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**Assessing US-Africa Strategies: The Cases of the Obama and the
Trump Administrations**

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Dedication

First and foremost, we would like to thank God Almighty for granting us the health, strength, and opportunity to arrive at this moment. We pray that his grace will always be upon us.

This dissertation is dedicated to each and every individual who have supported us and believed in us throughout this challenging endeavor.

Dear parents! Your unwavering encouragement and belief in our abilities have been the driving force behind our success.

Thank you for standing by us and being a constant source of motivation.

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Abstract

This study provides an account of the general US foreign policy, along with an outline of its overall strategy towards Africa; including its economic, humanistic and national security aspects. It also compares US-Africa relations under both the Obama and Trump Administrations in order to deduce whether the policy was affected by administrative change or continued to be the same. Furthermore, the study looks at internal developments as well as new emerging foreign powers in the studied period and examines how this affects US foreign policy in the region. This study finds that there is an observable pattern of cross-administration continuity concerning the United States' foreign policy towards Africa.

المخلص

تقدم هذه المذكرة سرداً للسياسة الخارجية العامة للولايات المتحدة، إلى جانب نظرة شاملة لاستراتيجيتها تجاه إفريقيا، بما في ذلك الجوانب الاقتصادية والإنسانية والأمنية. تقوم هذه الدراسة أيضاً بمقارنة وتقييم العلاقات بين الولايات المتحدة وإفريقيا في ظل إدارتي أوباما وترامب لاستنتاج ما إذا كانت السياسات بشكل عام قد تأثرت بالتغيرات على رأس الإدارة الأمريكية أم أنها استمرت على حالها. بالإضافة إلى كل ذلك، تستعرض هذه المذكرة التطورات الداخلية وكذلك القوى الأجنبية الجديدة الناشئة في الفترة المدروسة وتحلل كيفية تأثير ذلك على السياسة الخارجية الأمريكية في المنطقة. توصلت هذه الدراسة إلى وجود نمط ملحوظ لاستمرارية التواصل بين الإدارات فيما يتعلق بسياسة الولايات المتحدة الخارجية تجاه إفريقيا.

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List of Abbreviations

ACOTA	Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance Program
ACRI	Africa Crisis Responsibility Initiative
AFRICOM	United States Africa Command
AGOA	African Growth and Opportunity Act
AMISOM	African Union Mission to Somalia
APRRP	African Peacekeeping Rapid Response Partnership
CENTCOM	Central Command
CJTF-HOA	Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa
EAC	East African Community
EACTI	East Africa Counterterrorism Initiative
EUCOM	European Command
FTF	Feed the Future Initiative
GPOI	Global Peace Operations Initiative
ISR	Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSPD	National Security Presidential Directive
NSS	National Security Strategy
PACOM	Pacific Command
PDD	Presidential Decision Directive
PEPFAR	President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
PMCs	Private Military Companies
PREACT	Partnership for Regional East Africa Counterterrorism
TSCTI	Trans-Sahara Counter Terrorism Initiative

UNITA	National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
UNITAF	Unified Task Force
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
US DFC	International Development Finance Corporation
W-GDP	Women's Global Development and Prosperity
WHO	World Health Organization
YALI	Young African Leaders Initiative

General Introduction

The twentieth century witnessed significant and extensive transformations that greatly impacted global political ideologies and disrupted the established equilibrium of power in international affairs. The devastating conclusion of World War I, coupled with rapid technological progress, accelerated the recognition that the existing political system was inadequate to address the challenges of a new era in human history. Consequently, a widespread call for a fresh global order emerged, emphasizing the imperative for all nations to collaboratively devise and implement solutions to comprehend and tackle global issues that surpass the capabilities of individual nation-states.

Following the American Revolution, the United States recognized the necessity of altering its non-interventionist foreign policy to fulfill its aspirations of attaining global power and influence. This transformation was reflected in the country's adoption of a more idealistic approach to international relations, supplanting previous realist perspectives. The United States, along with other nations worldwide, now aimed for a unified future centered around the promotion of democratic values, cooperation, and peace, with the United States assuming a supervisory role. Additionally, specific objectives, positions, and themes that could not be accommodated within the framework of the United States' uniform foreign policy were articulated through "Presidential Doctrines," implemented by incumbent presidents who possessed the authority to deviate from the newly adopted approach of the United States.

The effectiveness and adaptability of US foreign policy have long been topics of debate and criticism, particularly in relation to its ability to address evolving domestic and international circumstances. Among the various regions that have garnered attention and raised questions is Africa, which scholars widely agree has experienced significant neglect

over the years. The recent administrations, specifically those of Obama and Trump, offer a recent track record that can contribute to forming an assessment of the situation in the region.

The significance of this research lies within the fact that foreign policy is an important aspect of international relations. Therefore, it is extremely important to go for a foreign policy that is both a viable and a flexible manual for action that defines international relations in clear-cut terms for the benefit of all. The study also aims at providing academia with materials on a significantly important area of expertise.

This research delves deep into the mechanisms of the US foreign policy towards Africa and the way it was established. It also provides an understanding on the exact aspects it was based upon. Moreover, it aims at offering an outline of the overall policy of both the Obama and Trump administrations with an examination of how those aspects are manifested in their approach. In the same vein, this study investigates whether the overall approach was affected by this administrative change or continued to be the same. It also examines the effects of the internal developments and the emergence of foreign powers on the US-Africa relations in the region.

This research addresses several aspects related to the US-Africa strategies in light of the rapid changes that continue to take place in world affairs. It attempts to provide answers to the following questions: to what extent did the aspects of the US foreign policy manifest themselves in US-Africa relations? How did the US approach to Africa evolve during the Obama and the Trump administrations? What impact did the policies of both administrations have on the Region? How did the internal developments and the emergence of foreign powers affect US-Africa strategies? How did the Obama and Trump administrations perceive both internal and external factors?

In regards to the historical overview about the US-Africa relations, Herman J. Cohen's book titled *US Policy toward Africa: Eight Decades of Realpolitik* presents a

thorough investigative work. By Drawing on both documentary records and years of field experience, Herman Cohen provides a unique, comprehensive overview and interpretation of nearly 80 years of US policy towards Africa. More importantly, by tracking how these policies have evolved in successive governments since 1942 till 2019, Cohen sheds light on debates at the highest levels of government and shows how policy towards Africa has been influenced over the years by the United States and foreign powers' relations. It is important to mention that his detailed narrative revealed not only that ideologies but also personalities have a significant role in the formulation and implementation of US foreign policy.

Through foreign policy agents, Stephen M. Magu in his book titled *Great Powers and US Foreign Policy towards Africa* examines the history of US-Africa relations together with their engagements in the continent. It discusses various the European and the BRICS countries' foreign policy inclinations and approaches toward the region.

Adebayo Oyejide's *The United States' Foreign Policy in Africa in the 21st Century: Issues and Perspectives* also provides insights on the dynamic forces that influenced the US approach towards Africa, along with some major issues that defines this relationship, including economic development, counter terrorism, security apparatus, diplomatic partnership, conflict resolution, democratization and good governance. Furthermore, on the topic of security aspects in relation to Africa, the book edited by Terry Buss, Joseph Adjaye, Donald Goldstein, and Louis Picard and titled *African Security and the African Command: Viewpoints on the US Role in Africa* proves to be a valuable source.

As for the Obama administration and its approach to African relations, the paper titled "U.S. Strategy toward Sub-Saharan Africa" issued by the White House provides the foremost account in this concern. Additionally, Nicolas van de Walle and George Klay Kieh's *Obama and the World: New Directions in US Foreign Policy* provides an overall evaluation of Obama's approach to Africa. In the same regard, Peter J. Schraeder's chapter in his book

called *African Engagements: Africa Negotiating an Emerging Multipolar World* gives an in-depth analysis of the historical context surrounding Obama administration's engagement in Africa.

Within the same scope, the contribution of Martin S. Indyk, Kenneth G. Lieberthal, and Michael E. O'Hanlon to the chapter in the book titled *Bending History: Barack Obama's Foreign Policy* presents beneficial source of information about both the regional developments and foreign involvement that happened during the latter's presidency along with the way he approached such changes; especially, the situation of the Arab awakening as well as some major political and economic shifts in the continent.

As for the Trump administration, there is a significant lack of official documents regarding policy geared towards Africa. However, an official document came to provide a clear picture on Trump's foreign policy. The reference is the speech delivered by John R. Bolton at the Heritage Foundation. It is also worth mentioning that the work of Nicholas Westcott titled *The Trump Administration's Africa Policy* that provides insightful information on the way Trump perceived Africa compared to how his administration approached the continent. It is almost the same way as the previous administrations' perception. The book also examines some slight changes considering the new strategy that have roots in his so-called "America First" foreign policy. As for the security aspect, Christopher Griffin's article titled "Trump and the Al Qaeda and ISIS Networks in Africa" provides beneficial insights about US military engagements during that period.

The investigative nature of the topic implies that it would be conducted through both the historical and the comparative methods. First, it positions the theme in its adequate historical framework. The goal is providing an understanding to the history of the US foreign policy as well as exploring how their relations with Africa are rooted in it. Within this

methodological framework, the comparative method is used to approach both the Obama and Trump administrations as specific case studies in order to highlight their similarities, differences and how they perceived some internal and external agents. To provide the groundings through which the recent research evolves, it is essential to analyze US governmental documents along with a collection of books, articles, and journals in order to create a much broader perspective of the topic.

This work is divided into five major parts, a general introduction, three main chapters, and a general conclusion. The first chapter titled “US-Africa Foreign Policy: A Historical Background” addresses a general account with a full understanding of the US foreign policy and an outline of its overall strategy towards Africa; including its economic, humanistic, and national security aspects. The second chapter titled “The Obama Administration’s Africa Strategy” explores and examine if the US-Africa foreign policy continued to be the same or if it was updated with the administrative change, regional developments or emergence of foreign powers. The third and final chapter titled “The Trump Administration’s Africa Strategy” discusses the same elements of the previous chapter, under the authority of the Trump administration.

Chapter One: US-Africa Foreign Policy: A Historical Background

Introduction

This chapter explores the influence of international relations theories on the formulation of US foreign policy, specifically, the impact of realism, liberalism, and constructivism, on shaping the principles, objectives, and outcomes of US engagement with other nations.

Against this theoretical backdrop, this chapter provide a brief historical background of US foreign policy towards Africa in order to showcase the aforementioned theoretical conceptualization in action. The relationship between the United States and the African continent specifically has been shaped by historical factors such as colonialism, the Cold War, and economic interests. As a result, US engagement with Africa has evolved over time, encompassing periods of neglect, sporadic involvement, and recent efforts to deepen ties in areas including trade, security cooperation, and development assistance.

By analyzing the influence of international relations theories on US foreign policy towards Africa, this chapter aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors that have shaped US-Africa relations. It examines the historical context, key principles, and objectives underlying US foreign policy towards Africa, and explores the opportunities seized, challenges confronted, and the overall impact of US presidential approaches on the relationship between the United States and Africa.

