are invisible layers of individuals, groups and the state watching over how people use social media for electoral deliberations. This further heightens tensions and confrontations within the social media space. The tensions and confrontations result in physical violence breakouts among the civilian social media users who may track down perceived oppositional enemies for attack. The state apparatus may also feel that the incumbent is under threat by the political opposition, and launch attacks on the perceived threat to the government/incumbent, as is the case with Africa. The US state apparatus may cause violence while pursuing “criminal looking civilians” who need to be contained, in this case black people. Either way, minority groups including anti-incumbent ethnic associations in Africa and racially stereotyped black Americans, would suffer casualty. For that reason, they are cautious about how they use social media.

Social media use in both Africa and the US has led to the same level of vulgarization of the electoral politics in the two societies. Twitter was the most used social media platform during the 2020 US electoral campaign in the US, while WhatsApp is the most used social media platform in Africa. The difference in social media preference, as earlier mentioned, is attributed to market characteristics shaped by dominant social actors through endorsements, among others. In the US, Donald Trump’s use of Twitter inadvertently popularized American electoral politics in Africa and globally, besides increasing the vulgarization of political engagements. Arguably, American and African dominant social actors are aware and afraid of how people can use the power of social media to hold them accountable. This has made them shape how the platform is used in electoral politics – to enable them to preoccupy

people with emotional engagements at the expense of sobriety on public interest issues. Although it may be argued that social media was used for the collective emotionalization that resulted in the unseating of long-serving presidents during the 2010 Arab Spring, the platform did not bring with it any better political engagements that would enable the people to attain the political justice they set out to achieve. The emotional use of social media did not safeguard the purported better democratic values envisaged by its inventors.

Today, governments and corporates in Africa and the US, as well as the rest of the world, are strengthening control over content on social media for commercial and political purposes. The new practices of corporate surveillance and exploitation are at all-time highs. For instance, in Africa, governments have always attempted to regulate social media technologies, allegedly on the grounds of public interest, arguing in the interests of national security. During the last elections in Nigeria and Ghana, incumbent presidents (mis)used social media during political campaigns for their re-election bids far more than any other entity in their countries. The incumbents infiltrated the opposition parties and unnecessarily tracked their activities. In Kenya, the 2017 elections witnessed the first incumbent's high-tech electoral malpractice^{ix}, which was later nullified by the country's Supreme Court. The Kenyan incumbent allegedly used social media to rig the elections, ostensibly using ghost accounts to stamp virtual majoritarianism, to justify rigged numbers. However, the very same social media was used by the opposition parties to collect evidence of the incumbents' malpractice, which, upon presentation to the court, led to the election being nullified. In the US, Trump's allegation through social media that his opponent, Joe Biden, had rigged 2020 US elections compares with Africa.

In the next paragraphs of this section, the chapter shall explore two instances where the dominant social actors in Africa and US have influenced how people use social media during electoral deliberations; to escape the people's sobriety on issues that affect them. The first incidence is during social media content co-production. As earlier

mentioned, social media has allowed for everybody to co-produce. This makes the people whom Castells^x refers to as amateurs to access electoral debates. Besides lowering the quality of the debates, these lower social status individuals, with less experience and electoral debating skills, are easy targets for influence by the dominant social actors. The actors accomplish their political will through the unsuspecting amateurs who are unable to foresee the implications of accepting to undertake the dominant social actors' will. In the US we can regard the social media enabled co-production component as a feature of liberalism. As seen during Trumps vs Biden supporters' online debates, some of the debaters lack the experience, skills, and knowledge to participate in a logic-based debate. They were more armed with emotions than logic.

In Africa, local politicians across the continent use unemployed youths, popularly known as *Ogada* in West Africa and *Bodaboda* in East Africa, for electoral campaigns and mobilization for political rallies. These youths can be paralleled with Trump's far-rightists and economically poor supporters in the US. The youths who earn their livelihood through using their motorbikes to transport short distance travelers in the urban and rural Africa, are cheaply hired to use the bikes to run the dominant social actors' electoral campaigns. Ostensibly, they co-produce/record their "convoys" of motorbikes as they chant slogans in support of the political actors. The content is then posted on social media to create the impression that the politicians are the people's favourite candidates. The ease with which social media enables the youths to take part in electoral content co-production, the excitement that comes with sharing the content, and the lack of needed skills to question the political actors about the content, makes the platform unsuspectingly emasculative. This affirms the chapter's earlier assertion that social media users such as the youths least suspect that the platform emasculate them during electoral deliberations.

The second incidence is about African middle-class individuals who heavily censor themselves while using social media, because they know about the possibility that their next employer could be watching

what they post. We can compare this with the US middle class whose capitalistic-minded employers fire them over their social media posts. For example, in 2013, renowned public relations personality Justine Sacco was fired while on a flight to South Africa, after posting on her social media account: "Going to Africa. I hope I don't get AIDs"^{xi}. This can be interpreted to mean that the dominant social actors in Africa and US influence the content that middle-class African people co-produce on social media. In this case, the dominant social actors reward the middle class according to the way they use the platform. For instance, middle-class people who aspire to form the administrative or secretariat teams for the actors who win elections in Africa would avoid engaging in particular electoral deliberations, that they suspect might go against the political stance of the actors. For example, during the 2017 elections in Kenya, there were allegations that a leading mobile service provider had colluded to rig elections in favour of the incumbent. As a result, the leading opposition candidates called on the people to boycott the corporate's products. A big public electoral debate about the issue came up, and the middle-class people who aspired to be hired by the corporate had to censor their social media content about the topic.

This brings us to the idea of rewarding ethnic associations and civic publics in the African electoral deliberations – to most Africans, electoral politics is about rural kinships and ethnic associations supporting their own to loot the state coffers. It is never about the good development ideas of political candidates. We can loosely compare this with US racialized political alignments, where, for example, Biden had to choose a non-white running mate to win the votes of the non-white community. In the African context, the notion of a reward system holds that those who support their own in looting the state coffers, are rewarded monetarily. As mentioned in the previous paragraphs above, this unwritten African viewpoint runs across the social classes, with the dominant social actors shaping how it is perpetuated to their benefit. Overall, the African and US dominant social actors have shaped social media; dictating how people use the platform during electoral deliberations.

Harnessing social media benefits for US and Africa

The comparisons herein point to the fact that social media use and practices between the US and African nations is shrinking fast. They also indicate that geographical distances, aspirations, points of view, and race, among others do not make people any different. For instance, as discussed in this chapter, the neo-nationalism associated intolerance being experienced in US and across the world has been experienced in Africa for centuries. The knowledge drawn from these comparisons would be handy in analyzing US policy on Africa under the Biden administration. The many social media technological similarities, the reemerging historical phenomena including the aforesaid neo-nationalism, the concept of indigenous African violence, among others, may be identified and mutual benefits harnessed to better both continents.

Apart from the politically motivated notions discussed above, this section explores the impact of commercialization/corporate surveillance, looking at the similarities between Africa and the US. Commercialization/corporate surveillance informs the political decisions in both the US and Africa. The chapter identified commercialization/corporate surveillance as one of the direct results of the influential commercialists' subversion of the technologies from the inventors' original intention. The commercialists advance globalized interests that lack the humanitarian touch, hitherto envisaged by inventors earlier discussed. American author Mark Manson's^{xii} first chapter in his motivational book, *The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F*ck*, refers to social media as "the feedback loop from hell". He argues that social media posts from friends entrap people into a daily struggle to meet certain desires. It makes them strive and break down with self-hate in pursuit of the social media-set standards of success. They then regard themselves as losers after gauging themselves against others' material acquisitions. Their biggest fear is that the social media world would perceive them as losers if they do not have material possessions to flaunt. They would engage in impulse spending, usually on credit,

to acquire and flaunt the latest acquisitions, for friends to affirm that they are not losers. The commercialists love it so. The desire to flaunt material acquisition has been popularized through the universalization of human desires such as holidays, expensive cars, and exclusive parties, among others. Since most of the inventions are from the US, the universalization of human wants is defined in US terms. This leads to skewed relations between US and Africa, with more US culture imposed on the African.

Today, Americans and Africans have similar desires, propagated through social media. They plan grand weddings because their friends just had colourful ones the previous weekend. They hire limousines for short trips to take photos because a friend got a Ferrari on their birthday. Kenyan netizens remember the Dorcas Sarkozy saga, which culminated in an emotional con and financial loss. In the saga, a middle-aged man fell in love with a purported lady, whose social media post always oozed intelligent social analytical posts. They never met physically but rumour had it that she was a former French president's daughter sired with an African woman. She could not share her photos through social media for security reasons. However, she often asked for monetary favours from the Kenyan man; alleging she was stranded in some African country after work assignments. It was later discovered that the social media account was run by a network of male individuals who conned the unsuspecting public. Had it not been for the social media materialistic lure, the Kenyan man would not have fallen victim while trying to impress the purported intellectual spouse. This implies that social media showing-off culture can preoccupy people, causing them to miss out on realistic assessments, for focusing on peers' approval. Such ecstatic materialism brings to mind the classical play by a Russian, Nikolai Gogol, *The Government Inspector*, in which he satirizes material greed^{xiii}. Although the play was written long before social media invention, worldwide materialism enabled by the platform's technology allows for similarities to be drawn. Social media does not only rejuvenate human desires that are as old as man himself, but also presents new opportunities for having these desires met.

For instance, the 2019 highest-paid person on YouTube was a nine-year-old. This may make an African musician who has spent decades figuring out how to earn a living from YouTube to break down. But such is the life that social media allows mankind across the globe. It is full of mixed fortunes and endless opportunities. It creates a job for a young man in Africa but subjects him to walking a delicate balance between using his earnings to buy online nudes and sending the money to his ailing parents upcountry. It creates jobs for American celebrities whose engage in pornographic production when their musical careers dwindle. In fact, the “emotionalizing” power of social media has made the desires of the *nyalgunga* or *owe-ingo* (typical rural setting in Kenya) dwellers similar to those of a New York superstar. It has expanded the capitalist market by globalizing human desires. While the *nyalgunga* dweller of the 1990s may have wished to inherit his grandfather’s fishing dhow and catch more fish, to attract the beautiful widow who refused him publicly the last time he made advances, today’s one desires a 100-inch digital TV screen. *Owe-ingo*’s 1990’s desire may have been to clear the thicket on the fertile Samia hills and plant more millet in the next season to fill his granaries and lure the elusive secondary school-girl into marrying him as his third wife. But today, he wishes for a holiday in Dubai or to attend a live Chelsea match in London. As such, African and Americans have developed similar desires.

The dominant social actors including the commercialists, the “investors”, the politicians, among others are happy with the globalization of desires. They are the regional authorized dealers in the TV brands that dwellers would buy; and they have shares in the airlines that would fly the dwellers to Dubai and London, should their life desires come true. However, the social media provides for the opportunity to the *nyalgunga* and *owe-ingo* to craft means that can make them become authorised dealers too; and make enough money to enable them to buy shares in the airlines if they so wish. Therefore, there should be no blanket assumption about social media use across the continent, that it is transforming the electoral politics and the corporate world. Rather, social media is a jigsaw that gives and takes,

rewards and punishes, or blesses and curses, depending on the user's strategic ability.