1. US Foreign Policy from an IR Perspective

For decades, political scientists have attempted to give a properly comprehensive explanation of what foreign policy is and what it entails. However, the task has proved to be extremely arduous due to the complex nature of the topic. Scholars interested in explaining foreign policy recognized the importance of theory-based analysis. This is due to the fact that theories provide the necessary structure to understand and analyze the complexity of lived

reality by aiding in the selection of what to focus on and what to ignore. While the goal of achieving an overarching theory of foreign relations continues to elude scholars, an acceptable understanding has already been reached by looking at both the internal and external realities of nation states, and thus constructing theories that shift in focus between the two (Schmidt 7-8).

According to Schmidt, the aforementioned theories are often constructed based on the framework proposed by political scientist James N. Rosenau, who identified five elements that have a potential influence on a state's foreign policy, namely: the external environment of the international system, the domestic societal environment of a nation state, the governmental structure that specifies the policy-making process, the bureaucratic roles occupied by the individual policy-makers, and the personal characteristics and idiosyncrasies of individual foreign policy officials and government elites (8). Looking at Rosenau's framework, we can organize its elements into two categories: those accounting for international relations theories, and those accounting for domestic politics theories, with an emphasis on the character and behavior of political actors. In the case of the United States, the usage of this set of elements has yielded three significant theories that prove to have an influence on American foreign policy-making.

The most circulated theory in terms of systemic, international theories is that of realism, which suggests that countries act in their own self-interest and try to gain power and security in a world where there is no higher authority to ensure peace. In this state of anarchy, it is important not only to have a substantial amount of power, but also to make sure that no other state sharply shifts the balance of power in its favor. Realism later bred into different strands as part of its metamorphosis to keep up with international developments. In their quest of estimating how much power is enough to maintain their survival, states may choose any number of realist theories. For example, Defensive Realism emphasizes the importance

of maintaining a strong defense capability in order to deter potential aggressors, as well as the abandonment of pursuing absolute power since the international system often punishes those who attempt it. Offensive Realism, on the other hand, argues that states should actively seek to expand their power, and seek hegemony if possible, for the reason that overwhelming power is the best way to ensure one's survival (Mearsheimer 77-78).

Another theory of international relations is Constructivism, which suggests that international relations are a social construct devised by man. A notion denoting that phenomena pertaining to the collective subject of international relations may be built on the basic material of human nature, but they take specific historical, cultural, and political forms that are a product of human interaction in a social world. Thus, Constructivism focuses on the role of human consciousness, ideas, and social practices in shaping the behavior of individuals and groups in the political world, arguing that countries and other actors do not act solely based on material interests such as power and wealth, but are also influenced by their beliefs and cultural norms (Fiekre 189). Constructivism also highlights the importance of identity in international politics, a notion that refers to the way people see themselves and others. The academic debate around identity politics has grown in recent years due to the difficulty present when attempting to explain it using traditional theories such as realism and liberalism. After events like World War II and the Cold War, identity has become more complex and challenging to understand. Such events have produced a kind of parallel rhetoric that draws a clear divide between personal ideology and national objectives (Nguyen 24).

As for internal, domestic theories, Nguyen reports that liberalism proves to be the most prevalent in American politics. It believes that promoting democracy and free-market economies is crucial for ensuring peace and security around the world. According to this theory, non-liberal regimes are more likely to be hostile and to seek military capabilities, while liberal democracies are generally more peaceful and focused on economic prosperity.

For this reason, Liberal theory emphasizes the importance of international institutions and free trade as key elements of US foreign policy. These institutions and practices can help promote cooperation among nations and strengthen US interests while contributing to the construction of a peaceful world order. Moreover, there are different opinions within the Liberal camp on how to best extend freedom and democracy globally. Some believe in promoting democracy through foreign aid and diplomacy, while others support military intervention and regime change (23).

Thus, taking note of the aforementioned dominant political theories in IR theory, we can detect their effect on the making of the basic “pillars” of the United States’ foreign policy, which can serve to portray a better picture of the country’s strategic priorities and objectives on the global stage. The US Department of States identifies three pillars that fall under a realist approach to policy making. First, is the pillar of national security, which seeks to protect the country and its citizens from threats like terrorism, nuclear proliferation, cyber-attacks, as well as other national security concerns. Second, is the use of military force, where the United States leverages its powerful military to protect its interests, support its allies, and promote its values and principles. Third and last, is the pillar of economic promotion, which involves encouraging trade, investment, and access to markets for American businesses, both at home and abroad.

Furthermore, the US Department of State identifies two additional pillars that reflect the United States’ liberal tradition. The first of which lends itself to showcasing the importance of international cooperation to address global challenges like climate change, disease, and poverty, while the second pillar focuses on promoting regional stability and preventing conflicts. This later involved working with allies and partners in different regions of the world for the end goal of endorsing peace and security through diplomacy, economic development, and humanitarian assistance.

Even though these five pillars reflect the core objectives of US foreign policy, they are not exhaustive, and the priorities of the country may shift depending on the administration in power and the global context existing in a specific time period.

2. Historical Background

Throughout history, the relationship between Africa and the rest of the world has been shaped by significant global changes, such as colonization, the Cold War, and democratization. These changes had a hand in dictating the policies of major powers towards African nations, leading to a complex and often fraught relationship between the two sides. At different times, Africa had been used for various geopolitical purposes, depending on the global, strategic and military climate. This dictated a significant impact on the lives and livelihoods of people living on the continent, as well as on the broader political and economic landscape (Morgan 45).

The earliest contact between Africa and outsider world can be traced back to the beginnings of the transatlantic slave trade, which led to millions of Africans being forcibly taken to the Americas as slaves. This was followed by the colonial period, during which European powers carved up large swaths of the African continent in their race to achieve economic and political dominance, thus elevating their power and influence in the world. The destruction of African kingdoms and established political governments at the time resulted in Africa being perceived as nothing more than a colony, an extension, of their colonial fathers. A fact that understandably hindered independent foreign relations that represented the continent's genuine needs and goals on the world stage. The status quo of colonial authority would continue to prevail in Africa up until the years after the Second World War, when nationalist movements of independence effectively put an end to colonialism in the African region (Schraeder 2). An additional point that is worth mentioning is that for all of Europe's grand plans of expansion, the United States had little to no part in it. In Fact, when the

country was invited to the Berlin conference of 1884–85, which sought to divide Africa among European nations, it actively chose not to have colonies (Magu 56).

To examine the roots of US-Africa foreign policy, we would have to go back prior to 1937. A time when the United States planned its foreign policy towards Africa through the Division of European Affairs located under the jurisdiction of its Department of State and not through an “African division”. This was done to ensure that the policies issued by the Department of State aligned with the priorities, needs, and interests of the colonial powers, who happened to be strong US Allies. However, during World War II, Africa became strategically important as a port for military supplies and trade; and thus, the responsibility for Africa was divided between the Near East Division and the European Division at the Department of State, with most of the substantive responsibilities remaining with the European Division. This further reflected the importance of coordinating African policy with the interests of European colonialists. It was not until 1949 that a new Bureau for Near Eastern, South Asian, and African Affairs was created, headed by an Assistant Secretary of State. The Office of African Affairs was then created within this new bureau, which marked the beginning of a separate US policy towards the African continent (Divon and Derman 108).

Africa’s relationship with the United States has undergone significant changes tied directly in relation with developments occurring inside and outside Africa. Scholars observing these developments were then able to divide the progression of events occurring from the start of the Cold War to recent times into three “phases” characterized by major shifts in US policy behavior towards Africa: the first phase describes events happening during the Cold War, the Second, describes events during “a transitional period” between 1990-1998, and the last phase is concerned with events occurring in the years since 1998 (Tieku).

2.1. Foreign Policy during the Cold War

Schraeder reports that, during the 1950s, the desire for independence among African nations caused European colonialism to decline. As a result, two politicians with widely diverging political views suggested reevaluating US foreign policy toward Africa. The first of whom was then Vice President Richard M. Nixon, who, after his 22-day tour of the continent in 1957, pointed out that many Americans considered Africa a remote and mysterious place that was “the special province of big game hunters, explorers, and motion picture makers.” Nixon understood the importance of Africa’s emergence on the global stage, particularly within the context of the East-West struggle, and he consequently proposed that President Dwight D. Eisenhower establish a separate Bureau of African Affairs within the State Department. A proposition that was realized a year later in 1958 (1).

The second person of note to speak on the state of Africa was then Senator John F. Kennedy, who spoke out in the same year criticizing Washington’s inability to address the issue of colonialism and the rise of nationalism in Africa. He warned that new African nations would now have to choose between the West or the East, meaning either the United States or the Soviet Union, for help and guidance. Moreover, Kennedy did not stop at criticism and went on to suggest a bold and imaginative program for African development aimed to prevent the rise of Soviet influence in the continent at the expense of US prominence. His project, The Peace Corps, which reached fruition in 1961, sought to send young Americans to African countries in order to work on development projects.

In addition to economic endeavors, the Kennedy administration also provided military aid and training to various pro-Western regimes in Africa as part of its efforts to counter Soviet sway. One of these regimes was that of Colonel Joseph Mobutu, president of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, who had seized power in a coup d’état in 1965. The US viewed Mobutu as a bulwark against communism in Africa, and therefore provided him with

significant military aid and training. This support allowed Mobutu to consolidate his power and maintain control over the country for over three decades, a time during which he established a highly centralized and authoritarian regime. The US continued to support Mobutu even as his regime became increasingly repressive and corrupt, plagued with allegations of human rights abuses and election fraud (Horvitz and Catherwood 305).

Another country that inspired significant US attention was South Africa. In the early 1980s, the United States government began grappling with the issue of Apartheid in South Africa. President Ronald Reagan, who was newly elected in 1980, did not believe that imposing strict economic sanctions was the best approach. When asked about Apartheid in a 1981 interview with Walter Cronkite, Reagan framed it as a part of a larger discussion about human rights and the fight against communism. He held the belief that there was progress being made in South Africa, even though it was happening at a slow and steady pace, reminding the public of “how many people, black and white, in South Africa are trying to remove Apartheid and the steps that they’ve taken and the gains that they’ve made.” After acknowledging the progress made in South Africa, Reagan went on to reaffirm his support for the government in power, saying, “can we abandon a country that has stood beside us in every war we’ve ever fought, a country that strategically is essential to the free world in its production of minerals we all must have...?” (Peters and Woolley).

In other words, although Reagan recognized that ending oppressive systems like Apartheid was important, he clearly insinuates that it is not a matter of priority as long as countries like South Africa were opposed to communism, and that the United States would still be supportive and friendly with the likes of these governments under such circumstances.

Despite his implications toward South Africa and Apartheid. The Reagan administration adopted a policy known as “Constructive Engagement” during the first half of the 1980s. This policy encompassed various approaches such as diplomatic engagement,

promotion of human rights and democracy, education and cultural exchange, and international cooperation. Its ultimate aim was to pressure the South African government into making significant reforms while engaging in constructive dialogue. It is important to note that the aim of Constructive Engagement was not to preserve the white-dominated status quo in South Africa but rather to bring about genuine change. Its designers recognized that US strategic and economic interests could not be fully realized as long as Apartheid persisted (Thomson 112).