Recommendation

This chapter recommends the correction of the skewed relations between Africa and the US in terms of cultural flow. Although there are many similarities between the two continents in terms of social media use, there is an imbalance in the flow of cultural content on social media. Fairness would be attained if the African continent offered her culture in the same measure as the US does. The arguments about the imbalance in the flow of social media culture content leads us to the issue of who invents most of the technology that supports social media. Logically, it may be argued that the US has more inventions, and therefore rightfully asserts more cultural influence. However, Africa has social capital that is three times more than the US. Social capital uses social media. Therefore, they deserve fair representation in the cultural flow on social media, between the two continents. As explored in this chapter, the Afrocentric perspectives on cross-cutting issues such as electoral violence, indicates that concepts such as neo-nationalism may have originated in Africa. Therefore, a more inclusive representation of Africa in social media use between US and Africa, in terms of cultural flow, needs to be attained in the long run. ◇

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US-Africa student exchange programs: Re-engagement on student cooperation

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Although education cooperation has developed into one of the most important aspects of public diplomacy between the US and Africa, the benefits are uneven. The US foreign policy towards Africa should reflect meaningful multilateral efforts that do not overlook Africa's needs and interests. The US agenda with regards to Africa over the past decade has reflected democracy, economic opportunities, security, governance, and education cooperation. Such education cooperation has been implanted through student exchange programs.

However, with the changes that Africa and the US are experiencing, there is a need to re-engage the African continent by moving away from the old ways of conducting US educational foreign policy. The US administration under President Joe Biden has a chance to rebuild meaningful relationships with the African continent by forming alliances that also cater for Africa's priorities in the education sector. Conversations about the higher education systems between Africa and the US have been seen as being concerned with aid rather than partnerships as the student exchanges tend to overshadow the cooperation aspect of the exchange. Student exchange programs between the US and Africa promote Western models of academic and social learning, typical of the American education system, as well as US geopolitical interests in Africa. This has resulted in an imbalance in the student exchange programs, limiting the realization of African goals and interests. This paper argues that although many Africans have benefited from student exchange opportunities, such education does not necessarily respond to the needs of Africa as a whole. Therefore, for these partnerships between the US and Africa to be effective, they should fit into the needs of the African continent as well.

Introduction

The US government's foreign policy towards Africa is premised on the need to promote human dignity, equality, and human development on the African continent. Student exchange programs between Africa and the US were rooted in principles of adaptation to and assimilation of the American system of education. African institutions of higher learning were expected to adapt to the standards and values of the American education system. The aim of students exchange programs between the US and Africa were to build on knowledge and information, and to have human contact so that the nations could become acquainted with each other, helping the involved countries to forge good relations. The student exchange programs were also established as a means to transfer political ideology and economic information, and to train future African leaders.

This chapter examines the education cooperation between the US and Africa, focusing on student exchange programs. Student exchange programs are educational partnerships and cooperation whereby students from secondary schools or universities study at a partner institution, and this might involve international travel and can be as far as abroad.

Background

The earliest American agents of educational and cultural exchange were Christian missionary organizations in the 19th centuryⁱ. The US' commitment to international exchanges and understanding could be seen in the programs such as Fulbright Scholarships established by the federal government of the United States (1946)ⁱⁱ.

Student exchange programs often involve many stakeholders, for example, government-to-government, think tanks, foundations, churches, and academic institutions. Discussions surrounding the US educational policy towards Africa have moved from government-to-government level and are now more focused on university partnerships between American universities and their African peers. Although these

partnerships have remarkably expanded, the benefits of such exchanges are largely dominated by US interests towards Africa.

Academic partnerships between the US and Africa are rooted in the logic of foreign aid. These educational partnerships have perpetuated dependency for the African counterparts. Most of the educational programs take directional linear flow in terms of the many African students who go to study in the US. There are comparatively fewer American students who come to study in Africa. Some critics have argued that the word 'partnerships' is being used to fit the present political climate without adequately reflecting the biased and problematic nature of the student exchange programs. The language used and the character of the programs mask huge inequalities, which should be comprehensively resolved to ensure mutual benefits. On paper, the US-Africa educational foreign policy emphasizes people-to-people interaction looking at culture and understanding the attitudes of Africans. However, the student exchanges promote the understanding of the US as a nation and a society, leaving no room for Americans to learn more about Africa's interests, culture, and societyⁱⁱⁱ.

Under the US Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs' exchange program, the exchange is offered to students, teachers, and professionals. The special focus areas are listed as technology, education, teaching, and lastly arts and culture. The aim of this initiative is to support diversity and inclusion and yet results have shown that the exchange program often does the opposite as the bias is usually on the US teaching and Africa often biased towards learning. The problem that arises from this style of exchange is that Africa is being seen as dependent and cannot be on equal ground with the US intellectually. Instead of Africa contributing to coming up with applicable theories that suit the African landscape, it will be seen to be borrowing theories from the US, as not enough is being done on the continent to educate the US about Africa. These student exchange programs are not conscientizing students to the different cultures or the sharing of knowledge that can strengthen international relations^{iv}.

After most of the African countries gained independence, funding was expanded to private foundations, international organizations, governments, and foreign aid, which contributed to the building of higher institutions in most African countries^v. The various US foundations affiliated with the US government focused on different areas as a strategic move towards protecting US interests in the different education sectors. For example, in 1954 the Ford Foundation granted the International African Institute \$50 000 for fellowships and library support^{vi}. This made it easy for the US government and US independent foundations to cultivate strong relational ties through higher education initiatives.

While there has been progress on both independent and government US-Africa education-based initiatives, it is important to distinguish the progress that has been made between government and independent programs. Independent Foundations such as the Carnegie Corporation, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Phelps Stokes Fund are some of the leading funders for US-Africa-education related programs. What has changed since the implementation of scholarships between the US and Africa relations, is that the scholarships have become more aligned with the foundations' areas of interest. For instance, the Rockefeller Foundation focuses on social, natural, and biomedical sciences while the Carnegie Corporation focuses on teacher education. Beneficiaries of scholarships to the US are taught the US curriculum and not given an opportunity to promote education from their African countries. The result is that these educational initiatives do not evolve or offer new paths that students can choose for themselves, hence some scholars and policy practitioners have questioned the often US bias of the "partnerships" that often emphasize US culture, theories at the expense of the African culture and theories^{vii}. There is a huge imbalance both in number of students going from Africa to the US and the fields of study where Africans tend to come to the US for sciences and professions while Americans tend to go to Africa for Social Sciences and Humanities^{viii}.

Even though the US foreign policy was rarely direct, the mandate was clear that the US aimed to shape and inform the thinking of

Africans who would assume leadership positions. As far back as 1940s, the Fulbright Scholarship was born with the goal increase mutual understanding among people through living and working experiences as scholars^{ix}.

This was done through the approach of supporting African higher institutions that had based their systems on US educational models. This tactic made it easy for US foreign policy to promote their interests, norms, and values through offering scholarships to African students.

Through the student exchange programs, the US educational foreign policy was able to communicate with the African continent through cultural and educational exchanges. Internal and external support was offered to the higher education initiatives between Africa and US universities. The US support to African countries comes in the form of donations, setting up of programs, and general institutional support. Higher education initiatives during the colonial era were developed and backed up mainly by religious and philanthropic organisations. Klein (2007) in her book *The Shock Doctrine* suggests that some of the student exchange policies that were implemented by the US government did not engage and provide adequate responses for the people the policies were designed for. In addition, Frank (1990) in conversation about how the West underdeveloped Africa, brings out a key element of the importance of looking at US policies in light of African development and post-colonial theory.

US-Africa student exchange programs as public and cultural diplomacy

Education is a vital component of public and cultural diplomacy. The Murrow Center defines public diplomacy as dealing with the influence of public attitudes on the formation and execution of foreign policies^x. It encompasses dimensions of international relations beyond traditional diplomacy; the cultivation by governments of public opinion in other countries; the interaction of private groups and interests in one country with those of another; the reporting of foreign affairs and its impact on policy; communication between those whose job is communication,

as between diplomats and foreign correspondents; and the processes of intercultural communications^{xi}. Students exchange programs played an important role in the building and management of relations through understanding cultures and attitudes of various communities as a way of advancing the interests and values between Africans and Americans. As education and culture are seen as autonomous, the integration of both education and culture cannot be avoided in instances where focus is placed on students exchange programs^{xiii}.

To understand the intricacies of the US-Africa educational foreign policy it is important to consider their historical context and how we can build sustainable student exchange programs that enhance cultural dialogue. By focusing on cultural diplomacy, the US could shift its focus to students exchange program policies that meet the issues and needs of Africans^{xiii}. Most of the scholarships between the US and Africa are meant to reflect long-term goals between the counterparts. However, reviews of the impact of these programs reflect a lack of clarity on the goals and the expected outcomes^{xiv}. Reports show that many of the programs launched in Africa are discarded as soon as a new cabinet takes over^{xv}.

In student exchanges, both cultural and public diplomacy are interrelated as cultural immersion, hence they are taken simultaneously. This resulted in education and culture being integrated into public diplomacy. Both educational and cultural affairs seem indispensable to US foreign policy even though the understanding is that they are only academic interventions. Education and culture have an important role to play in US foreign policy. There are many education programs; for example, the Fulbright-Hays Act of 1961^{xvi} aimed to advance international education and cultural initiatives. This highlights the relationship between culture and education in terms of student exchanges. Over the years, the results from student exchange programs have indicated the tensions that are encountered by cultural affairs officers in demonstrating immediate and long-range features of public diplomacy.

Some of the conflicting views about the student exchange programs between the US and Africa are centered on the direct impact on national

level, while others rest on the question of the relationship between the university and its educational mission^{xvii}. These opposing perspectives suggest a need to relook at the student exchange relationship between Africa and the US. The exchanges need to be for the betterment of the communities they are serving. If this is made clear from the beginning, the student exchanges will go a long way in removing biases of promoting only national interests at the expense of creating better student exchange programs. Many have advocated that the student exchange programs should be distanced from government influence so as to create them as separate entities run by various organizations from both Africa and the US^{xviii}.

The furthering of education and cultural affairs has not had the mutually desired impact on the US and Africa. Past relationships have proven that the student exchange initiatives were done for the promotion of the US' image across the board. Student exchange programs as public diplomacy between the US and the African continent should be re-evaluated in order to promote alternative ways of improving the student exchange initiatives. Some reports on student exchange initiatives have shown that the student beneficiaries are not involved with cultural diplomatic work and may not participate in the day-to-day activities of the student exchange programs or interact with the host countries. Yet, these beneficiaries should play the role of ambassadors for these programs, spreading cultural awareness.

When evaluating student exchange programs between the US and Africa, we need to take into consideration a shift in the era when they were first introduced. There are different perceptions on what democracy looks like in African countries and the US; the cross-cultural sharing of knowledge should be a key element in these student exchange initiatives. If both the US and Africa can demonstrate their ability to engage in clear dialogue through student exchanges, there will be remarkable changes within the international education and cultural programs.

Globalization brought about new complexities in the realm of international affairs between Africa and US cultural exchanges. The

internet has also made it easy for African voices as cultural diplomacy to be heard globally. Another problem stems from the generalizations and stereotyping between the US and the African continent. The shift towards public-private partnerships as public diplomacy initiatives has the potential to enhance student exchange cooperation. The Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) is a good example of American foreign policy towards Africa aiming to invest in the future leaders of Africa. However, YALI only creates a positive image for the US, and subtly entrenches a stereotypical view of Africa as failed and lacking opportunities for its youth. The initiative has been criticized for its unilateral launch and how it has its four regional offices in only four countries: South Africa, Kenya, Senegal, and Ghana. The continent has 54 countries, with many not being represented in this program. There are questions too about what really is the impact of these transformative leaders in their own countries. Furthermore, the YALI fellowship initiative looks like a duplication of its flagship program, the Mandela Washington fellowship program^{xix}, which claims to promote innovation.