In 1980, Chester Crocker, who was later nominated as Assistant secretary of State, outlined his vision for Constructive Engagement. He stressed that the fundamental goal of this policy was to establish a South African society that could enjoy a full and friendly relationship with the United States without any political damage or embarrassment. In contrast to previous US policies towards South Africa, Crocker believed that the West could neither embrace the country's current form nor walk away from the issue. He thought that past approaches had been ineffective and insufficient, resulting in neglect of the region, which ultimately led to the Cuban intervention in Angola (325, 331). That is to say, the goal of Constructive Engagement was creating a positive and proactive approach that would yield significant results.

These efforts were interrupted, however, in the mid-1980s by an increase in unrest in South Africa's townships. Suddenly, it became comparably harder for the United States to continue with its Constructive Engagement policy. The situation continued to worsen until 1986 when the US Congress decided to take action. It passed a package of economic sanctions, despite a presidential veto, to put pressure on the South African government to change its policies (Meriwether 385). The passage of sanctions marked a significant shift in US policy towards South Africa and reflected a growing recognition of the negative impact of Apartheid on both human rights and US strategic and economic interests. The imposition of

sanctions ultimately contributed to the end of Apartheid and helped pave the way for a democratic South Africa.

The prescriptions offered by Nixon and Kennedy were aimed towards elevating Africa to a position of priority to be in step with the changing international realities surrounding it. Despite the realization of some significant changes brought about thanks to the two politicians' remarks, Africanists, both politicians and academics, continued to express a sentiment of pessimism to the extent that they considered the level of attention and understanding America was exercising when formulating and implementing its policies as generally lacking. A usual outcome of such a volatile approach is that policy would become driven by events, instead of taking the forefront in shaping them, which is considered to be the better, more effective approach to foreign policy. In fact, such a state of affairs might even prove to be dangerous since poor understanding on the part of policy makers has the tendency to produce failed policies. Thus, it is important for the United States to formulate policies that are proactive rather than reactive in its dealing with Africa (Schraeder 2).

2.2. A Transitional Period in Foreign Relations

The end of the Cold War ushered in a new era in US-Africa foreign policy, marked by major shifts in the distribution of power on the world stage. In this new frame of events, Cold War dynamics were no longer the driving force behind the United States' engagement overseas, and in the case of the African continent, it proved to be the opposite of good news. For Africa, the end of the East-West struggle marked a period of steady decline in relevance in the United States' list of foreign priorities, most likely as a result of the vacuum created by the collapse of the Soviet Union (Hentz 25). Looking at the events occurring at the tail end of the Cold War, we can identify two very different transitional Stages in the United States' policy towards Africa before the country opted for a middle ground solution embodied in the final phase.

2.2.1. A New World Order

The first transitional period came as a result of general American optimism following the collapse of the Soviets Union. An event that sparked the United States' desire to build a "New World Order", as envisioned by President George H. W. Bush (Ploch 31). In this period, the Bush and Clinton administrations pursued similar strategies of positive, pro-active engagement in the African continent, especially on the front of conflict management: The United States and its allies played a big role in ending several clashes in the region, an example of which was the 1988 mediation of the Angolan civil war (Rothchild 120, 145).

US interventions in Africa were not all a success, however, as evident by the situation in Somalia from 1992-1993. In this instance, the Bush administration deployed American troops to Somalia under the US-led Unified Task Force (UNITAF) with the aim of protecting humanitarian convoys and distribution centers throughout the country (Ploch 31). As the conflict unfolded, this decision would prove to be the most expensive humanitarian operation ever undertaken by the United States (Hentz 31).

The case of the Somalia intervention was later inherited by President Clinton in 1993. By this time, there were approximately 25, 400 American troops in Somalia (Hesse 327). Despite the large number of the United States' force, as well as the existence of plentiful resources, the operation ended in disaster in October 1993 when 18 US soldiers were killed and 73 others were wounded in Mogadishu during the infamous "Black Hawk Down" incident (Hentz 31). The images of Somalis dragging the dead bodies of American soldiers through the streets were broadcasted by news networks to a horrified American public, sparking public outrage. Feeling the immense pressure of the American people, Clinton announced the end of direct involvement in Somalia only 3 days later (Hesse 328).

2.2.2 Retreat from Africa

The second phase came directly as a result of the United States' disastrous failure in Somalia. By 1994, military interventions in far-flung, strategically insignificant African countries seemed very much like a situation the US government wished to avoid. Hence, even after the United States was repeatedly informed about the deteriorating situation in Rwanda, it remained utterly inactive (Silver 44). This decision came in tandem with a time in which the Clinton administration was in the process of seriously reconsidering its foreign policy objectives towards Africa (Silver 1).

Deliberation about the new policy culminated in Clinton issuing Presidential Decision Directive 25 (PDD 25) which sought to strictly limit future UN missions, and especially US participation in them (Power). The directive saw its first application in Rwanda where the formation of a peacekeeping force was stopped by a US vote in the UN Security Council, thus blocking the operation's financing (Hesse 328). This was not all; the US government refused to even acknowledge the word "genocide" for fear that it would compel it to action under the 1948 Genocide Convention (Hentz 32). Such actions made it clear to both Africa and the world that America will no longer involve itself in each and every instance of peacekeeping in the continent.

2.2.3 A Middle Ground

The third phase of the post-Cold War US-Africa relations began with President Clinton's visit to Africa in March of 1998, the first of its kind by an American president since Jimmy Carter. In a sense, this visit represented the peak of the United States government's lengthy process of elaborating its newly revised Africa policy. The presidential tour sought to convey four distinct themes as part of its overall message: support for the African renaissance; conflict resolution; trade, investment and development; and environmental efforts. The driving push for the US new foreign policy could be traced back to the "African

solutions to African problems” rhetoric as coined by South African politicians and thinkers, which had played a crucial role in shaping formative debates (Alden 355, 371). It could be said that the steps taken by President Clinton at this time represented the United States’ recognition that it cannot afford complete disengagement from Africa.

2.3. Post 9/11 Foreign Policy

Before the tragic events of September 11, 2001, Africa was not considered to be a significant part of the United States’ strategic interests. Even George W. Bush, who promised a foreign policy based on realism during his presidential campaign in 2000, did not see Africa as an important factor in his geopolitical calculus. In an interview with Jim Lehrer from PBS, he said “at some point in time the president’s got to clearly define what the national strategic interests are, and while Africa may be important, it doesn’t fit into the national strategic interests, as far as I can see them.”

The 9/11 attacks, however, soon changed this perception, and Africa began to be seen as an increasingly important “second front” in the Global War on Terror. This led to the development of a new framework of engagement with the continent, which involved creating overlapping networks of ties that would have significant political, economic, and military implications for many years to come (Pham 231).

2.3.1 Security Aspects

One of the most significant priorities for the Bush administration in its policy towards Africa was improving security relations with the continent. This was due to concerns about the possibility of terrorist groups using the continent as a breeding ground, given the region’s weak and unstable governments, historic ties to the Middle East, and potential for funding through illegal trade in natural resources like diamonds (Tieku). As the 2002 National Security Strategy mentioned: “weak states ... can pose as great a danger to our national interests as strong states. Poverty does not make poor people into terrorists and murderers.

Yet poverty, weak institutions, and corruption can make weak states vulnerable to terrorist networks and drug cartels within their borders.”

When President Bush took office, he inherited two ongoing security projects in Africa: a peacekeeping training program (ACRI) and a peacekeeping operation in Sierra Leone that ended in 2002 (Bellamy 19). According to a Department of State fact sheet, to continue supporting African militaries in peace support operations, Bush replaced ACRI with the Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance Program (ACOTA) in 2002. ACOTA provided training in various areas, including logistics, intelligence, human rights, and civil-military relations. It also focused on improving the operational and tactical skills of African forces, such as convoy operations and patrolling. One of the strengths of ACOTA was its ability to foster regional cooperation and coordination among African nations. This helped to build trust and promote stability in the region. Additionally, ACOTA worked closely with international partners, such as the United Nations and the African Union, to ensure that the training provided was in line with international standards.

On top of the existing efforts to address security concerns in Africa, Pham argued that the Al-Qaeda attacks on an Israeli-owned hotel and commercial airliner in 2002 raised even more alarm. As a result, the United States military made the decision to further increase its presence on the continent. Thus, One of the key initiatives to come out of this decision was the establishment of the Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) in October of the same year, with its headquarters located at Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti - a former French Foreign Legion post (249, 263).

Initially, the focus was on fighting terrorism and building up the security forces of partner nations. However, over time, the mission evolved to include a greater emphasis on civil operations. The CJTF-HOA shifted its focus towards civil affairs projects, which included drilling wells and building infrastructure. While the command still had a

counterterrorism mission, that responsibility was largely left to special operations forces and national agencies. In the words of the CJTF-HOA commander at the time, it was like “the separation of church and state - they were state and I was church. They did what they did...we stayed on the civil affairs side, drilling wells, building roads, schoolhouses, and churches.” Furthermore, these projects were centered around Djibouti due to its proximity to areas of interest and to maintain good relations with the host nation. However, over time, from 2005 to 2006, civil affairs operations expanded to other countries such as Uganda, Ethiopia, Yemen, Comoros, Tanzania, and Kenya. Apart from infrastructure projects and vaccination efforts, CJTF-HOA troops were frequently on the front lines of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief when tragedies struck. (Kimball and Morrow 1). Consequently, The CJTF-HOA’s civil affairs operations were very important in building relationships with partner nations and making the region more stable.

In 2003, William Pope, Deputy Coordinator for Counterterrorism, stated in the East Africa Counterterrorism Initiative conference that Bush came up with a new idea to improve the security of the United States in Africa. This idea was embodied in the creation of the East Africa Counterterrorism Initiative (EACTI) with the purpose of enhancing cooperation between East African countries, namely Djibouti, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Eritrea, and Ethiopia. This latter was a response to the growing threat of terrorism in the region, especially in Somalia where the extremist group Al-Shabaab was gaining strength.

Later in 2004, according to the US Department of State, the United States launched the Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI) to further strengthen peacekeeping efforts in Africa and the world at large. Through GPOI, partner countries received training in areas such as logistics, communications, and leadership, as well as providing equipment such as vehicles, communications and protective gear all with the aim of sustaining peacekeeping missions.

The establishment of the Africa Command (AFRICOM) in 2007 was a major administrative change within the US military's chain of command. Prior to the creation of the organization, military responsibility for potential operations in Africa had been divided among three combat commands: European Command (EUCOM), Central Command (CENTCOM), and Pacific Command (PACOM). EUCOM had responsibility for the largest number of African countries in northern, western, central, and southern Africa, while CENTCOM covered several eastern African countries and focused mainly on the Middle East and southern Asia. Lastly, PACOM covered the African island nations in the Indian Ocean. This division of responsibility reflected the US military's worldwide responsibilities after World War II. However, the growing security challenges in Africa arising from the collapse of regimes in northern Africa and the rise of terrorism in western and eastern Africa led President Bush to consolidate military responsibility for United States-Africa relations within a single command, AFRICOM. The primary mission of the command was to foster regional stability and security in Africa. This was achieved through a variety of means, including military-to-military engagement, training, and assistance. AFRICOM also sought to address the region's most pressing security challenges, which included terrorism, piracy, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by working closely with African partners and other US government agencies. In addition to its security related activities, AFRICOM was also involved in providing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief during times of crisis. This included providing food, water, shelter, and medical care to those affected by natural disasters or armed conflict (Cohen 209).