The program has done well in promoting US organisations for international engagements. However, its impact is lacking in terms of broadening of perspectives about Africa. Under the Mandela Washington fellowship there are also reciprocal exchanges that take place within the program. The partnerships should be guided by principles from organisations that are speaking for Africa, like the United Nations' sustainable education goal, which urges for inclusive and equitable quality education that promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all. The aspirations and goals of the African diaspora scholarships program could be potentially linked to Historically Black Universities in the US, broadening the cross-cultural linking of the African diaspora, African Americans in the US, and Africans at home.

Policymakers and technocrats involved in these exchange programs should consider the African Union framework for higher education, which proposes that the needs for Africa's education should focus on such areas as: portability of skills, promote an African education space,

support learning outcomes acquired through life, facilitate recognition of diplomas and certificates and lastly, to enhance comparability, quality, and transparency of qualifications from all sub-sectors of education and training.

Refocus on higher-education partnership needs towards the African continent

From the prior the discussion it is evident that student exchange programs play an important role in both parts of the world. Africans could benefit more if the student exchange programs are tailored to meet the interests, goals and aspirations of the African continent as defined by Africans themselves. Continental Education Strategy for Africa is a document that provides the African education aspirations, and the US student exchange programs can be tailored and compatible to the goals of the US exchange programs.

With the increasing global knowledge economy, the debates about higher education partnerships are refocusing on how cooperation in education could promote the interests and aspirations of Africans. Cooperation in education and student exchange programs should therefore assist Africans to primarily learn more about themselves as much as they learn about the world outside. While the rise of African centres studying the US and vice versa provides an important starting point, such centres should work closely with African institutions to expand spaces for Africans to learn, teach and spread societal awareness from their perspectives, and enabling Africans to inform and educate the American society about Africa.

The higher education systems between Africa and the US have launched sister universities in different countries. These universities should be used to promote Africa teachings as well the US fundamentals. The education aid given to African countries by the US should advance the aspirations of Africans without compromising the partnerships^{xx}.

The contemporary context of higher education in Africa-US relations

The forging of present student exchange partnerships is seen as complementary compared to previous decades. The World Bank's *Learning for All* campaign brought about a change in the direction of the US educational foreign policy focus. However, the role of societal and political discourse continues to influence the state of US education foreign policy towards Africa. This has led to the emergent need for the African discourse to be considered while factoring in how these new cooperation can assist Africans in learning about themselves and their American counterparts. The patterns and trends for educational exchange purposes have changed with time and therefore the foreign policy on US-Africa higher education needs to be relooked at with a different lens that focuses on how Africans can benefit from student exchange programs.

According to Igue (2010), a number of African businesspeople and leaders have been educated in the best universities and schools in the US, Great Britain, and France. Once they return to Africa, they often gain control of the banking, insurance, microfinance and business sectors^{xxi}. Kwame Nkrumah is a good example. After deciding to take his studies abroad in 1935, he joined Lincoln University, where he completed his undergraduate studies before moving to the University of Pennsylvania for his post graduate studies^{xxii}. It was while studying in the United States that Kwame Nkrumah began to develop his views on Pan-Africanism, economics, and African development, attending a number of meetings of various political organizations including Marcus Garvey's movement, and later on became a president of Ghana^{xxiii}.

African education institutions have evolved to a point where they challenge the notion that Africa cannot think for itself, however African intellectuals and institutions of higher learning need autonomy and public accountability to make meaningful contributions^{xxiv}. The narrow notion of universities being centres for liberating Africans has since become irrelevant, and the universities presently believe they should

have full autonomy to promote their role as centres of Afrocentric teaching, research, and publishing. Universities in Africa are now seen as knowledge production organizations. What directions or agendas to place first has always been a contentious issue in these institutions.

Firstly, the shortcoming of the student exchange programs between Africa and the US is that over the past few years, higher education partnerships between the US and Africa have tended to insist on having African universities provide a clear agenda before funding can be provided. Scholarship programs such as the Fulbright scholarship are offered for predetermined faculties and areas of knowledge which is often limiting on the choices of the participants^{xxv}. This implies that these partnerships always require the receiving partner to bend to the choice of the institution that is funding them. Arguments have been put forward to show that the role of African universities has changed over time, and therefore we ought to have a relook at US-Africa relations with regards to higher education. The approach where the US counterparts tend to shape the discourse of student exchanges with Africa tends to overlook the new modes of education that have been developed in Africa, and has led to Africa becoming an active participant in the dissemination of knowledge production and information. African universities have now become competent centres of learning that the US must not ignore in the African strategy to integrate Africa into the rest of the world.

The second and overarching criticism of US-Africa student exchange programs between Africa and the US is that the programs often do not focus on teaching education that is fitted to the African continent's needs^{xxvi}. This issue needs to be addressed so that the Africa policy towards the US becomes a cooperative initiative instead of the exchange ending up being a US-Africa program that is not beneficial to Africans. Onyenekwu et al argue that post-secondary institutions should direct more efforts towards fostering a balanced understanding of the African continent; the authors propose that one way this can be achieved is by improving the image and perception of the African continent in study abroad promotional materials^{xxvii}. The rhetoric for

these programs is a by-product of the actual program, reflecting the packaging of Western values as African needs. Quite often you find that when the participating students are asked about the values, they fail to communicate them to the larger audience. Terms like education partnerships, institutional linkages and collaborations have to start moving in the direction where sustainable education is aimed at by both the US and Africa while expanding it to all young adults^{xxviii}.

More shortcomings of the US-Africa student exchange program were made apparent at the Conference to Strengthen US-Africa partnerships, held by the Center for Strategic International Studies, where panellists put forward critiques, ideas, and perspectives to strengthen US-Africa partnerships. The conference suggested that student partnerships between US and Africa had to be improved to remain relevant for the African continent. Panelists such as Tawana Kupe and Paul Zeleza argued for a program of scale that places focus on mutual beneficial programs, designed semesters and joint degrees, which include both staff and students in the movement^{xxix}. Zeleza further argued for collaborative ownership through strategic partnerships that create knowledge and research publicity. In addition to that, he argued for sustainable support of these student exchanges through bilateral and multilateral donor support^{xxx}. As postulated by Kupe and Zeleza, these student exchange programs have far-reaching implications for development, continuing cultural and educational contact between the US and Africa.

In spite of the difficulties caused by COVID-19, it has, on the positive side, fostered the emergence of student virtual exchanges for online education and cultural exchanges. This warrants a great opportunity to restate the purpose of the student exchange programs between Africa and the US. The writer Viktor Frankl suggested that educational and cultural exchange is represented as a straightforward matter with its own obvious and unarguable objective. Its justification is that it contributes to the progress of the sciences and the arts and enhances the opportunities of students and scholars – both those who travel and those who stay at home – to improve their minds and extend their

imagination^{xxxii}. Productive and successful student exchange programs should be driven independently from secondary to foreign policy engagements. This would allow student exchange programs that are beneficial to both Africa and the US.

Under Agenda 2063, the overarching goal for all African countries is to create a knowledge economy that will improve human capabilities^{xxxiii}. Such a knowledge economy creates a capable labour force adequately equipped to advance Africa's interests. If the student exchanges are to be transformed, they need to have a focus on African issues. The World Bank's knowledge economy index highlights the importance of developing human capabilities, especially in a region like Africa^{xxxiii}. Africa needs to improve the quality and availability of the education offered in order to compete with the Global North when it comes to student exchanges. Another strategy that can be implemented is collaborative research and publications between Africa and the US. This would engender multilateral knowledge production and solutions to contemporary challenges in both Africa and the US^{xxxiv}.

A relook at the student exchange initiatives between the US and African government is only a first step in leveraging opportunities for more sustainable student exchange programs. The long-term goal for the student exchange program must be built on collaboration and engaging in dialogue between Africa and the US. Amelia Arsenault suggests that US foreign policy needs to understand the current efficacy and potential applications of these forms of student exchanges in the African context if it is concerned with improving US-Africa relations^{xxxv}. By 2065, the projected number of young working Africans will be more than the rest of the world^{xxxvi}. Accordingly, the youth population of Africa will be double, presenting growing opportunities for the US government to re-evaluate the kind of student exchanges it wants to foster within the African continent. US efforts toward student exchange programs should therefore factor in anticipated demographic change and how that will potentially play out on the global scale. Such an approach will enhance US-Africa engagements based on youth-centric aspirations and development approaches.

The US government also needs to come up with a way to cultivate knowledge from the brainpower of Africa^{xxxvii}. The framing of Africa by the US has generally been one of distant relations^{xxxviii}. However, the rise of other superpowers means it has to compete for Africa's attention with both Russia and China. These countries have also been making progress in engaging Africa with regards to student exchanges, creating competition for the US government. There is a need for US foreign policy towards education to be more proactive with regards to Africa's present needs.

Towards a US-Africa policy framework shift

The policy framework towards student exchange programs should shift towards mutually cooperative and beneficial approaches. US and African universities should be able to equally participate in curriculum development that benefits students from both parties. With COVID-19 on the rise, the engagement can also be made online to assist in implementing the co-creation of projects. There is a need to scale the thinking of student exchange programs beyond humanities to assist them in expanding areas of mutual interest. As suggested by Kupe, the US and Africa should and could build forward better^{xxxix}. Developing new structures of student virtual exchanges will go a long way in coming up with strategic programs that are beneficial for both Africa's and the US' educational systems. This will also lead to maximum visibility on education both on the African continent and in the US. Initiatives such as the Carnegie programs should be expanded to all the African countries, including the development of e-learning methods to increase networking and opportunities. Such initiatives should be based on a good understanding of cross-cultural dynamics to ensure that the funders do not end up controlling the narrative, hence the principle co-creation is crucial in the crafting and implementation of such programs. We need to base our exchanges on principle initiatives and co-creation.

Conclusion

Regardless of some evident shortcomings, student exchange programs are very important because they create an environment that can foster mutual benefits for both African and US students. The nature of student exchanging students across cultures goes a long way in ensuring that there is understanding between cultures where people can learn from each other. From this paper it is evident that the current exchange programs fall far short in terms of addressing the interests of Africa and Africans. Therefore, there is a need to relook at the implementation of such programs to result in co-creation of the programs to enable both the African participants and their US counterparts to have equitable reorientation in terms of the students and fields of study. US and Africa universities can reap more benefits by equally developing curriculums to ensure there is mutual understanding of the different dynamics between the two counterparts. Collaborative research may go a long way in the re-engagement efforts towards redressing the shortcomings of the exchange programs. While efforts must be directed towards equitable representation of institutions and curriculums, there is need to ensure academic institutions do not lose their autonomy and accountability in the process. Although there are diverse views this chapter acknowledges the benefits that can be reaped from exchange programs, especially by affording mutual understanding through experiences to a diverse groups of people who stand to develop into often outstanding members of their communities. ◇

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US aid in Africa: The challenges of official development assistance and advantages of philanthropy

PRINCE MUDAU

Philanthropy has been on a steady growth path over recent years when compared to official development assistance (ODA). It has presented itself as a compelling non-state actor in developing countries. On the other hand, ODA is burdened with ineffectiveness, among a myriad of other issues. Africa as a developing continent needs to fully optimize opportunities offered by philanthropy. In this chapter, a discussion about the advantages of philanthropy and the challenges of ODA are framed to trace the rise and practice of philanthropy and ODA on the global stage to give context to the main discussion of the Chapter: US-to-Africa. Various US programs that have been implemented in Africa through philanthropy and ODA are discussed so as to enunciate the impact, strength and weaknesses of both forms of aid. While philanthropy is innovative and agile, it cannot replace ODA. However, there is room for US ODA to embrace philanthropic practices and organization to improve delivery of aid in Africa.