Ultimately, the establishment of AFRICOM represented a significant shift in the US military's approach to Africa, recognizing the importance of the continent in global security and the need for a dedicated command structure to address its unique challenges. Despite its positive intentions, AFRICOM has been criticized by some African leaders and activists who

view it as an extension of US military power and influence in Africa. Critics argue that AFRICOM's activities have led to increased militarization of African societies and have not always been aligned with the needs and priorities of African countries and their citizens. In addition, they were afraid that this was an attempt to dominate the region and that it was just another form of colonialism to secure access to Africa's oil (Ploch 24-25). Hence, the concerns raised about AFRICOM highlights the importance of adopting a careful and well-considered approach to external interventions in Africa, one that is grounded in respect for African sovereignty, agency, and autonomy.

2.3.2 Economic Aspects

Although security concerns have been a significant factor in shaping the United States' relationship with Africa, there have been various other initiatives aimed at fostering stronger ties between the two regions. One notable example of such an initiative is the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which was launched during the Bush administration. Enacted into law in 2000, AGOA sought to promote trade and investment between the US and African countries by providing duty-free access to the US market for eligible products from Africa.

AGOA also has been acknowledged for its impact on boosting exports from African countries to the US and supporting the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises in the region. Additionally, AGOA has been seen as an important tool for promoting economic development and poverty reduction in Africa by facilitating greater access to US markets for African products (Lighthizer 8).

In addition to the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), another important initiative aimed at promoting economic growth and poverty reduction in developing countries is the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) that was established in 2004. The primary objective of the MCC, as identified by Riffel and Fox, is to provide aid to countries that

demonstrate a commitment to good governance, economic freedom, and investments in human capital. Specifically, the MCC focuses on countries with a per capita income of less than 1,905 USD per year and that uphold democratic governance, rule of law, and economic policies that encourage growth and poverty reduction. They also described the MCC's distinctive approach to aid delivery, which involves collaborating with recipient countries to design and implement programs that are customized to their specific needs and priorities. This approach is informed by a data-driven analysis of the constraints to economic growth and poverty reduction in each country, and aims to work with local stakeholders to develop projects that address those constraints (1, 3).

While AGOA and MCC are intended to promote economic growth and development in Africa, they have been criticized for being overly focused on certain sectors, such as oil and textiles, rather than promoting more diverse economic growth. Indeed, the majority of African exports to the US under AGOA have been oil, which is not likely to lead to broad-based economic growth. In 2001, the Cheney report warned that the US would become more and more reliant on foreign oil in the future, and suggested that the Bush administration should focus on increasing oil production and export from regions other than the Middle East. Thus, Latin America and West Africa were identified as potential sources for future US oil imports, with Africa already supplying about 15% of US oil. In addition, African oil production was growing at a faster rate than the global average, which meant that within a decade, Africa could potentially supply the US with as much energy as the Middle East. Three months later, Walter Kansteiner, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs declared, "African oil is of national strategic interest to us, and it will increase and become more important as we go forward" (Lawson).

This analysis highlights the significance of adopting a more comprehensive and diversified approach to economic development, which should consider the wider socio-

economic environment and the enduring consequences of development strategies.

Additionally, it emphasizes the requirement for increased openness and responsibility in designing and executing aid programs to guarantee that they align with local development objectives and foster sustainable and equitable economic progress.

2.3.3 Humanitarian Aspects

During the Bush administration, significant efforts were made to improve the health sector in Africa by providing substantial financial resources. The government, led by the Republican Party, made a commitment to donate 200 million USD to the Global Fund aimed at combating deadly diseases such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria. The following year, they further showed their commitment by pledging an additional 500 million USD to the International Mother and Child HIV Prevention Initiative, which aimed to prevent the maternal transmission of HIV (Tieku).

Another important initiative that was explored by the White House fact sheet is the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). It was launched in 2003 with the goal of preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing treatment to those who are infected, particularly in Africa where the disease has had a devastating impact. Moreover, the initiative was initially intended to allocate approximately 15 billion USD towards fighting the HIV/AIDS epidemic over the course of five years. However, by the end of 2008, it was estimated that the actual amount disbursed had far exceeded expectations, reaching an impressive 25 billion USD. This significant investment of funds was crucial in helping to combat the devastating effects of HIV/AIDS, saving countless lives and improving the health outcomes of many individuals in need (Tieku). He also noted that the administration was interested in Africa not only because of national security concerns, but also because they saw economic opportunities in the continent's natural resources and growing population. Tieku added that the United States' government remained keenly aware that pursuing these interests

too aggressively could be seen as exploitative and damage the relationship with African countries.

To address this, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice introduced a new approach called “transformational diplomacy”, in early 2006. This tactic aimed to present the United States as a positive partner to Africa and pursued a policy based on the “three D’s”: Diplomacy, Development, and Defense. Diplomacy aimed to build a stronger relationship with African countries by treating them as equal partners and promoting regular dialogue on important issues. Development sought to promote economic growth and stability in Africa through investment, trade, and aid programs, while defense focused on addressing security threats like terrorism and transnational crime by collaborating with African militaries and law enforcement agencies (O’keefe).

Despite this shift, Scholars who specialize in African studies generally agree that the defense component of the US-Africa partnership was prioritized above the diplomatic and developmental aspects. This indicates that the military or security dimensions of the relationship between the two parties held a more significant role than the other two dimensions.

Conclusion

Over the course of the historical period extending from the Cold War to the War on Terror, the United States’ foreign policy towards Africa has been guided by key pillars that shaped the way it engaged with the continent. The numerous challenges and setbacks that came as a result of a rapidly changing world dictated that the US change and reshape the pillars of its policy in order to keep up with the developing events. By the end of the 90s, the policy finally assumed its contemporary structure, numbering five key pillars of American interest in Africa.

The evolution of American foreign policy in Africa details the United States' gradual realization of the continent as an important part of the world that requires genuine policy making effort that requires a mutual benefit approach. Thus, the current model of US-Africa commits itself to achieving its bilateral goals through the support of democratic transitions and encouragement of the development of civil society in African nations as well as the stimulation of economic growth. This comes in tandem with a firm emphasis on the part of the United States towards safeguarding its strategic interests in Africa, including supporting regimes that are aligned with its geopolitical goals, especially when it comes to perceived threats to US security.

Chapter Two: The Obama Administration's Africa Strategy

Introduction

Chapter one of this dissertation has demonstrated that the foreign policy pursued by a US president carries significant implications for global affairs, with particular relevance when considering Africa. During his tenure, Barack Obama's approach to Africa garnered substantial attention and scrutiny. The continent, with its diverse nations and intricate challenges, presented Obama with a distinctive array of opportunities and responsibilities.

The objective of this chapter is to present an overview of Obama's foreign policy towards Africa, encompassing an examination of its key principles, objectives, and outcomes. Moreover, it delves into the strategies employed by the Obama administration to engage with African nations and address critical issues encompassing governance, development, healthcare, and conflict resolution. Additionally, it explores the intricate interplay between Obama's approach to Africa and his broader foreign policy agenda. Within this context, the chapter delves into the evolving perception of Obama's approach, encompassing debates surrounding the extent of continuity or discontinuity with preceding administrations, as well as the influence of geopolitical considerations.

By thoroughly analyzing these facets, this chapter aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of Obama's foreign policy towards Africa. It seeks to illuminate the opportunities seized, the challenges confronted, and the overall impact of Obama's presidency on US-Africa relations.

1. Africa Strategy

The inauguration of Barack Obama as the President of the United States in 2009 was seen by many as a sign of renewed commitment to liberal values in American foreign policy. Many believed that Obama would usher in a new era of diplomacy, one that would replace the previous administration's neoconservative approach with a more collaborative and

multilateral strategy. Some even saw Obama as a global organizer-in-chief, applying his community organizing skills to the international stage (Lynch 41). However, Lynch argued that such expectations were largely unfounded. While Obama's rhetoric may have been liberal in tone, his policies were pragmatic and frequently drew on realist principles rather than adhering to a purely liberal paradigm. In other words, he pursued liberal goals through the use of realistic means. Consequently, Obama's foreign policy did not represent a transformative shift, but rather a response to the realities of the international system. In fact, his approach to international relations was more similar to that of his predecessor, George W. Bush, than it was to a liberal revolution.

Additionally, the election of Barack Obama as the first African-American president sparked a sense of pride and excitement across Sub-Saharan Africa. This was particularly significant as Obama was seen as a "son of the soil" due to his Kenyan heritage. Many Africans believed that his election would lead to a shift in US foreign policy towards Africa, with greater attention and support for the continent. However, Obama's message to the African people was not in line with their expectations (Cohen 212). In fact, Africa was not a primary focus in the hierarchy of US foreign policy during the first two years of Barack Obama's presidency. This was partially the result of the administration's need to prioritize domestic issues and other regions that were deemed to be of greater significance, such as managing the ongoing economic crisis in the US and the military conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq (Schraeder 300).

It should be noted, however, that this prioritization of domestic affairs and other regions did not reflect a lack of interest or engagement with Africa on the part of the White House. Rather, it reflected the practical realities of managing a complex and multifaceted foreign policy agenda in the face of numerous pressing challenges.

In their first year under Obama's leadership, the US foreign policy team has exhibited a commitment to upholding and advancing the US-Africa policy that was established by the previous administration. This commitment has been demonstrated through a variety of political gestures that signal the administration's interest and dedication to the African continent. This came in the form of numerous official visits to Africa by both the US Secretary of State and the President, along with other high-ranking officials (Carson).

During his inaugural trip to Africa, President Barack Obama delivered a notable and assertive address in Accra, Ghana. In his speech, he conveyed a deep appreciation for the mutually dependent relationship between the United States and Africa by characterizing the continent as "a fundamental part of our interconnected world (...) and partners with America". Obama also articulated his belief that the future of Africa was in the hands of its own people, saying, "We must start from the simple premise that Africa's future is up to Africans". He also asserted that sustainable economic growth in Africa could only be achieved when African governments established policies and practices that would lead to long-term development. In other words, the president said "Development is your problem, Africa. We can only assist."

In the same vein, at the conference on sub-Saharan Africa in 2010, Secretary Clinton emphasized the salient points of President Obama's 2009 address in Accra. Clinton reiterated Obama's message and referred to it as "a message of tough love". She added that the United States seeks to cultivate a relationship with African countries founded on partnership rather than patronage and emphasized that they are not capable of singularly resolving the internal issues of African states. Clinton also highlighted that the conditions of these countries are primarily shaped by their own activities and decisions. However, she reassured African countries that the US is willing to provide assistance and support to help them tackle their problems and achieve their aspirations. Furthermore, Clinton elaborated on the key priorities

of US commitment in Africa, including combating corruption, expanding healthcare initiatives (with an additional 6.3 billion USD allocated by the Obama administration over five years), participating in UN and African Union peacekeeping operations to mitigate conflicts, and promoting responsible utilization of natural resources through the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative .

In addition to the brief outline of the Obama administration's policy towards Africa, Assistant Secretary of State Johnnie Carson provided a more comprehensive overview in Testimony before the Subcommittee on African Affairs in 2010. He identified five key areas of focus for US policy towards Africa, which were crucial to advancing the region's development. These priority areas included bolstering democratic institutions and the rule of law, promoting sustainable development and economic growth, improving access to quality healthcare and education, facilitating conflict prevention and resolution, and working with African countries to tackle transnational issues such as terrorism, maritime security, climate change, drug trafficking, and human trafficking.

In terms of democratic governance, Carson stated that the United States sought to support the development of strong institutions in Africa, with independent judiciaries and free and fair elections. It also sought to promote good governance and anti-corruption measures in African countries. In promoting sustainable development and economic growth, the US prioritized initiatives such as the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which provided duty-free access to the US market for African goods, as well as trade and investment promotion and job creation.

In the realm of healthcare and education, He added that the US aimed to improve access to quality services in Africa. This included combating HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases, improving maternal and child health, and increasing access to education, particularly for girls. Conflict prevention and resolution was also a priority for the US in

Africa, and it worked with regional organizations and African countries to prevent and resolve conflicts through peacekeeping, dialogue, and reconciliation efforts.

Carson concluded his speech saying that the US recognized the importance of international cooperation in tackling transnational issues. In addition, it collaborated with African countries to address terrorism, maritime security, climate change, drug trafficking, and human trafficking, recognizing that these issues have global implications. The Obama administration's policy towards Africa, therefore, emphasized partnership and collaboration with African countries to promote development and address shared challenges.

Nevertheless, a comprehensive official articulation of Obama's Africa strategy did not emerge until shortly before the second-term presidential elections. The approach outlined in Carson's Speech was realized in the 2012 United States Strategy toward Sub-Saharan Africa, as it also highlighted the same four Key Objectives for the US-Africa policy. This Strategy outlined a comprehensive plan for the US to engage with the region in a way that would promote peace, security, and economic prosperity. Moreover, it recognized that Africa was rapidly changing and had significant opportunities for growth and development, but also faced challenges that needed to be addressed. The president also stressed that the US believes in Africa's potential and will work with African partners to build strong institutions, remove trade and investment barriers, and expand opportunities for Africans to prosper. He also added that empowering the next generation of African leaders is a priority for the US, and thus they will continue to support their efforts for a better future.

Additionally, Lynch continues to posit that there are at least two schools of thought on the Obama foreign policy. The first approach finds continuity, both positive and negative, with the Bush administration, often in the case of combating terror. The second, however, concludes a divorce from Bush, often in areas where Obama has succeeded in realizing his aforementioned objectives, like China, for example, where he was able to build diplomatic

ties with the country (43). It is remarkably noticeable that this view of continuity or discontinuity is influenced by the geopolitical area that is subject to analysis.

An assessment of the Barack Obama foreign policy, or that of any other period in American politics, can be achieved through the use of a number of varying frameworks. Accordingly, Kieh explains that analysis of American foreign policy in Africa throughout the years falls under one of two frameworks: *realpolitik* or “positive-sum”. Policy issued in the context of *realpolitik* treats Africa merely as an object of American foreign policy. While the application of this model has proved to be beneficial to the United States, it meant the exact opposite for Africa itself: American complacency in the region has paralyzed it, often due to the deliberate meddling that supported corrupt regimes and strangled democracy, all to facilitate US interests and extend its reach towards Africa’s material wealth. Expectedly, this framework has historically lent itself time and again in shaping US relations with the continent. Positive sum, on the other hand, argues for rethinking US policy in such a way that a relationship of mutual benefit is achieved for both sides. This framework generally has a higher degree of affectivity because it compensates for the failings of the previous model (167).

With this in mind, revealing the probability of the Obama Administration’s use of either *realpolitik* or positive sum may directly lead to a general summation of continuity or discontinuity in the region of Africa. A conclusion that can be achieved by observing Obama’s conduct in the continent and matching it with either framework.

2. Security Aspects

Generally speaking, there are some glaring similarities between the approaches of the Obama administration with that of his predecessor, George W. Bush, when it comes to security concerns. For example, the Bush Administration’s understanding of security challenges in the African continent as an interconnected web of threats was reaffirmed by

Barack Obama after he entered office. He repeatedly stressed this point as early as 2009 during his official visit to Africa in Accra, Ghana, stating that, “when there is genocide in Darfur or terrorists in Somalia, these are not simply African problems, they are global security challenges, and they demand a global response.” (Obama).

In the same vein, the 2015 National Security Strategy, in a manner similar to the Bush security documents, pointed out the connection between Africa’s instability and underdevelopment to the fostering of security threats. According to the document:

The threat of catastrophic attacks against our homeland by terrorists has diminished but still persists. An array of terrorist threats has gained traction in areas of instability, limited opportunity, and broken governance. Our adversaries are not confined to a distinct country or region. Instead, they range from South Asia through the Middle East and into Africa (9).

A wording that is strikingly similar to that of the Bush Administration’s 2002 Security Strategy, which declared Africa as a region where “promise and opportunity sit side by side with disease, war, and desperate poverty. This threatens both a core value of the United States—preserving human dignity—and our strategic priority—combating global terror” (10).

On the other hand, a marked difference between Obama and Bush’s approaches to Africa is also present in the documents. There is an undeniable change of tone in Obama’s strategic papers that places a bigger emphasis on non-military means to solve problems arising in the continent. The 2010 National Security Strategy contextualized this point through discussion about the role of good governance and economic growth in ensuring African security. Moreover, the 2012 United States Strategy towards Sub-Saharan Africa stressed the importance of non-military action in the region, saying that “stronger democratic

institutions lead countries to achieve greater prosperity and stability; and are more successful in mitigating conflict and countering transnational threats” (2).

Despite Obama’s rhetorical emphasis on good governance and reduction of military engagement, the actual military presence in the continent continued to rise under Obama’s leadership (M’cormack and Kaba 246). For instance, there was a remarkable increase in US military-security aid to Africa. As a result, arms sales to the continent through the foreign military financing program rose from 8.3 million USD in 2009 to 38 million USD in 2011. Similarly, during the same period, the amount for anti-terrorism assistance programs to Africa jumped to 24.4 million USD (Kieh 175).

According to the Department of State’s *Security Governance Initiative* released in 2015, president Obama showed no attempt to discontinue the flagship security activities of the Bush administration such as the Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA), Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI) and Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Initiative (TSCTI). These programs, as well as others, were later integrated in the 2014 Security Governance Initiative (SGI), which was launched to fulfill the aim of improving security sector governance as well as the overall capacity to address threats in Africa (2). That same year, the White House Office of the Press Secretary released a Fact Sheet that mentioned that Obama introduced another initiative titled: The African Peacekeeping Rapid Response Partnership (APRRP or “A-Prep”). This latter was created for the purpose of building the African militaries’ capacity to rapidly deploy peacekeepers in response to emerging conflict (“Fact Sheet: U.S. Support for Peacekeeping in Africa.”)

The most important element of the Bush administration to survive in the Obama era is perhaps AFRICOM. The Obama administration made a decision to strengthen AFRICOM and expand its foothold on the continent, which consequently increased the role of the Command in the implementation of the US counterterrorism strategy in Africa (Kieh 175).

Thus, according to a statement made by Gen. David M. Rodriguez, Commander of the US Africa Command, in front of the Senate Armed Services Committee in March 2016, AFRICOM conducted a total of 68 operations, 11 major joint exercises, and 363 security cooperation activities in 2014 alone. These numbers later increased to 75 joint operations, 12 major joint exercises, and 400 security cooperation activities the very next year (“Statement of General David M. Rodriguez...”).

AFRICOM’s base at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, was often the launching point for such operations. It started to play an increasingly significant role, not only as a regional center on the continent, but also as a staging ground for counterterrorism operations in the Arabian Peninsula, specifically Yemen, as well as the Indian Ocean (Pham 263).

When speaking about AFRICOM, it is important to keep in mind that ever since its conception in the Bush era, the US Africa Command was, and remains, a highly contested project by Africans. State leaders, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, viewed AFRICOM as a secretive institution whose main agenda remained unclear. In the Obama era, the suspicion and fear surrounding AFRICOM was proven to be correct when AFRICOM (along with NATO) did not consult with the African Union before launching an assault on Libya in 2011. The Gadhafi regime, in a manner similar to Saddam Hussein’s in 2003, was accused by the US led military coalitions of terrorist activity. Whether these accusations were justified or not, one fact remains concrete: although both regimes were dictatorships, they managed to provide relative state stability for their countries; a beneficial status quo that the US intervention has effectively ended (Stevenson). Moreover, the security situation which the US claimed it would provide after the fall of the two regimes has proved to be a mere pipe dream. Today, both Libya and Iraq have joined the list of failed states and are now fertile grounds for additional terror cells, which means that there is more insecurity today in both countries than there was before the fall of the two regimes. In the light of this aftermath, Sub-

Saharan Africans are well in their right to see the US as a marauding superpower that cannot be trusted with military power (Sherry 245, 263).

Elsewhere in Somalia, the administration has continued its predecessor's strategy of using drones to target suspected al Qaeda operatives as well as increasing US military training and aid for the embattled government in Mogadishu led by Sheik Sharif Sheikh Ahmed (Baldauf). Additionally, When Hillary Clinton held talks with Ahmed in August 2009, she claimed that Al Shabaab, the extremist group threatening to topple Ahmed's government, had links to al Qaeda and saw Somalia as "a future haven for global terrorism" (McConnell).

The same could be said about the situation in Nigeria, where Washington increased its military assistance and cooperation with the Nigerian government after Boko Haram, another terrorist group related to al Qaeda kidnapped 276 schoolgirls in 2014, a highly publicized transgression that sparked international outrage. The Obama administration dedicated a task force to help the Nigerian government in the matter by providing them with intelligence from drone and satellite imagery. However, US officials later complained that the Nigerians failed to act on the information (Van de Walle 57). Tensions between the two countries over coordination matters culminated in 2014, when Nigeria canceled the cooperation all together (M'cormack and Kaba 246).

Obama's record, both in rhetoric and praxis, demonstrates that the Bush era interventions remained ongoing. The similar emphasis on the necessity of a military presence in Africa due to the widespread threat of terrorism as well as the resulting interventions like that in Libya indicate that the United States has not yet shed its unilateral approach to the African continent by the time of Obama's inauguration. Moreover, given the additional resources being poured into AFRICOM, its continuation seems almost certain.

3. Humanitarian Aspects

As was mentioned before, in his second address to Africa, the US President Barack Obama placed great emphasis on the significance of trade and investment as crucial factors for achieving swift economic growth, which would ultimately lead to the eradication of poverty among the African population. While this policy was not entirely new, Obama's message was characterized by a more intense and specific focus on the role of trade and investment in promoting African economic development than that of his predecessors.