The global context of philanthropy and ODA

US to Africa aid is influenced by global trends as both the US and Africa are major players in the world of aid, the US as a donor and Africa as one of the biggest recipients of aid. Therefore, starting by discussing the global picture of philanthropy and ODA provides a nuanced understanding of the dynamics of US to Africa aid.

At the heart of global aid is the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The OECD is a 60-year-old organization that works to “build better policies for better lives” (OECDⁱ). The OECD is driven by a Developmental Assistance Committee (DAC)

which comprises of members from 30 countries including the US and they are all donor countries. It is noteworthy to that no African country is part of the DAC, which describes itself as “a forum for consultations among aid donors on assistance to less-developed countries” (OECDⁱⁱ). In the Resolution of the Common Aid Effort, which the DAC (then known as the Development Assistance Group) adopted on the 29th March 1963 in London, its members agreed to “periodically review together both the amount and the nature of their contributions to aid programmes” (Fuhrer, 1994, 11)ⁱⁱⁱ. Hence, one of the critical tenets of the OECD is research on aid and providing key statistics on issues that relate to aid. This data is essential in understanding foreign aid trends, opportunities and challenges.

The OECD (2018) defines ODA as aid provided by other countries for developing countries^{iv}. In the context of foreign aid, philanthropy is the use of private resources, i.e. financial contributions, volunteering, collective action, and donating creativity or other talents to provide public goods (Philanthropy, 2020)^v. For easy statistical comparisons with other developmental flows, the OECD (2018) defines private philanthropic flows as: “transactions from the private sector that promote economic development and welfare of developing countries as their main objective, and which originate from foundations’ own sources (notably endowment, donations from companies and individuals, as well as income from royalties, investments and lotteries)” (15)^{vi}.

The 2020 *Global Philanthropy Tracker* report by the Indiana University’s Lilly Family School of Philanthropy (2020) draws data from 47 economies to detail cross-border flows^{vii}. The key determinants for this data include private philanthropy, private capital investments, ODA and remittances. Twenty-six of the countries used in this study belong to the OECD-DAC.

The report states that in 2018, the combined four streams of aid had an output of US\$834 billion. Only \$68 billion of this amount was from philanthropic flows, which accounted for 8% of the total cross-border flows. ODA contributed \$175 billion. Remittances contributed

\$481 billion. This amounted to 58% of the total contributions. Private investments amounted \$109 billion.

In 2017, the Hudson Institute released the *Index of Global Philanthropy and Remittances*^{viii}. This index provided analysis and mapping of global philanthropy and ODA. The report studied data from 1994 to 2014 and concluded that there had been a notable increase in private flows. In 2014, private flows contributed \$801 billion, and ODA only contributed \$139 billion. In addition, \$764 billion came from DAC donors and \$37 billion from non-DAC donors. Government aid totalled \$147 billion, with \$137 billion from DAC donors and \$10 billion from 11 non-DAC donors.

Beyond the above reports, the OECD detailed philanthropic flows from 2013 to 2015 (OECD, 2018)^{ix}. It reports data from 143 foundations from all over the world, which gave \$68 billion. The top five foundations are the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Children's Investment Fund, the Susan T Buffet Foundation, the Dutch Postcode Lottery, and the Ford Foundation. Some 97% of these funds were disbursed through intermediaries, while 28% was directed to Africa.

Philanthropic flows make up the smallest percentage in the global aid contributions. Unlike ODA and other private flows that are easier to trace and record, philanthropy is usually shrouded in secrecy regarding who is giving where and how much. This emanates from the fact that philanthropists prefer to carry out their contributions anonymously. In addition, philanthropic giving is fragmented, and therefore it is challenging to document it, resulting in a lower reflection of philanthropic aid^x.

US ODA to Africa

The early manifestations of US ODA to Africa are traced back to the creation of Liberia to facilitate the relocation of former American slaves^{xi}. Even in that era, the US government's assistance was still relatively low. Most African countries were European colonies and the US could not interfere with developmental issues in these countries (Schuyt, Hoolwerf and Verkaik, 2017).

The successful implementation of the US' Marshall Plan in Europe from 1945-52 resulted in the focus of US aid shifting towards Africa. The Marshall Plan was the European Recovery Plan devised by President Harry Truman and George Marshall after the the World War II. The Marshall Plan was founded on "Woodrow Wilson's ideas of multilateralism or international cooperation in economic and diplomacy"^{xii}. Beyond these ideals, the US' Marshall Plan was also an effort to curtail communism in Europe. The Marshall Plan has been described as a turning point in the history of America and its greatest contribution towards its allies^{xiii}. Zambian economist Dambisa Moyo remarked: "By the end of the 1950s, once reconstruction in Europe was perceived to be working, attention turned towards other parts of the world, specifically in the context of aid, Africa. Africa was ripe for aid." (2009, 26)^{xiv}.

The Cold War saw an increase in US ODA to Africa as an instrument of West vs East ideological battles. According to Moyo, this "battle for world hegemony between the US and the USSR was fought economically and on foreign soil. The choice of weapon – aid. Africa saw many such battles. Aid became the key tool in the contest to turn the world capitalist or communist" (2009, 27)^{xv}. This was to the extent that at the height of the Cold War in 1985, US ODA in Africa also reached its all-time high^{xvi}.

In the past 20 years, US ODA to Africa has seen a steady increase. Africa has been getting the lion's share: "the region received 37% of State Department- and USAID-administered aid obligations in FY2018, up from 28% of global obligations in 2008 and 16% in 1998" (Husted, et al. 2020, 3)^{xvii}. The figures mentioned above are associated with specific programmatic events and times in the African developmental space and the US. For example, the war on terror by the Bush administration saw an increase in security aid to Africa while the more domestically focused "Make America Great Again" mantra by the Donald Trump administration saw attempts to reduce US ODA.

The George W Bush administration made commitments to increase aid to Africa through several interventions and mechanisms. In 2005, the US committed to double its aid efforts to Africa by the year 2010.

For example, in early 2000, when the Aids pandemic ravaged Africa, in 2003 the US initiated the President's Plan for Emergency AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). By 2008, PEPFAR had already provided USD 1.8 billion since 2003. In the same year the US made a commitment to provide \$48 billion for HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. By 2020 the US had provided over USD 85 billion towards PEPFAR (PEPFAR, 2020). PEPFAR have saved many numerous lives in African countries and a few other countries outside the continent especially in the Caribbean. PEPFAR has been hailed as a success that has resulted in the reduction of the HIV prevalence in Africa. Fauci and Eisinger (2018, 316) appportion the success of PEPFAR on the "strong government leadership in the global health arena^{xviii}."

When former US president Barack Obama took over in 2009, he built on the momentum of the Bush era. The Obama foreign policy and programs were informed by the 2010 Presidential Policy Directive (PPD) on Global Development. However, the Obama administration faced constraints through budget cuts, the control of the House by the Republicans, and general budget deficits. The PPD focused on the host country, investments in innovation and research, and the government. It was results-oriented and focused on global partnership. Through the Global Health Initiative (GHI), the Obama administration gathered all health initiatives, including PEPFAR, under this umbrella body. Under GHI, the Obama administration committed \$63 billion for five years. However, this goal was not fully met.

Following the global food crisis in 2007-2008, the Obama administration launched the Feed the Future Initiative. Through this program, the Obama administration pledged \$3.5 billion, a target that was easily met. Among the initially 19 countries that were on this program, 12 were from Africa. However the number has been reduced to 12 and eight of these countries are African. By the end of 2015, African countries had already received over \$2 billion of the pledged funds (Lawson, Schnepf and Cook 2016)^{xix}. Another program that the Obama administration instituted was the Global Climate Change Initiative (GCCCI). Like the GHI, the GCCCI was built on the already existing

programs of the previous administrations (Lawson, *Major Foreign Aid Initiatives Under the Obama Administration: A Wrap-Up*, 2017).

The election of Donald Trump as the US president did not only cause tectonic shifts in American domestic policy, it had a major impact on foreign policy as well, and that includes US ODA to Africa. The Trump administration tried to cut back the USAID budget “by almost one-third. However, the US Congress prevented this, with votes coming from members of the Republican Party too, and kept funding for development aid programmes at high levels” (von Soest, 2021, 4)^{xx}. It was only able to cut back on \$300 million in support to international development organizations like the United Nations (UN). This affected African countries supported mainly by UN health, food and security programs. In addition, Trump was able to reinstate the Mexico City policy. The Mexico City policy prevents any beneficiary of US foreign assistance from using the funds to support or participate in the management of a program of coercive abortion or involuntary sterilization. This resulted \$150 million declined funding as NGOs refused to accept the policy^{xxi}.

Beyond this, the Trump administration’s approach towards African ODA was characterized by neglect, as noted below by Owusu, Robredo and Carmordy:

...surprised when the new president’s transition team indicated possible disengagement from the continent when it sent a set of probing questions to the State Department, including: ‘With so much corruption in Africa, how much of our funding is stolen?’ ‘We’ve been fighting al-Shabaab for a decade; why haven’t we won?’ ‘How does US business compete with other nations in Africa? Are we losing out to the Chinese?’ ‘Why should the US continue the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which provides massive support to corrupt African regimes?’ (2019, 6)^{xxii}

The above questions by the Trump administration cannot be ignored and simply put down to one of Trump’s Twitter outbursts. Instead, there is a need to interrogate the defections, shortcomings and challenges of US ODA to Africa.

The failure of the Trump administration to drastically cut down aid has ensured a steady continuity of the US ODA programs in Africa right from the Clinton era to the Biden administration. This has also afforded the Biden administration a chance not to make any major shifts in terms of US to Africa ODA.

Challenges with ODA

Over the past years, US aid has been critiqued by many scholars for its questionable motives, which are not aligned to the needs of recipient countries^{xxiii}. One of the challenges with aid is the existence of conditions that have a significant bearing on the policy and governance direction of the recipient countries. This is best encapsulated by the donor interest model, which proposes that the single driver of aid allocation is the donor's interests^{xxiv}. These interests have been categorized into political, economic and cultural aspects^{xxv}. There have been arguments that self-interest largely influences US aid policy. However, some argue that US aid policy is a reward system for developing nations with a desirable human rights records that maintain good governance^{xxvi}. According to a study by Neumayer (2010), to be eligible for US aid, countries had to meet certain conditions, such as respect for the rule of law and democratic governance^{xxviii}.

Recipient governments are less committed to structural and sustainable programs but in most cases they exhibit a strong commitment to development by supporting donor policies in order to receive aid, which plays a crucial role in political power consolidation. In their quantitative data analysis of US aid (1945-2001), Bueno de Mesquita and Smith (2007, 254) describe the "strategic process in which donors purchase policy support from recipients who use at least some of the assistance to ensure that they are securely ensconced in power"^{xxix}.

ODA has significant challenges that relate to the sustainable development needs of recipient countries because of its fixation on donors' geopolitical and geostrategic interests. Regilme and Hodzi (2021) note that the US ODA programs show little convergence of the

donor and beneficiary governments' governance preferences; they further note that the US is using aid as an economic strategy^{xxx}.

ODA, particularly to Africa, has an incessant challenge in that the dominant economies, such as the US and China, are embroiled in a battle to conquer the world and thus are in constant competition to control recipient nations. This covert battle manifests in how developed nations seek to control the domestic governance of recipient nations. Amusa et al (2016) note that the recipients of US aid changed between the period (1980-1999) before Chinese entry and the period (2000-2021) after Chinese entry^{xxxi}. After China's entry, the US' aid has shifted towards particular sub-Saharan countries like Tanzania, Uganda, Nigeria and South Africa. US aid has been predominantly channelled into health and education sectors for many sub-Saharan countries. The emergence of China in the geopolitical and geostrategic arena has seen US aid preferred less than that of China, which supports communication, transport, and the energy sectors^{xxxii}.