In June of 2009, during the G8 summit in L'Aquila, Italy, President Barack Obama unveiled a program worth 3.5 billion USD over the course of three years. The objective of this program was to address the underlying causes of poverty and hunger by promoting food security. One year later, in 2010, the official Feed the Future (FTF) initiative was launched, targeting twelve countries of which eight were located in Africa. To oversee this ambitious program, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) established a new Bureau for Food Security in November of the same year. This bureau was tasked with the responsibility of managing and coordinating the implementation of the FTF initiative, in close collaboration with the US government, international organizations, and various private sector partners (Lawson).

The impact of this approach was reflected in the early results of the FTF. A year after its launch, the Congressional Research Service published a report that praised the program's achievements stating that, "the 'Feed the Future' initiative has to date helped nine million farmers gain access to new tools and technologies, and improved the diets of eighteen million children. The Service went on to say that the program stood out for its unique approach to addressing food insecurity by emphasizing the importance of supporting farmers as business people. This was often done by providing them with access to markets, finance, and technical

assistance rather than treating them as subsistence-level peasants who required supplementary food aid.

Given the successes achieved by the Feed the Future program, it is certainly worth preserving by future administrations. By continuing to prioritize investment in agriculture and rural development, future leaders can build on the progress made so far and help to unleash the full potential of Africa's agricultural sector. This will require sustained commitment, collaboration with international partners, and a recognition of the crucial role that agriculture can play in driving inclusive economic growth and reducing poverty across the continent.

In 2013, as per an executive order, the Obama administration launched Power Africa, an ambitious initiative aimed at doubling access to electricity in Sub-Saharan Africa, where a significant proportion of the population was without reliable electrical power. The program set out to increase electricity generation capacity by over 10,000 MW, utilizing cleaner and more efficient energy sources. Additionally, the program aimed to extend access to electricity to at least twenty million households and businesses through on-grid, mini-grid, and off-grid solutions.

The initiative also prioritized the use of Africa's vast power potential, including clean geothermal, hydro, wind, and solar energy, as well as significant oil and gas reserves, while promoting responsible establishment of power generation, transmission, and distribution infrastructure. Power Africa leveraged the resources of over 130 public and private sector partners, as well as tools provided by the Federal Government, to achieve its objectives. These resources provided coordinated support to African partners, offering assistance through policy and regulatory best practices, institutional capacity building, pre-feasibility support, grants, long-term financing, insurance, guarantees, credit enhancements, and technical assistance ("Advancing the Goals of the Power Africa...").

In summary, the coordinated support provided to African partners includes a diverse array of resources and mechanisms, each aimed at promoting sustainable economic growth and development on the continent. Through these efforts, African countries can access the expertise, resources, and support needed to achieve their development goals and realize their full potential.

One successful example of a Power Africa project was in Senegal, where an 86-megawatt power plant was installed by Contour Global Corporation, eliminating power outages in the capital city, Dakar. The project earned the US company a 15 percent rate of return, and the government of Senegal did not need to invest anything but signed a contract to purchase the power at a fixed rate. Despite the fact that only 2,500 megawatts of power had actually been installed by the end of Obama's tenure in the White House, Power Africa was still considered one of the most innovative, significant, and relevant US development projects in Africa. One reason for this was the program's private sector profit-making aspect, which made it attractive to investors (Cohen 214-215).

4. Economic Aspects

Along the same lines, according to the USAID report on trade Africa, the Initiative was launched with the aim of promoting increased trade and investment between the United States and Africa, as well as enhancing regional integration and trade competitiveness. Initially, the initiative focused on the countries that make up the East African Community (EAC), which includes Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda.

Pursuant to the White House fact sheet, the initiative "aims to double intra-regional trade in the EAC, increase EAC exports to the United States by 40%, reduce by 15% the average time needed to import or export a container from the ports of Mombasa or Dar es Salaam to land-locked Burundi and Rwanda in the EAC's interior, and decrease by 30% the average time a truck takes to transit selected borders". Thus, several measures have been

implemented, including exploring the possibility of a U.S.-EAC Investment Treaty, negotiating a Trade Facilitation Agreement, and establishing a new U.S.-EAC Commercial Dialogue.

Additionally, the fact sheet mentioned that the U.S.-Africa Trade Hubs are being transformed into U.S. Trade and Investment Centers, providing advisory services, risk mitigation, and financing to encourage links between American and East African investors and exporters. Furthermore, public-private partnerships are being created to boost trade in goods under the African Growth and Opportunity Act, with a focus on promoting investment in key growth sectors such as agriculture, health, clean energy, environment, and trade-related infrastructure.

In August 2014 as mentioned in *background & fact sheet: The President's Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI)* statement, President Obama concluded his series of four trips to Africa with the United States-Africa Leaders' Summit in Washington. During this summit, he made a final plea to African heads of state to take the necessary steps to attract both domestic and foreign investors. The event served as an opportunity to advance the administration's focus on trade and investment in Africa, while also emphasizing America's commitment to the continent's security, democratic development, and people. The White House released a statement affirming these priorities and highlighting the importance of continued collaboration between the United States and Africa.

Furthermore, in accordance with the White House fact sheet, the United States-Africa Leaders' Summit held in August 2014 was centered around the theme "Investing in the Next Generation," with a focus on promoting growth and creating opportunities for young Africans who had recently completed their education. Hence, President Obama launched the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) as part of this program, which aimed to identify emerging leaders in Africa who could benefit from exposure to American culture and entrepreneurship.

On top of that, during his Africa Week, Obama met with 500 YALI participants who were in the middle of their programs. The participants had completed six weeks of introduction to US culture and politics at the University of Virginia, followed by assignments to various enterprises across the country to learn about US business practices. In order to foster networking among YALI participants upon their return to Africa, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) established four regional leadership centers across the continent. These centers, located in Ghana, Kenya, Senegal, and South Africa, offer courses on leadership and a range of topics across various sectors, and support entrepreneurship through mentoring, technology, and access to capital. Additionally, the centers facilitate professional networking to help YALI returnees establish connections and build their careers. The centers also collaborate with local businesses to provide small financial grants to support the start-up of new enterprises by YALI participants.

By the end of the Obama administration, the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) remained robustly active. In fact, on January 18, 2017, just two days before Obama left office, a statement was released by USAID proclaiming that they were providing 38 million USD in funding for new YALI centers aimed at bolstering the development of emerging young leaders in Africa.

Despite efforts to stimulate trade between the two regions through various initiatives, there has been no significant improvement in trade flows. In fact, trade between the regions has demonstrably decreased, indicating that the measures implemented to encourage trade have not yielded the desired outcomes. As stated by the United States Census Bureau, during the final fiscal year of President Bush's term in office, the value of exports from the United States to Africa was 28,392.7 million USD, while imports from Africa to the United States amounted to 113,495.6 million USD. However, these figures gradually declined during President Obama's administration, with exports dropping to 22,270.2 million USD and

imports decreasing to 26,536.9 million USD during the 2016 fiscal year. The primary cause for the notable decline in trade between the United States and Africa can be traced back to the global financial crisis of 2008-2009 (Lei). Moreover, Brune argued that the shift in energy strategy has also had a considerable impact on the overall trade patterns, as the United States has decreased its imports of African oil.

Another factor contributing to the decline in trade between the United States and Africa is the continent's increasing focus on building stronger economic relationships with other global players, notably China. In 2009, China surpassed the US and became Africa's largest trading partner, with a focus on investment and infrastructure construction. Meanwhile, American companies were more active in technology (Hanauer and Morris 97). They also added that despite the differences in their economic objectives in Africa, the Obama administration did not describe the Sino-American economic interests in Africa as competing. This may be because they were more focused on promoting economic growth and development in Africa, rather than engaging in economic competition with China (102).

In this regard, when asked about China's role in Africa in 2013, President Obama expressed a positive outlook, stating that:

I think it's a good thing that China and India and Turkey and some of these other countries -- Brazil -- are paying a lot of attention to Africa. This is not a zero-sum game. This is not the Cold War (. . . .) We shouldn't view the participation of a country like China or Brazil in Africa as a bad thing. It should be a signal to us, though, that there's great opportunity there and that we cannot afford to be left on the sidelines because we're still stuck with old stereotypes about what Africa's future is going to be.

Furthermore, according to Hanauer and Morris, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Johnnie Carson asserted a view similar to that of President Obama in 2011,

stating that the activities of China and the United States in Africa were not antagonistic. He emphasized “We in Washington do not see China as an adversary in Africa, but as a country trying to expand its trade and investment across the continent just as we and others are also doing” (103).

Despite not seeing China as a direct economic competitor in Africa, US officials have expressed concerns about China’s approach to governance and human rights in the continent, as well as its economic practices such as resource extraction and infrastructure development. In particular, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton’s comment during her 2012 tour of Africa that was widely interpreted as a veiled criticism of China’s policies on the continent when she said that the US “seeks a model of sustainable partnership in Africa that adds value, rather than extracts it”.

In conjunction with this, in his speech to the African Union in Ethiopia in 2015, President Obama cautioned against the pursuit of short-term gains at the expense of long-term development, claiming “We don’t look to Africa simply for its natural resources. We recognize Africa for its greatest resource, which is its people and its talents and its potential.... We don’t simply want to extract minerals from the ground for our growth. We want to build partnerships that create jobs and opportunities for all our peoples that unleash the next era of African growth” (McGreal).

However, it is important to note that while the US may not have viewed China as a direct economic competitor in Africa, the two countries were still vying for influence and access to resources on the continent. Therefore, while the US may not have explicitly described the Sino-American economic interests in Africa as competing, there was still a certain level of economic competition between the two countries in Africa.

Conclusion

Relying on the Obama administration's record in Africa, it could be said that its foreign policy towards the continent treaded a fine line between continuity and discontinuity with the previous administrations. Unlike his predecessors, Obama has shown a degree of sincerity not seen before in his dealings with Africa. He placed significant emphasis on building partnerships with African nations based on mutual respect and shared interests, rather than security concerns alone. An approach that was reflected in many of his initiatives, such as the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit, which brought together leaders from across the continent to discuss issues of mutual concern, as well as his increased engagement with civil society organizations and youth leaders. Additionally, Obama prioritized economic partnerships with Africa for the end goal of a more sustainable, mutually beneficial relationship with the continent. Engagements of this kind, demonstrate Obama's budding attempt at an application of positive sum in Africa.

Although Obama has demonstrated a readiness to build viable, mutual ties with Africa, the heavy hand of realpolitik is hard to be yet rid of due to its long history of use in American politics. In light of the terrorist threat, the Obama administration chose to follow in the steps of its predecessor. President Obama worked to adopt and recontextualize Bush's tactics in order to eliminate terrorism in Africa, going as far as to double military efforts in the region toward this end. The results were often catastrophic due to the United States' miscalculated interventions that did nothing but destabilize new regions, such as Libya, and agitate existing terrorist cells. Whether out of necessity or otherwise, Obama's Security Strategy in Africa, not unlike that of Bush, sought to eliminate security threats to the United States with little consideration of the ramifications that African states may suffer as a result.

Therefore, weighing Obama's applications of both realpolitik and positive sum in the African region, it is possible to say that Obama's attitude might lean slightly towards the

former. The reason being that his economic and diplomatic plans, while beneficial, were nothing extraordinary compared to what Bush has done before him, and thus, it could be argued that they ultimately show a pattern of continuity as well.