The US and China have different approaches to aid. While the US focuses on issue of good governance, democracy and anti corruption; China is totally opposed to aid that is subject to these political values. According Blair and others, (2019, 9) China has rejected the "West's "politicization" of aid. China instead advances what President Xi Jinping has described as a "five-no" approach to aid, which imposes no good governance conditionalities and only lax anti-corruption safeguards, and thus aims to minimize interference in the politics of recipient states^{xxxiii}". The battle is not so much about where and how much is given, it is more about the principles that guide aid for both countries.

US private philanthropy to Africa

The history of philanthropic giving is explained through four eras^{xxxiv}. The first era is that of the Renaissance in the 16th century. The second era is associated with joint stock exchange companies in the 18th century, and the third era was born out of the United Kingdom and the US' industrial boom, which gave rise to philanthropic giants like John Davison Rockefeller Sr and Andrew Carnegie. These three stages

were more localized and focused on the countries and communities of the philanthropist. The fourth era follows the end of World War II, when globalization started to take place on a large scale. Aided by technological and information advancement, global philanthropy began to soar as well. In this era, the US is seen to be taking the lead, mostly motivated by humanitarian aid issues.

Philanthropic giving in the US is done through formal structures, the most notable being foundations. American foundations are interested and invested in international development. Leading philanthropic foundations have a huge global footprint in Africa.

Individuals and families of means in the US have been pursuing philanthropy through formalised structures since the late 1800s. For example, from the 1920s to 1940s, the Carnegie Corporation of New York began expanding its activities beyond Europe and the US to Africa and other parts of the world^{xxxv}. Notably, the Carnegie Corporation began working in some parts of Africa in 1926 with a grant to Kenya to train Africans. In addition, a grant was made to South Africa 1932, which resulted in a study titled *The Poor White Problem in South Africa: Report of the Carnegie Commission*^{xxxvi}. The paper studied poverty among white people and produced five volumes. Pro-apartheid South Africans used it as a rallying cry to protect white people from poverty and it became a blueprint for apartheid. It resulted in the entrenchment of racial segregation as the government dedicated more resources to white people at the expense of black people. After this, the Carnegie Foundation stopped its work in South Africa, save for a few grants for travel to the US. In the 1980s, the foundation resumed its work in earnest; however, this time round it was to fight racial inequality, and it was now on the forefront of social justice^{xxxvii}.

The Carnegie Corporation's continued work in Africa is seen in the signing of a memorandum of understanding with the Ford Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation, and the Rockefeller Foundation to support higher education in Africa jointly in 1997.

The Carnegie Corporation is one of many examples of foundations that were working in Africa before World War II, while the Rockefeller

Foundation was heavily involved in the health sector^{xxxviii}. Since the turn of the 21st century, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has worked in various sectors in Africa, including health and agriculture. It has started many projects in Africa, most notably the AGRA project to transform agriculture, which was jointly initiated with the Rockefeller Foundation. The Mastercard Foundation and philanthropic organizations later supported it.

American philanthropy in Africa has been instrumental in tackling the continent's complex problems^{xxxix}. The various organizations' interventions are innovative, highly impactful and life-changing.

Advantages of philanthropy in the development arena

While ODA is plagued by geopolitical interests, centralization and bureaucracy, philanthropy does not suffer the same^{xl}. Through foundations in the US and globally, philanthropy has a robust culture of independence, innovation and risk-taking^{xli}. Philanthropy's nature and practice have high impact, making it advantageous when compared to ODA.

ODA agencies suffer from political considerations and interference, resulting in aid not being directed to where it is most needed. On the other hand, philanthropic institutions are governed by boards that exercise democracy and the rule of law^{xlii}. Usually, when philanthropic organizations are founded, they are launched by individuals or families; however, they establish independent boards that determine thematic focus and the distribution of resources^{xliii}. In addition, some philanthropic organizations are founded through associations to respond to a particular need and others established by companies to advance Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in areas they operate in. In all of this, what is important is that their governance through boards allows them to fairly disperse resources where they are most needed, with little attention to political or founders' interests but rather the needs of the recipients.

Another form of philanthropy is philanthrocapitalism. This refers to philanthropy's business approach in carrying out its goals and

mandate^{xliv}. It is imbued in the activities of philanthropic institutions in terms of how they implement programs and their evaluation program. Philanthropy allows for adopting corporate structures and for impact investing and endowment^{xlv}. This allow for sustainability in the philanthropic sector and continued program implementation that will not be abandoned because resources run out.

Philanthrocapitalism also manifests in the funding of African for-profit endeavours by US foundations and other philanthropic organizations. Foundations engage in these practices to achieve impact by using private enterprises to solve societal problems and issues, including housing and food shortages^{xlvi}.

One of the fundamental tenets of philanthropy is meaningful partnerships in the host country. Philanthropic organizations that provide aid in Africa are known for involving local communities as key stakeholders and partners^{xlvii}. Unlike ODA, whose programs are dictated by government agencies or consulting firms and remove the recipients' ultimate sense of ownership, philanthropy creates a partnership between the donors and the recipients, resulting in recipients owning the program and ensuring its sustainability.

One of the most significant criticisms of ODA is that it is bureaucratic, which leads to a sluggish response to the delivery of aid. This frequently makes ODA inefficient. However, with philanthropy, there is a close-contact relationship between donors and recipients, which allows for the close monitoring and evaluation of programs. Continuous monitoring and evaluation allow for interventions that make aid in the philanthropic sense efficient^{xlviii}.

Creating an enabling environment for philanthropy

Framing philanthropy in a manner that makes it efficient than ODA does not mean that it does not have its own challenges however these challenges can be easily resolved at national level by the donor and receipt countries. For philanthropy to thrive, it needs an environment that is enabling. Unfortunately, some African countries are biased against philanthropy due to legislation aimed at curtailing civil society

activities. These countries are motivated to regulate funding from the US due to suspicion of civil society, and philanthropic organizations being viewed as agents of the West for regime change^{xix}. Despite that challenges may be faced by organizations that are distribute ODA the difference is that philanthropic organizations do not have the political and diplomatic muscle wad off such practices by recipient countries.

The delivery of philanthropic aid is tied to several vehicles^l. These include US donor organizations and grantmakers, recipient organizations and grantmakers in Africa. The rules and laws that facilitate the formation, registration and operation of philanthropic organizations need to be in a manner that encourages philanthropy. It is not the case in many African countries.

Although there have been efforts to liberalize the philanthropic sector in some African countries, some restrictive elements persist in the regulation of philanthropic organizations^{li}. These elements include mandatory registration, onerous registration processes, and needing government approval before receiving government funding, among many others^{lii}. For example, Ethiopia removed the 10% cap requirement on organizations. The 10% cap was that organizations operating on politics and governance were not allowed to receive more than 10% of their income from international donors. However, the classification of organizations through percentages of sources of funding persists.

The OECD (2018) urges governments to adopt regulations and laws that allow philanthropy to thrive^{liii}. Most philanthropists prefer to give money to governments that have an enabling environment for philanthropy.

Conclusion

According to a World Bank report, globally, poverty levels are decreasing in many regions. However, Africa still lags behind with extreme poverty, where almost 50% of countries in sub-Saharan Africa are far from attaining the millennium development goal of ending extreme poverty^{liv}. This is the evidence behind many years of ODA to Africa, which prompts an inquiry into the effectiveness of aid in transforming

African economies. Furthermore, aid dependency in Africa has had a negative effect on long-term development needs as many countries fail to carry out their functions of providing basic services, infrastructure development, and building robust development institutions without projects and technical help from foreign aid^{lv}. Thus, the failure of billions of dollars' worth of aid to Africa connotes a need to reinvent the aid paradigm to ensure sustainable human development and ultimately attain the SDGs. Thus, while philanthropy is the best shot at creating more impact, there is a need for African governments to embrace it and create more enabling environments for it to prosper, so that donors will find in Africa a ready market for their philanthropic investments. Beyond this, the US foreign assistance agencies must fully embrace philanthropic foundations and organizations in the US and in Africa and built on the momentum that they have already created in delivering developmental aid in Africa. ◇

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Can US policy makers give Africa what it wants: Trade policy certainty and consistency?

SIVIWE RIKHOTSO

US-Africa trade relations stem back from transatlantic slave trade to the periods of professionalised politics and state engagements dictated first by mutlipolarity, bipolarity, and unipolarity as international systems of governance. In many of these periods of engagements, US-Africa trade policies have always stemmed or initiated by the US, with the ‘intent of fostering development’ in the continent. Thus, with the current political climate in the US signalling renewed hope for better and fresh trade negotiations and deals, this chapter finds it prudent to analyse the most prominent trade policy initiatives that underpin US-Africa trade relations over the last 28 years. During these 28 years, five presidents have taken the helm of the Oval office: Bill Clinton, George W Bush, Barack Obama, Donald Trump, and the incumbent Joe Biden. Looking at the trade policies of these five figures, this chapter probes whether the US can provide trade policy certainty and consistency, as the trend seems to be that every president has had his or her own trade policy initiative.

Moreover, another view of these trade policy initiatives is that Africa is invited to the negotiating table with an offer already set by the US and thus the chapter argues that going forward, Africa needs to leverage its position on trade and economics, especially given that the US has fallen down the packing order as Africa’s main trade partner. Lastly, this chapter finds that as much as US trade policies towards Africa are multi-sectoral and aim to address a number of developmental concerns, they are short term, with the exception of AGOA, and seem to diffuse the concentration of policies, which hinders realistic target setting, and

achievement of targets. Thus, and an African policy framework towards the US needs to bring back focus on key economic concerns that require immediate development and enhancement.

Introduction

This chapter looks Africa-US relations with a focus on trade and economic partnerships, examining the US' involvement in Africa under the last four administrations of Bill Clinton (1993-2001), George Bush (2001-2009), Barack Obama (2009-2017), and Donald Trump (2017-2021). Their foreign policy postures towards the continent are examined from the point of view of trade in goods and services, investments, and development more broadly.

The objective is to attempt to pinpoint the major initiatives from the US under past administrations, the level of African involvement, as well as policy change and continuation over the years. The intention is to make recommendations for the Biden administration as it moves towards its second year in office.

Moreover, lessons learned from the way the US previously engaged with the continent and how it engages going forward need to be highlighted as a means of creating strategies that would boost productive engagements. The question is: what should be form and shape of the Africa-US relations from an African perspective? It is, however, noteworthy that the African continent has made considerable strides on its development path, with most of these following the formation of the African Union (AU) in 2002. The continent has become one of the hubs for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the world (receiving only \$40 billionⁱ in 2020), having sevenⁱⁱ (Rwanda, Ivory Coast, Papua New Guinea, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Mozambique, DRC) of the 13 fastest growing economies in the worldⁱⁱⁱ and having partial representation (South Africa) on the global top 10 emerging economies index^{iv}.

This partly culminated in Africa having increased its participation and engagements in international affairs on security, trade and economics, diplomacy, and human rights. While not at its full potential,

the continent has become a valued trading partner for great powers (US, France, Russia, and China) and other emerging powers (India, Turkey) to the extent that there is now what is referred to as the 'new scramble for Africa'^v. Africa's rapidly increasing relations with external players, owing to their interest in the continent in terms of trade, FDI, diplomacy, security, and aid, has highlighted the need for deeper and stronger engagements with African countries. However, much of US reach in global politics is being challenged on many fronts, by emerging powers such as China, Russia, and India.