Chapter Three: The Trump Administration's Africa Strategy

Introduction

Chapter two has established that Obama tended to walk a fine line between continuity and discontinuity regarding cross-administration conduct in Africa. A conclusion that took into account his approach to foreign affairs as dictated by his personal ideology, as well as the current events that may have influenced his decision-making process when it came to the continent. Donald Trump's administration is the second element in the analysis of the cross-administration continuity/discontinuity dichotomy presented in this study. As the 45th president of the United States, Donald Trump became a notorious political figure known for his unconventional and bold approach to decision-making, as well as his unique spin on conservative politics. His foreign policy is one of the many areas he was criticized for his political approach, and when it comes to his policy towards Africa, the same remains true.

The current chapter follows a process similar to that of chapter two in order to reach its conclusion. It aims to provide an overview of Trump's foreign policy towards Africa, exploring its fundamental driving principles, stated objectives, as well as its outcomes, especially in light of the United States' rising competition with foreign powers like China and Russia in the context of the African continent. By examining the Trump administration's conduct in its engagement with Africa, and contrasting it with the conduct of previous administrations, specifically that of his direct predecessor, Obama, this chapter seeks to reach a conclusion of continuity or discontinuity in regard to the United States' Africa policy during Trump's tenure.

1. Africa Strategy

President Donald Trump's win in the 2016 Presidential Elections came as a surprise to many, defying the expectation that he was unlikely to win against Democratic Party nominee Hillary R. Clinton. Trump's successful electoral campaign, placed under the general

theme of “Making America Great Again,” garnered unforeseen attention thanks to its isolationist-inspired, conservative populism that emphasized four broad foreign policy themes. Namely, the destructive domestic economic impacts of unfair free trade agreements; the need to build walls to reduce the number of undocumented immigrants entering the US, including the deportation of those already residing within the country; the need to reduce US military intervention abroad so that US financial resources can be properly spent rebuilding America and especially its infrastructure; and the need to proactively protect the American homeland from international terrorist attacks (Schraeder 99).

In the case of Africa, President Trump has shown a marked lack of interest. Out of roughly 5,000 Presidential tweets since he took office, only four of them have directly mentioned Africa (Brown). Moreover, in his most widely quoted comment on Africa at a closed-door briefing with Congressmen in January 2018, President Trump is reported to have referred to the undesirability of receiving more immigrants from “shithole countries” like Haiti and Africa (Dawsey). The comment immediately provoked a barrage of protest both domestically and abroad. For example, on the domestic front, the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus expressed his displeasure, going as far as to accuse Trump of racism (Allman). The sentiment was more or less the same abroad. Across Africa, US Ambassadors were summoned to foreign ministries to receive protests about the defamatory phrase (Greef and Sewell). Additionally, The African Union, through its mission in Washington, collectively expressed its “infuriation, disappointment and outrage” at the comments and demanded a formal apology from the United States’ government (Stoddard and Mfula).

Despite this, Trump has nevertheless maintained relations with the continent, meeting with several African leaders on various occasions. In all these meetings, however, the President has revealed little grasp of the issues facing African countries, recognizing only the

United States' domestic preoccupations that African can potentially provide for (Westcott 740).

Trump's lack of interest in pursuing specific policies in Africa is perhaps best illustrated by his long delay in nominating an Assistant Secretary for Africa at the State Department. Gramer reports that for the entirety of the administration's first year, the position of Secretary of State was occupied by Rex Tillerson until he was fired by Trump in March 2018. After his dismissal, the White House stalled nearly all political nominations to the State Department, including Africa. Tillerson was then replaced by CIA director Mike Pompeo as the new acting secretary. Pompeo went on to nominate Tibor Nagy, former Ambassador to Guinea and Ethiopia, to fill the position of Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, replacing Don Yamamoto, a career diplomat and Africa specialist, who has been appointed to do the job in an acting role since 2013. Nagy was confirmed by Congress on 30 June 2018, a whole 18 months after Trump became President.

President Trump's personal views on, and apparent neglect of, Africa is nevertheless not the whole story of US policy. Surprisingly enough, the administration released its Africa Strategy a mere two years into its term. A point of pride for the Trump Administration, since it managed to finalize the document much earlier than the previous administration ("Remarks by National Security Advisor John R. Bolton..."). Even though the document was originally meant to be publicly available, it has subsequently been classified, meaning that many of the finer details of the strategy are inaccessible for public viewing (Gass). However, this is not to say that an account of the bolder points of the strategy does not exist. In his speech to the Heritage Foundation in Washington, D.C., National Security Adviser John Bolton gave a general description of the Strategy, highlighting three core US interests on the continent: firstly, advancing US trade and commercial ties with African countries for the benefit of both; secondly, countering radical Islamic terrorism and violent conflict; and thirdly, ensuring

the efficient and effective use of “Americans’ hard-earned taxpayers dollars” through aid programs (Bolton).

A closer look at Bolton’s speech reveals that the overarching theme of the strategy is not only concerned with safeguarding US interests in Africa, but also with eliminating hostile competition in the continent for that end. Bolton dedicates a fair bit of his speech to address the presence of foreign powers like Russia and China in Africa. He accuses the two powers of pursuing “predatory” policies, saying that “they are deliberately and aggressively targeting their investments in the region to gain a competitive advantage over the U.S.” He expands on this point by stating that China’s strategic use of debt is designed “to hold states in Africa captive to Beijing’s wishes and demands”, while Russia “advances its political and economic relationships with little regard for the rule of law or accountable and transparent governance” since “it continues to sell arms and energy in exchange for votes at the U.N.” Bolton goes on to say that African countries receiving US assistance “must invest in health and education, encourage accountable and transparent governance, support fiscal transparency and promote the rule of law” in order to prevent both conflict and politician predatory behavior. He then follows this point by warning to withdraw aid support from countries that “repeatedly vote against the United States in international forums, or take action counter to U.S. interests.”

As a consequence of this latter point, Bolton also accentuated that US support in Africa would thus be more selective, focusing on priority countries, both in terms of aid and trade. Interests that will be negotiated and delivered strictly through a bilateral basis and not through multilateral agencies, specifically the UN: “We will no longer support unproductive, unsuccessful, and unaccountable U.N. peacekeeping missions.”

It could be said that as a whole, the strategy reads like an “America First” manifesto of the larger US policy. This is evidenced by Bolton himself who emphasized in the aforementioned speech that President Trump’s African strategy emerges from an intensive

interagency process, and reflects the core elements of President Trump's foreign policy doctrine.

2. Security Aspects

In 2017, the National Security Strategy (NSS) of the United States reprioritized its focus from the fight against radical Islamic terrorism, which had been the central focus of US foreign policy since the 9/11 attacks, to the challenges posed by China and Russia. The NSS identified these two countries as the primary threats to US national security, as they were seeking to challenge the US's geopolitical advantages and undermine the international order to their own advantage (2).

According to the NSS, China and Russia were becoming more assertive on the global stage, and their actions were increasingly hostile towards the US and its allies. This included disinformation campaigns, cyber-attacks, military interventions and efforts to expand their territorial influence. The NSS also argued that the US needed to take a more assertive approach to counter these threats and promote a free and open international order that respected democratic values and human rights (3). In the same vein, the Secretary of Defense James N. Mattis reaffirmed in a speech presenting the 2018 National Defense Strategy that the US government will persist in its efforts to counter terrorism, but its primary security focus has now pivoted towards competing with other major powers, known as Great Power competition.

This change in US foreign policy to prioritize national security interests and great power competition has also impacted the US approach to Africa. As outlined in the Trump's National Security Strategy:

China is expanding its economic and military presence in Africa, growing from a small investor in the continent two decades ago into Africa's largest trading partner today. Some Chinese practices undermine Africa's long-term

development by corrupting elites, dominating extractive industries, and locking countries into unsustainable and opaque debts and commitments (52).

The statement discussed the danger posed by China's economic policies in Africa, particularly their “debt trap diplomacy.” This strategy involves offering loans to other countries that they cannot repay, which can result in those countries losing control of crucial infrastructure assets to China. Thus, many US officials believe that this approach not only threatens African countries but also poses a risk to the United States (Zengerle). Despite the fact that the central theme of the statement primarily centered on China’s predatory economic practices in Africa, the establishment of the first Chinese overseas military base in Djibouti has also been a matter of substantial concern among policymakers in the United States.

According to Blanchard, the establishment of this military base in 2017 is considered a pivotal component of China’s enlarging global military presence and its endeavors to safeguard its interests in the African and Middle Eastern regions. As reported in the article, the base is strategically located in proximity to a critical shipping lane and is anticipated to provide accommodations for as many as 10,000 troops. Furthermore, the reporter added that the base is considered as the main location for China’s first aircraft carrier battle group that undertakes training exercises in the surrounding area. Therefore, the initial concerns about the situation were raised first by the commander of AFRICOM General Waldhauser in an interview by saying, “we’ve never had a base of, let’s just say a peer competitor, as close as this one happens to be. So there’s a lot of learning going on, a lot of growing going on. Yes, there are some very significant operational security concerns, and I think that our base there is significant to us because it’s not only AFRICOM that utilizes”. He also expressed apprehension about China potentially using the base to gather intelligence on US activities in the region and projecting its military power throughout Africa and the Middle East (Clarck).

In essence, the commander's remarks reflect the US government's broader concerns about China's increasing military presence in Africa and the potential for its expansionist policies to destabilize the region. As a result, Djibouti has become a key player in the Sino-American military interaction on the continent, as both China and the US have sought to maintain good relations with their small host nation. These relations have been reflected in high-level visits by officials to the country.

During his visit in 2017, According to the article published by the US Department of Defense, the Secretary of Defense James Mattis expressed appreciation for the strong partnership between the US and Djibouti. In addition, he acknowledged Djibouti's support for the US in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, when the country offered to host US troops stating "you'll remember, those who go back to those hectic days after 9/11, this was a country that stepped forward at the end of 2001, early 2002, and said, 'We're with you,' and they've been with us every day, and every month and every year since."

Furthermore, in 2018, Djibouti received another high-level visit from Washington when Secretary of State Rex Tillerson visited the country as part of his Africa tour. During his visit, Tillerson emphasized the strategic importance of Djibouti in supporting US military and counterterrorism operations in the region by saying:

We are grateful to Yibuti for hosting thousands of United States troops here in Yibuti. This is a relationship that has been mutually beneficial to both the United States and Yibuti, by strengthening Yibuti military forces, as well. U.S. military presence here does facilitate a very quick response to terrorism and violent extremism that threatens both of our countries. But as well, it threatens the region and stability in this region.

Tillerson also acknowledged Djibouti's contribution to the fight against terrorism in Somalia by noting that the country had deployed two battalions to the African Union Mission

in Somalia (AMISOM), which is tasked with stabilizing Somalia and fighting against the al-Shabaab terrorist group. Finally, he announced the United States' intention to work with the country to build a new training facility for its military forces that would further strengthen the two countries' military partnership. Ultimately, these visits demonstrate the close relationship between the two countries and highlight the mutual benefits of this partnership, with the US providing military and security support to Djibouti while also benefiting from the country's strategic location and military capabilities.