When one examines Africa's external relations, the US involvement in the continent has declined significantly over the years, being outpaced by Europe (owing to its colonial ties in the continent) and the Asia Pacific (owing to their 'less conditionalities' attached to their loans and investments). US trade with Africa in 2020 amounted to \$45 billion^{vi}, while trade between China and Africa in the very same year was just below the \$200 billion^{vii}, leaving a \$150 billion or 300% gap between China and the US in the trade with Africa. Only the EU (as a group) has more trade with Africa than China, having had FDI stocks worth €221 billion in 2017 and accounting for over 30% of Africa's total trade in 2019^{viii}.

With the success of the 'China Model'^{ix} as a system of governance for non-democratic Africa, the nationalism and populist politics that have certainly taken centre stage, and the personalization of leadership and political power that is normalized by many heads of states in the continent, the US perhaps has a bigger and more important role to play in the continent than ever before.

In particular, the China Model is criticized for its natural resource-backed loans and the impact this has on the continent's future and its capacity for sustainable development. Hence, the focus is on China's economic interests in Africa, the role played by Chinese government and companies, and the economic and social impacts of such activities on the ground. China has less to do with the promotion of good governance practices and more to do with natural resource extraction in the continent, which would make sense why particular

heads of states in the continent may find such an approach to Africa 'less of an intervention' when compared to nations such as the US or groupings such as the EU. While long-term economic relations for the development of the continent are important, good governance practices are equally important if Africa is to be able to sustain its development goals, and hence the US needs to re-strategize its approach when engaging the continent.

The upcoming democracy summit may be one way of doing it, provided the US is willing to listen to what Africa wants. Africa-US relations should be mainly directed towards one major goal: mutually beneficial trade and economic partnership tasked with assisting in the facilitation of development in continent. It needs to be made clear this early in the chapter that the ideal type of development for the continent is the type of development emanating from and driven at the community levels by the small business owners and small-scale farmers to the low- and middle-income working class all the way to the large corporations in the continent. The reasoning behind this line of argument is that large amounts of literature show that multinational corporations dealing with African governments at the highest level are riddled with corruption and fraud, leaving the grassroots communities with nothing to gain and the economy stagnated.

Thus the chapter recommends that whatever proposals on trade and economic partnerships that come from discussions, debates and negotiations must include the African activity from the lowest level of production in society, and hence a bottom-up approach is necessary. The chapter is aligned with the school of thought that espouses development processes that people-centered rather than entirely state-centered or government-centered.

Moreover, it is necessary to consider that development surrounds all aspects of a society, and not just trade (although this chapter focuses only on trade). A key consideration in these respects is the bulging unemployed youth and working-class population in the continent, which has identified as a potential flashpoint in terms of insecurity in the coming years.

A key question to pose is: What are Africa's developmental needs and what is the role that the US can play pursuing developmental agendas to fruition? This calls for locating and conceptualizing Africa's developmental needs, the approach to development that would work for Africa and the areas of focus and priority in order to garner the desired developmental milestones. Moreover, the author also considers how Africa-US developmental partnerships are or can be different from the ones driven by other major external players in the continent. The other players include former colonial masters who pin their development trajectory on colonial ties including forms of reparations and atonement for past atrocities.

New players have emerged, largely pinning their developmental entreaties towards Africa on 'anti-Western', 'anti-US' postures, often driven by non-democratic states like China and Russia, and for the most part pursuing 'anti-democratic' stances and wooing Africa with less conditionalities in economic dealings and 'less involvement' in Africa's internal affairs. The reason for the comparison between the US and other players arises from the understanding that the continent has once again become a hotspot for foreign interest and investments, and thus we are looking at how development is understood from external powers' view. It is important to see how various players view the continent.

Against the background of the crowding in of external players in Africa, the US remains the largest economy in the world and has multitudes of engagements with Africa, whether multilaterally or bilaterally on issues of conflict prevention and other security concerns, health, diplomacy, as well as democracy and human rights. It is against this global power of the US that its trade and economic engagements with Africa should be considered. What therefore are the historical and even historic relations between Africa and the US in the trade and economic sphere?

Africa in US' foreign policy since 1993

The US' intervention in the continent dates back to the 16th century of African monarchs dominated by the transatlantic slave trade and

colonialism, through to the multipolar world order defined by World War I and World War II. US trade continued to the bipolar world order dominated by the Cold War where the US first established the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) in 1971, which was replaced by the US International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) in 2018^x. In 1976, the US became a member of the African Development Fund and of the African Development Bank (AfDB) in 1983^{xi} where it has a 6.5% stake.

The fall of communism and the period termed by Fukuyama as the ‘end of world history’^{xii} saw the remaking of a new world order, a US-led world order, and thus also propagating a shift of US national interests in Africa from proxies of the Cold War rivalry, towards a political and diplomatic trajectory^{xiii} with elements of economic development. African nations, could from this period claim sovereignty and become actors in international affairs.

While it is acknowledged that most assistance from the US under the Clinton administration was focused on democratization, in which trade between Africa and the US had conditionalities, such as open market economy, the adoption of democratic system, and the promotion of good governance practices, were attached. It was through the Clinton administration that the Africa Growth Opportunity Act^{xiv} (AGOA) was adopted in 2000 with the intention of fast-tracking development in the continent. In many cases, much of what was done by the Clinton administration was aimed at regime change because America’s national interests were much more aligned with ousting authoritarian despots and installing new democratically elected leaders, or ‘new generation leaders’. Very few US policies during the Clinton administration, with the exception of AGOA, were actually aimed at development at grassroots level, assisting small scale entrepreneurs and low-income working class improve their livelihoods.

As AGOA was the hallmark of the Clinton administration’s foreign policy towards Africa, this initiative was continued by the successive administration of George W. Bush. In 2007, AGOA exports to the US amounted to over \$50 billion – six times more than what it was in 2001,

the first full year of AGOA^{xv}. During the same period, US exports to sub-Saharan Africa have doubled to over \$14 billion.

In May 2007, Bush announced the Africa Financial Sector Initiative (AFSI), which was set create seven new investment funds that will mobilize more than \$1.6 billion through support of then OPIC. Up to Bush's last term in office, OPIC had supported several investment funds that are mobilizing roughly \$1.3 billion in private investment for the continent. In 2006, Bush launched the African Global Competitiveness Initiative (AGCI), to provide \$200 million over five years to support increased trade and investment in Africa^{xvi}. Four regional Global Competitiveness Hubs – Ghana and Senegal for West Africa, Botswana for Southern Africa and Kenya for East and Central Africa – were the primary implementers of AGCI.

In the same year, the US provided \$195 million – the first year of a five-year effort – to support the AU's Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Program (CAADP), meant to promote the critical role of agricultural development as a means to eliminate hunger, reduce poverty and food insecurity, increase trade, and promote wealth in Africa. Between 2001 and 2008, the US had committed \$1.6 billion to trade capacity building assistance to Africa, inclusive of \$505 million in 2007. This assistance was to help African governments to reduce barriers to trade and African businesses, workers, and farmers to benefit more fully from global trade.

On May 2008, Bush signed a \$698 million compact with Tanzania – the largest project in the Millennium Challenge Corporation's (MCC) history, which was set to benefit 4.8 million Tanzanians^{xvii}. Bush also secured international agreement on the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI)^{xviii}. This Initiative provides 100% debt relief from the major International Financial Institutions to the world's poorest, most heavily indebted countries.

It has reduced a total of \$42 billion in debt to date – \$34 billion of which was for 19 African countries. President Bush launched the Millennium Challenge Account as a new model to support governments that commit to rule justly, invest in people, and encourage economic

freedom. Up to 2008, the MCC has signed seven compacts with African countries \$2.4 billion to fight poverty through economic growth. Bush further worked with Congress to extend the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). Thanks in part to AGOA, over 98% of African exports to the US entered the US duty-free in 2007. Similar to the previous administration of Bill Clinton, some of George Bush's trade and investments engagements were laced with conditionalities – a tendency that has always been a part of US engagements with Africa.

When analyzed between the two presidencies of George Bush and Barack Obama, the first decade of AGOA shows a relatively strong growth in the value of products exported from Africa into the US. Exports from AGOA beneficiaries were \$53.8 billion in 2011, showing a 21.5% increase in exports from 2010 and a more than 500% increase from the initial \$8.15 billion in exports in 2001. Mineral fuels and crude oil drove this increase and accounted for 91.6% of exports in 2011. The share of total US imports, an amount totalling \$2.19 trillion in 2011, although still relatively small as an aggregate number, grew from 0.7% to 2.5% during the first 10-year period of AGOA.

In addition, during the last 20 years, more than 70% of sub-Saharan Africa's exports to the US have been duty free under AGOA or the Generalised System of Preference (GSP). The focal points of Obama's Africa policy were on democratic consolidation, economic growth and development, food security, conflict prevention and mitigation, transnational threats prevention^{xix}. These objectives indicated the broad and unique requirements of the African continent that need engagement. Moreover, the US has provided a substantial amount of aid to Africa in health programs. As noted above, Obama's Africa policy highlighted five policy priorities in the continent that include strengthening democratic institutions, fostering broad-based and sustainable economic growth, combating disease and improving public health, armed conflict mitigation, prevention, and resolution, as well as addressing transnational threats and challenges.

In 2013, Barack Obama launched the Power Africa initiative to double access to electricity in sub-Saharan Africa^{xx}. Power Africa's initial \$7

billion commitment had gathered more than \$20 billion in private sector commitments to invest in power generation and distribution across sub-Saharan Africa. The initiative's public sector partners, including the AfDB, the World Bank and Sweden had collectively committed an additional \$9 billion in support of Power Africa. On 14 July 2015, the Power Africa, along with the EU, announced a new partnership at the Financing for Development Conference, through which the EU committed to fund more than \$2.8 billion in sustainable energy activities across sub-Saharan Africa. Thus, the Obama administration had gathered nearly \$32 billion in commitments from public and private sector partners towards energy in sub-Saharan Africa^{xxi}.

Various other trade and economic departments and agencies, under the Power Africa Initiative's commitments, have increased and set complete their investment goals in the energy sector. OPIC (now FDC) had committed \$1.5 billion by 2015, the MCC committed nearly \$2 billion by the end of 2015, nearly doubling its original \$1 billion commitment to implement power compacts in Ghana and Malawi, and is developing energy sector programs in Benin, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Tanzania^{xxii}.

The US Agency for International Development (USAID), through its Development Credit Authority, has gathered \$171 million in private finance in support of power projects, with a pipeline of over \$300 million in new projects in the continent. The US Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) spent over \$17 million on 29 projects which were expected to add over 660 MW to the continent's power supply and leverage an anticipated \$3.8 billion in private and public financing, or over \$200 for every \$1 spent. USTDA plans to commit an additional \$10 million in project planning assistance to help early-stage clean energy projects achieve financial close and implementation^{xxiii}.

The US Africa Development Foundation (USADF), in partnership with USAID and GE Africa, exceeded their initial \$2 million commitment, awarding 28 grants for a total of \$2.8 million in grant support in Rounds one and two of the Power Africa Off-Grid Energy Challenge. Furthermore, the Obama administration hosted the US-

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Africa summit which was last held by former president Barack Obama and resulted in \$14 billion worth of trade commitments by American businesses and companies^{xxiv}.

Through Power Africa's Off-Grid Challenge and the US-Africa Clean Energy Finance initiative (ACEF), the Obama administration funded projects with an expectancy of yielding an additional 1 million new connections. Following the ACEF's launch in 2012 grant-based, funding of \$20 million, the Department of State, together with OPIC and USTDA supported 32 renewable energy projects across 10 African countries to expand access to clean energy and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions. The projects have the potential to generate more than 300 MW of new renewable power in sub-Saharan Africa and mobilize more than \$1.3 billion in project capital, an advantage ratio of \$65 for every \$1 in ACEF funding^{xxv}. In August 2014, the Department of State committed an additional \$10 million to ACEF, bringing the total support for the program to \$30 million. Two OPIC ACEF-supported projects — the Gigawatt Global 8.5 MW solar project in Rwanda and the PAMIGA micro-lending program for solar home systems — have received full debt financing.

While the election of Trump as the 45th president of the United States did not have a positive impact on US-Africa political and diplomatic relations^{xxvi}, it has had a somewhat promising economic policy that would benefit Africa, the first of which was the continuation of AGOA, which had underpinned US trade with Africa for the last two decades, to 2025^{xxvii}. Under the Trump administration, aggregate US-Africa bilateral trade through AGOA steady declined^{xxviii}. Total two-way goods trade with sub-Saharan Africa was almost \$33 billion in 2020, US goods exports were \$13.6 billion, down 14 percent from 2019, while US goods imports were \$19.2 billion, down 8.6 percent from 2019^{xxix}.

It was around the same time that Trump would announce a new initiative under AGOA, bring together fifteen different state departments and agencies to work together to invest in various sectors in the continent, the Prosper Africa Initiative^{xxx}. From 2019, USAID has, through Prosper Africa, supported African and US businesses

and investors in closing more than \$2.8 billion in new exports and investments, and built a deal pipeline of more than \$10 billion^{xxxii}.

What the Trump presidency was always about was its archaic politics of domestic illiberalism, populist nationalism^{xxxii} and international isolationism, shown by the retreat of the US from the international scene. America under the Trump administration was created as a divided, classified (the rise of white nationalist supremacy) and segregated nation, unlike the last three administrations, because democratic institutions (courts, media, and state departments) were under attack for performing their primary functions, to check and balance the power of the president and ensure the protection of rights of all citizens.

Moreover, Trump publicly sympathized with and supported political leaders who refused to obey and adhere to the rule of law set by their countries' constitutions. In this sense, he was no different to China and its preference to the non-democratic African heads of states. Trump's "America First" stance in the international scene of trade followed the logic of zero-sum game, which was seen as a threat to the current International Order that has the US at its centre^{xxxiii}. Alas, the time for wallowing in what the Trump administration did not do, what it could have done better on US-Africa relations is over, now the is the time to focus on what Africa wants, and needs, from the current US administration and on what fronts (economics and trade, security and human rights, bilateralism or multilateralism, and the African Continental Free Trade Area).

Democrats Joe Biden and Kamala Harris' comprehensive victory in the November 2020 US elections echoed a sense of hope to many in Africa in that the US once again has what the continent needs – competent leaders with the kind of experience that is required to turn the US back into a stable economy and give Africa what it wants trade policy consistency and mutually beneficial gains.

The Biden administration announced plans to revitalize the Prosper Africa initiative, as it works to "substantially increase" two-way trade and investment between the US and Africa, focusing on infrastructure, clean

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energy and healthcare. The White House stated that to get Prosper Africa 2.0 or Prosper Africa Build Together Campaign off the ground, it would request US\$80m from Congress in additional funding resources^{xxxiv}.

Along with the revamped Prosper Africa, Biden announced a continent-wide Africa Trade and Investment (ATI) program, which is said to support the operationalization of the African Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA) by lowering trade barriers and tariffs across AU member states that have ratified the trade area. This, with the broader Build Back Better Initiative, gives off sentiments of a revitalised interest in Africa coupled with attempts by the US to close the \$400 billion trade and investment gap with China.

The US-led G7 Build Back Better World (B3W)^{xxxv} initiative may be instrumental here. Since Africa lags on industrialization and infrastructure, but significantly endowed in youth human resource, the initiative with its primary task of meeting the \$40 trillion infrastructure needs of the global south with Africa a part of that can help achieve and complete the infrastructure and industrialization deficit.

Infrastructure development cannot be a short-term goal, and will thus require all hands on deck to cover the gap between Africa (and the global south) and the global north. The B3W notes under one of its guiding principles on strong strategic partnership, that “infrastructure created under the B3W will be developed through consultation with communities and assessing local needs as true partners, and establish a taskforce together as a G7, and with others, to coordinate, harmonize our efforts, and increase our impact and reach”. This signals strong intent to drive development from the bottom up, with active participation of all involved parties. How true the statement above is remains subject to post implementation analysis and like many initiatives before, the issue of overpromising and underperforming^{xxxvi} is a real one.

Africa must invite itself to the negotiating table on agreements concerning the continent

History teaches that whenever Africa and outside powers engage in trade and any other agreement that concerns the continent and its

issues, Africa was the subject of the negotiation and not part of and director of said negotiations. Similarly, the discourse covering engaging the partnerships between the Africa and the US always analyze these from the perspective that America imposes its vision for African development on Africa, without considering how African leaders and thinkers envision the future Africa. The continent has made significant progress in this by drafting policy frameworks on the kind of Africa it envisions for itself, like the Agenda 2063, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030, and the African Charter on Maritime Safety and Security and Development in Africa, which amongst others emphasizes the 2050 Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy (AIM) framework for maritime security.

This then opens up the potential for engagements between Africa and outside powers on Africa's development, to be conducted within the guiding principles of these frameworks. Moreover, Africa can make use of these engagements to further the goals set forth in the frameworks. In the same light, an African Policy towards the US can very likely display the potential for Africa to ownership of its development plans by offering opportunities for trade between the continent and the US, areas that require urgent attention and that the US is better suited to address without echoing elements of colonization (as would be the case with former colonial powers) or modern day conquest (as is currently the case with China's current pursuit of global influence).

In this sense, Africa removes itself from discourses of a new scramble for Africa and being on the menu for dominant and great powers to carve up and divide amongst themselves. Thus Africa joins the negotiating table on issues concerning the continent, whether this is multilaterally or bilaterally. This would preferably be multilaterally (WTO and the UN) since the continent exerts more influence and soft power as a single cohesive unit that it does as fragmented singular components that make up the whole.

Lastly, when considering the above initiatives and programs, one soon realizes that they are short term, with the exception of AGOA, and seem to diffuse the concentration of policies, which hinders realistic

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target setting, and achievement of targets. Thus an African policy framework towards the US needs to bring back focus on key economic concerns that require immediate development and enhancement. Policy change, and lack of continuation for major trade and investment initiatives, is perhaps one of the obstacles in Africa's development and US-Africa sustainable trade and investment relations. There has been cited uncertainty in that AGOA is set to expire in 2025, and there has not been emphasis on its renewal, which means African nations may be forced to negotiate for bilateral trade deals, as Kenya did with the Trump administration. However, once again, history has shown that when negotiating bilateral relations with external powers, African nations come up significantly short as they seem to lack negotiation muscle need to leverage their positions against bilateral partners. Instrumentalization of the AfCTA as an asset to African nations for both intra-Africa trade and trade with external partners has never been more important than it is now.

Hopefully, the Biden administration, unlike many of its predecessors, will be more attentive to what Africa wants and less focused on imposing its conditionalities to trade and investment. It should also be remembered that the US is monumentally behind China in trade and investment deals with Africa, thus the time for corporation is now. Africa, now with the operationalization of the AfCTA, has the possibility to leverage its trade and investment position against the US, as the superpower is trying hard to close the gap between trade and investment and that of China's, in Africa.

Conclusion

The US has had a number of initiatives, some of them major, towards trade and investment in Africa, and they gradually declined over the last 28 years, with peaks rises and falls in between. A major tendency from the five presidents that initiated these trade policies is that they all came with their signature policies and thus policy continuation was a seldom practice in the US' foreign policy on trade and investment in Africa. Similarly, many of the initiatives were short term, and thus

were not sustainable or would not be able sustain long-term growth. From Clinton to Biden, Africa has been on the US' sights when it came to economics and trade, and conditionalities were often part and parcel of the policies. A positive perhaps is the sight of many agencies focused on trade and investment in Africa, and the question of whether or not the Biden administration will and can ensure policy certainty and continuation is one on the minds of academics and policy makers from both Africa and the US alike. ◇

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Bilateral multilateral engagements: Reimagining US-Africa relations

SANUSHA NAIDU

Even before Joe Biden's presidency could be confirmed by the US Congress, the debates surrounding the renewal of the US' Africa policy were gaining in momentum. Given the chilly reception that Africa had to contend with under the Trump administration, the Biden-Harris government was seen as helping to turn the tide.

While the possibilities that a Biden government could represent a re-invigoration of the relationship, at the same time there were undercurrents in the discussion which hinted that the US-Africa policy could not continue as usual. This was because the US engagement with Africa had become indecisive prior to the Trump presidency where the traction of China and other emerging actors had become a strategic point of competition and rivalry.

Nevertheless, Biden's election as the 46th president of the United States of America was as much about bringing the US back into Africa as it was about Africa returning to the US' ambit of tactical influence. Such an interpretation was analyzed against the backdrop of how such a renewal of the US-Africa engagement will define the relationship, beyond just a reaction to China in Africa, but to also explore a policy relationship that underscored a sense of pragmatism based on an actual partnership of mutual interests.

In reflecting on what will in effect be a renewal of the US-Africa policy, the pertinent question is whether the Biden government will consider its own independent engagement with state and other political actors in Africa instead of assuming that the relationship has to be pointed towards offsetting China's largesse across the continent.

With the above context in mind, this commentary will examine to what extent the US-Africa relationship can be reimagined from

the bilateral to the multilateral engagement. So far, the optics of the narrative have been set in the perspective that the US needs to reprise its role in the continent. As far as this may be the immediate objective of the Biden administration, this commentary will argue that in consolidating its Africa policy, the bilateral lens offers one avenue to reinvigorate the relationship and steer it towards the multilateral setting, which will afford Washington a complementary layer to advance its African engagement.

Prioritizing the bilateral footprint

Most often in foreign policy analysis the bilateral engagement sets the scene for the way a country will shape its interactions at a broader regional level. In the case of the US, this has more meaning and potential in informing Washington's relations with regional economic communities, and more strategically with the African Union (AU).

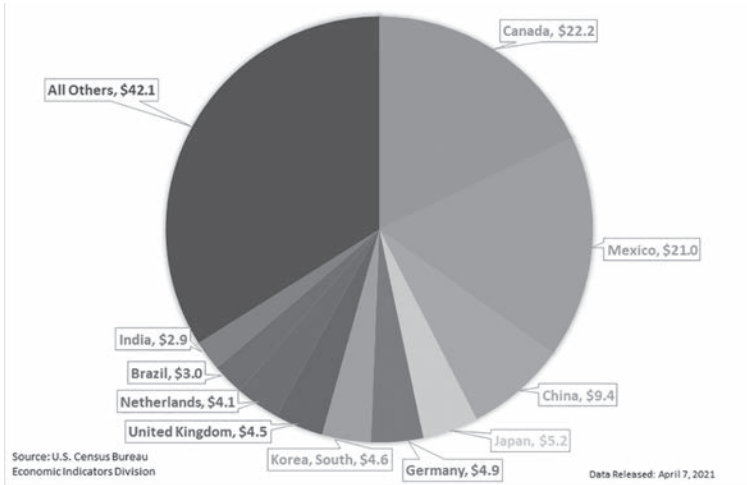
But the critical question is which countries are considered as having sufficient tactical significance to reorient Biden's Africa policy. This will depend on both strategic influence and economic trajectory.

Currently, from a purely economic point of view, it is important to disaggregate the data in terms of who are the US's major import partners and how much the US sells to Africa. Yet more than this it is also significant to understand where Africa fits in the US' global trading architecture. As the two figures below show, the continent has a negligible presence in the trade profile of Washington's global economic footprint.

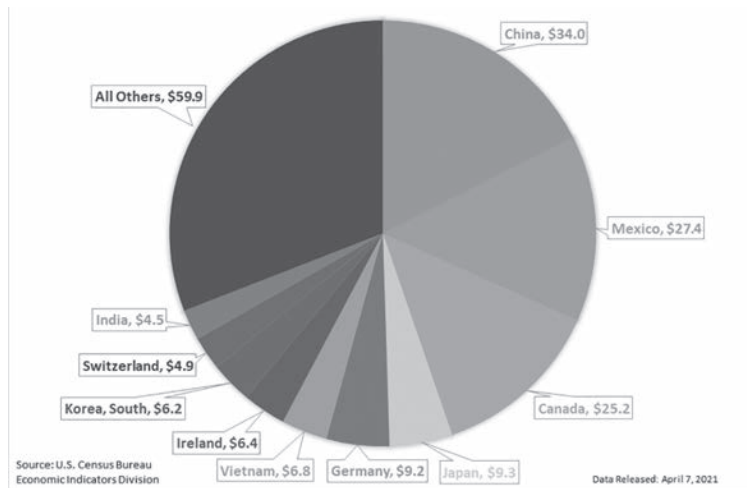
If we further explore US imports from the continent over a 20-year period (1997-2020), we see they have shifted from a peak in 2007/2008 to a recovery in 2011 and then a steep decline to levels well below US\$50 billion, as noted in the graph below. At the same time exports from the continent over the same period have seen a steady weakening. However, much of US reach in global politics is being challenged on many fronts, by emerging powers such as China, Russia, and India.

Reimagining US-Africa relations

US exports, top 10 countries of destination, Feb 2021
(\$US billions, not seasonally adjusted) ⁱ

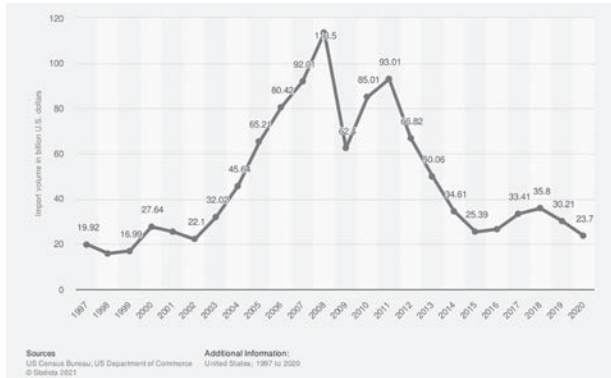


US imports, top 10 countries of origin, Feb 2021
(\$US billions, not seasonally adjusted) ⁱⁱ

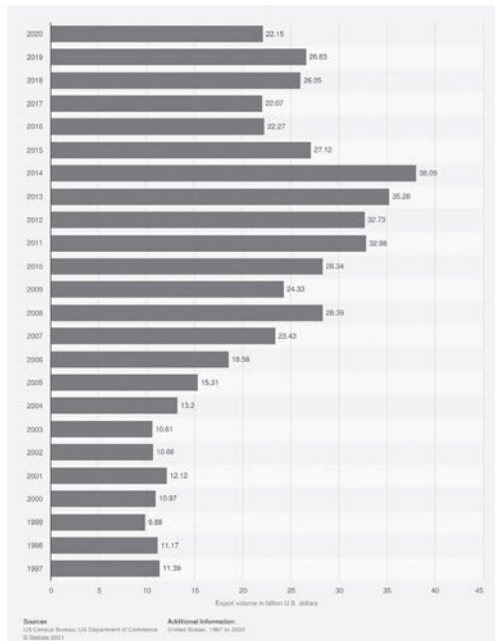


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Volume of US imports of trade goods from Africa, 1997-2020
(\$US billions) ⁱⁱⁱ



Volume of US exports of trade goods to Africa, 1997-2020
(\$US billions) ^{iv}



Clearly, the aggregate approach to the US' continental economic footprint seems to show a less convincing picture regarding how it will overshadow China's presence in Africa. Perhaps what is telling is that the bilateral engagement will provide more opportunities for the US in resetting its engagement with African stakeholders at the multilateral level. Thinking about localizing engagements towards anchor states in regional economic communities will be a good point of departure.

The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) will be the litmus test for this approach.

The debate around whether AGOA, which will expire in 2025, will remain in its current framework or become the foundation for a free trade agreement adopted by the US administration with Africa, highlights a key driver of the bilateral engagement. And this is not just in the context of the economic realm but also based on the domestic affairs that unfold following the 2024 US presidential election.

Assuming that Vice President Kamala Harris succeeds Biden as the first female black president, then the dynamics of AGOA and what defines its character and substance after 2025 will be determined by how the negotiations are advanced in this interim period of the Biden presidency. This is where a few beneficial options could be explored for both sides.

The first is that the Biden administration, with Harris leading the negotiations on AGOA, could set the pace for using its convening power to start the process of engaging with African anchor countries. These include South Africa, Rwanda, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Morocco, Egypt and Ethiopia. The AU Commission will initiate the strategic dialogue of cooperation and engagement of what a post-2025 AGOA format should incorporate as its focus in upping the ante on the economic front.

In this scenario, the directing of US foreign direct investment into regional infrastructure connectivity and transport projects will assist in strengthening regional economic integration programs with a view to addressing how this will complement the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA). Not only will this allow the engagement to be more consultative but having this interaction will allow the US to include a more collaborative engagement that takes into account

African agency and what actually constitutes the continent's trade and investment needs. It will also allow for a more inclusive engagement between state actors and the corporate stakeholders to develop a comprehensive partnership of cooperation.

Of course, if the domestic architecture in the US shifts towards a Republican Party-led White House, then the situation around AGOA will have to be considered in this context. Therefore, to this end, the window of opportunity needs to be seized upon now if the US-Africa relationship is to be recalibrated.

The second opportunity will be to look at how AGOA and the AfCFTA can be synchronized around the creation of regional value chains. Linking the investment around regional infrastructure corridors will open up the space for both the US and Africa to identify critical gateways that can support commercial activity around regional production spheres. The corridors, however, should not be seen as only serving the purpose of exporting to the US and global market, but should also be aimed at advancing the dynamics of regional markets that will serve the consumption patterns of Africa's growing population – in this way, boosting inter- and intra-state African trade.

The third opening for the engagement will be to include a multi-track diplomacy tag to the relationship, where AGOA will serve to strengthen centres of innovation and knowledge hubs that will advance critical engagement on, among others, pandemic preparedness, climate action and sustainable food production. This will not only enhance the agenda on future work but also provide a platform for people-to-people collaborations and exchanges that begin with a discussion on the post-COVID architecture of a global political economy.

The final area where AGOA can serve as a significant enabler is to recognize the power of city-to-city diplomatic engagements. This is becoming an emerging space for socio-economic development finance aligned to local economic development programs. It is an untapped market for both the US and African states to do well in shaping opportunities for young entrepreneurs, and crafting linkages with the Young African Leadership Initiative. It also represents a platform where harnessing the

potential of Africa's youth can become a critical resource in advancing digital and technological investments in respect of a green economy.

The bilateral engagement unlocks the potential for the way the US can manifest and rearrange its Africa policy. It offers pragmatic forms of engagement that are less rigid and geared towards looking at the continent outside of a macro lens.

But, indeed, the US's positioning on bilateral engagements has to dovetail with its multilateral expectations on the continent. In simple terms, this means that if Washington seeks to refocus its efforts in Africa towards a strategic engagement then it has to be oriented towards understanding that Africa has strategic autonomy and Washington should not view itself as the arbiter in the continent's external affairs.

Redefining the multilateral exchange

For starters, the multilateral space should not be interpreted as open season for Biden to use its arsenal based on its own form of wolf diplomacy in Africa. If this is the premise of a re-engaging policy towards Africa, then Washington is already beginning from a position of disadvantage. The primary test for Washington in its renewal with Africa at the multilateral level is to consolidate capacity and build resilience in its comparative advantage with the continent. And such an approach needs to go beyond rhetoric, congratulatory messages to an AU summit or using the continent for military bases and other vested interests in terms of security.

So what is needed?

The most basic issue that will serve to reinvigorate the US-Africa relationship is to enhance the engagement around peace, stability and development. To this end the first point of departure is to remember that democratic politics will prevail as long as Washington realizes that the winds of change for democracy reside with the citizens of Africa.

Second, the electoral landscape in Africa is complex and thus the US, like any other country, would do well to support the building of an institutional architecture that is based on African principles, norms and values rather than pronouncing for a particular brand of democracy.

Third, the notion of peace and stability, while intrinsic to the notion of electoral politics, has to be understood in the context of what are the root causes of intra-interstate conflicts and tensions. It will not be in the geostrategic interests of Washington to cast the material causes of conflict in Africa in the same light as it has done in the Middle East or on its own soil. Here peace, stability and development should not be viewed through a cursory framework. Rather they should be measured against the backdrop of the material transformation debate of the socio-economic politics of exclusion versus inclusion.

Finally, for this resilience to be truly reflected in the recalibration of the engagement with Africa then it must also be transmuted into the way Washington embraces and prioritizes the African voice and action in the global governance agenda aimed at reshaping the power dynamics of the multilateral system. It would be futile to talk about re-energizing the engagement at the continental multilateral level while still enabling global conditions that hamper the continent's integration into the political and economic affairs of the international system.

Conclusion

The biggest difficulty facing Washington in redefining its relationship with Africa, from a strategic autonomy perspective, is China. It seems that the Biden presidency, like previous administrations, is having a hard time trying not to chase the Dragon's tail across the continent. By framing the narrative in this parochial way, Washington is enabling and strengthening China's Africa policy instead of stabilizing its own identity on the continent.

It is important for Washington to consider that China, like any other external actor, is also undergoing its own metamorphosis in its engagement with Africa. While this may be construed as an opening by Washington, it would be wiser for the Biden presidency to look at this more from the basis of deepening its capacity and resilience based on the 'Africa that we the people want' rather than the wants and interests of political and economic elites.

Seemingly, Washington's traction in Africa lies with the way the US administration pursues a mature and pragmatic engagement with

continental state and non-state actors. Trying to circumvent Africa relations with other actors will be trivial. Redefining the bilateral and multilateral contours of the engagement with Africa offers Washington a more palpable roadmap for reimagining its African policy than trying to play catch-up with adversaries, and pushing back competitors. ◇

i. <https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/statistics/graphs/TopPartners.html#imports>

ii. <https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/statistics/graphs/TopPartners.html#imports>

iii. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/187734/volume-of-us-imports-of-trade-goods-from-africa-since-1997/>

iv. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/186573/volume-of-us-exports-of-trade-goods-to-africa-since-1997/>

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Following the transition from the Republican administration of Donald Trump to the presidency of Democrat Joe Biden, this book provides multiple perspectives on an African policy framework towards the United States.

It is a product of conversations, discussions and debates that took shape from early 2020 as the election season leading to presidential, gubernatorial, and senatorial elections rose in prominence in the US.

The initial discussions culminated in the publication of thought leadership articles dubbed “Biden and Africa: Continuity or Change?”, published in July 2021 by an imprint of Good Governance Africa, the *Africa in Fact* magazine. In this volume, the authors expand and expound on their initial thoughts to offer extended thoughts on US-Africa relations that should be considered by policymakers, intellectuals, government officials and civil society actors. The connecting thread throughout the book is: how should Africa approach the US during the tenure of the Joe Biden administration?

The book provides African perspectives on the US in a cascading manner from the broad and general to the topical and specific, from new ways of thinking about the US by Africans, to African agency as a panacea to the paucity of peace and security on the continent, homosexuality and related human rights, the role of the US in African governance to economics, trade, and investment.