On the other hand, according to the AFRICOM posture of 2019, which is an annual testimony from AFRICOM's commander to the Senate Armed Services Committee, Russia's increasing presence in Africa adopts a militaristic approach by deploying quasi-mercenary military advisors funded by oligarchs. This strategic maneuver allows Russia to gain entry into African countries with autocratic leaders who seek unchallenged rule, granting them access to valuable natural resources. In return, some African leaders willingly accept this support to consolidate their power, while offering Russia favorable terms for exploiting mineral rights. The Central African Republic serves as a notable example, where elected leaders mortgage mineral rights at significantly reduced values in exchange for Russian weaponry. Additionally, Russia leverages historical relationships and outstanding debts in Libya to secure both economic and military contracts. The main emphasis of these agreements is on gaining access to Libya's extremely lucrative oil market, reinvigorating arms trade, and securing a strategic presence along the Mediterranean Sea (9). This suggests that Russia's activities in Africa are driven by self-interest and the pursuit of geopolitical influence, potentially at the expense of African nations' sovereignty and long-term development.

According to the 2020 posture on arms sales, China has sold arms worth over two billion USD to African partners in the last seven years. In comparison, Russia has

experienced a significant surge of 200% in access agreements, solidifying its position as the primary arms dealer on the continent. With arms sales reaching nearly nine billion USD, Russia maintains its dominant role in this regard. However, the presence of Russian private military companies (PMCs) in Africa has had a destabilizing impact. These PMCs are frequently deployed to safeguard Russian investments, often at the expense of African interests. Additionally, they contribute to propping up corrupt regimes and further expanding Russia's military influence on a global scale (4).

The arms sales dynamics in Africa, with China and Russia as major players, showcase their strategic interests in the continent. China's significant arms sales reflect its growing economic and diplomatic engagement in Africa. On the other hand, Russia's increased access agreements and dominant arms sales position demonstrate its aim to solidify its military influence and secure access to valuable resources. The presence of Russian private military companies raises concerns about their potential role in perpetuating instability and serving Russia's broader geopolitical objectives.

Despite the growing emphasis on competing with major global powers, the United States military's presence and operations in Africa remained heavily focused on countering terrorism. As outlined in AFRICOM's yearly posture statement of 2018, there are five priorities known as "Lines of Effort (LOEs)" for the US military in Africa (8).

The top priority is to develop security and stability in East Africa, with a particular focus on addressing the threat posed by the Al-Shabaab in Somalia (9). According to the article released by the US Department of State, Pentagon spokesman Navy Capt. Jeff Davis said that President Donald Trump has given the green light to a proposal put forward by the Defense Department to provide increased precision fire support to both the African Union Mission in Somalia and Somali security forces. In the same line, he added, "Somali and AMISOM forces have already achieved significant success in recapturing territory from al-

Shabab, and additional US support will help them increase pressure on al-Shabab and reduce the risk to our partner forces when they conduct operations.” Moreover, Griffin mentioned in his article that AFRICOM’s Press Releases reported that there have been 3 U.S. airstrikes in Somalia since Donald Trump became president. This indicates that the United States has been more actively involved in military operations in Somalia under the Trump administration than any other administrations.

Although Somalia is the main priority for US forces in Africa, the US is also involved to a lesser degree in Libya and the Sahel region. In Libya, according to the posture of 2018, the United States has identified four main objectives, namely to degrade terrorist groups that pose a threat to both American interests and the stability of Libya and the region, to prevent the outbreak of civil war in Libya, to support the political reconciliation process, which is aimed at creating a unified central government, and to curb the flow of illegal migrants into Europe (13). As for the Sahel region, pursuant to the document, is a significant area in the battle against violent extremism and jihadist terrorism. Hence, The United States is providing support to the G5 Sahel organization, which consists of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger, in their efforts to combat violent extremism and jihadist terrorism in the region (15).

The posture statement also highlighted that the third area of focus is the fight against the terrorist group Boko Haram in northern Nigeria, which pledged allegiance to ISIS in 2015 after previously being allied with Al Qaeda. Of greater significance, it mentioned that in response to a request made by the Government of Niger and the Nigerian Armed Forces, US Africa Command is setting up an expeditionary and contingency support location in Agadez, which will serve as a base from where Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) assets can be flown to improve the identification and monitoring of threats in the region (16).

While counterterrorism and stability operations in North and West Africa are the primary focus of the US Africa Command, it also has a role in stopping illegal trafficking in the Gulf of Guinea and supporting peacekeeping efforts in various African countries. Therefore, the US Africa Command has engaged in cooperative efforts with African naval forces to perform maritime security operations within the Gulf of Guinea, with the aim of countering illegal activities like piracy and unauthorized fishing. In regards to peacekeeping, the Command has provided comprehensive support for African Union and United Nations peacekeeping endeavors, encompassing equipment, training, and logistical assistance in various African nations (18-19).

In the broader context, the AFRICOM Posture Statement provides valuable insight into the United States' strategic priorities and ongoing efforts in Africa, and underscores the importance of continued engagement and cooperation with African partners to address the evolving security landscape on the continent. It is noteworthy to mention that the US Africa Command's Posture Statements during President Trump's tenure from 2017 to 2021 remained largely unchanged, emphasizing the importance of countering violent extremist organizations, enhancing regional security and stability, promoting good governance, and fostering partnerships with African nations. However, there may be some variations in emphasis and specific activities or programs, depending on changes in the security situation and political context in different parts of Africa.

3. Humanitarian Aspects

As mentioned previously, President Trump, unlike his predecessors, showed very little support, and even disdain, for humanitarian and developmental assistance. From the outset of his term, Trump's rhetoric was hostile to the idea of funding overseas economic development programs and skeptical of the benefits of soft power (Campbell). A rhetoric that was aptly worded by National Security Advisor, John Bolton in his speech at the Heritage Foundation,

saying, “under our new Africa strategy, we will target U.S. funding toward key countries and particular strategic objectives. All U.S. aid on the continent will advance U.S. interests.”

For this end, during discussions about the budget for the fiscal year 2019, Trump proposed cutting diplomatic and development spending designated towards Africa by one-quarter (Signé and Allen). This included funding for diplomacy, peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, as well as funding for international organizations and development programs focused on agriculture, education, and democracy promotion. However, the requested cuts were contested by both the House and the Senate, and the approved budget for fiscal year 2019 included humanitarian and developmental funding at higher levels than the administration originally demanded. Thus, the amount of resources remained on a level similar to the Obama administration (“Department of State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs...”). According to Cohen, this allowed the humanitarian and developmental programs launched by the previous administrations to remain in place. President Obama’s signature programs, Power Africa and Feed the Future, retained their funding and so did Bush’s key programs, MCC, PEPFAR and AGOA.

This is not to say that opportune aid allocation in cases of humanitarian crisis does not exist in the Trump era. In 2018, for example, Secretary of State Tillerson pledged more than 533 million USD in humanitarian aid for victims of conflicts and drought in Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and the African countries bordering Lake Chad (Brice). Similarly, the next year, Ivanka Trump, the president’s daughter and senior adviser, completed a tour of Africa, during which she introduced the Women’s Global Development and Prosperity Initiative (W-GDP). Associated Press reports that the initiative aimed to economically empower 50 million women in developing countries, effective until 2025, by providing assistance with job training, financial support and legal or regulatory reforms. After the announcement, President Trump directed USAID to allocate an initial 50 million USD to the

fund (Gemechu). An additional 100 million USD accompanied by private investment were later requested during the 2020 budget proposal (Associated Press).

By the end of 2019, the unprecedented spread of Covid-19 left the United States in a precarious position, which came as a result of Trump's insistence on a unilateral approach that was completely at odds with the need for multilateral effort in such a time of crisis. The United States can be considered as the backbone of the existing multilateral order (i.e. that which was formed after WWII and the Cold War). It has played a key role in the establishment of international initiatives, including universal ones like the UN; security ones, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO); and global health ones, such as the World Health Organization (WHO) (O'Rourke). Trump has candidly criticized such institutions, arguing that the Globalist system takes advantage of the United States instead of serving its interest: "The U.S. will always choose independence and cooperation over global governance, control and domination" (Hennigan).

In spite of this, it still came as a shock to the world when Trump announced in April 2020 that the US would halt its funding for the WHO. The President accused the organization of being "China-centric" and making "wrong" recommendations at the beginning of the pandemic, which, according to him, have led to worse conditions. In May that same year, Trump declared that the United States would terminate its relationship with the organization. The withdrawal came at a time when the WHO had launched an appeal for emergency funding of nearly 675 million USD to support efforts against coronavirus worldwide. These coinciding events have resulted in harsh criticism of the United States considering its status as the leading global actor in the response to the pandemic. Beijing used the opportunity and announced an emergency support grant of 30 million USD to the WHO in support of its pandemic related activities. This indicated that while the US was retreating from supporting

international organizations, China was stepping up its role, using every opportunity to expand its global influence (Fayyaz and Malik 76-77).

The flare up of the American-Chinese rivalry during the pandemic years dictated that the two countries showed a readiness to enact different strategies in order to gain power and influence over the other. One of these strategies came in the form of aid assistance to developing countries around the world. Africa was one such region of interest in this regard. In April 2020, President Trump made several phone calls to African leaders in Rwanda, South Africa, Kenya, Ethiopia and Nigeria. Judd Devermont, director of the Africa Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies described these calls as “a burst of activity” by Trump’s standards, “probably the most active he has been on sub-Saharan Africa since the [United Nations] General Assembly in 2017.” (McGraw).

Around the same time, in February, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced an additional 270 million USD in foreign aid to combat the coronavirus, specifically targeting some of the money for African countries such as Algeria, Botswana, the Republic of Congo, Ghana and Liberia. In addition to this, the U.S. Agency for International Development to South Africa also donated ventilators to the continent, which had more than 25,000 confirmed cases in 2020. The United States may yet succeed in Africa, despite Trump’s policies. An opportunity that is likely due to the rise of Anti-China sentiment in Africa due to its predatory and racially discriminatory actions in the region (McGraw).

As a general idea, US competition with foreign powers renders aid in Africa as a necessity to safeguard US interests in the continent. In such order, Africa is only secondary and its interests are wholly unimportant. Thus, it could be said that the existing course of conduct, assistance-wise, indicates a persistent realpolitik approach.

4. Economic Aspects

In the realm of economy, specifically trade, the United States considers Africa as an important market for the US economy, rife with opportunities. This is evidenced by Tillerson himself who, at the beginning of his last year as Assistant Secretary, called Africa “a significant part of the future” due to its “expansive opportunities for economic growth and influence” (“Remarks by Secretary Tillerson...”). Due to this viewpoint, it comes as no surprise that the United States has maintained strong economic relationships with certain African countries. During one of his trips to Africa, Tillerson visited three out of five of these countries of interest, namely Nigeria, Ethiopia and Kenya, as part of the continued effort to maintain ties with them as part of the top five markets for American goods in Africa (Signé and Allen).

This, as well as other instances of conduct in Africa clearly reflect the views held by Trump himself concerning the matter of trade in the continent. For example, in a 2017 meeting with African leaders, the president stressed Africa’s economic potential saying: “Africa has tremendous business potential. I have so many friends going to your countries, trying to get rich. I congratulate you. They’re spending a lot of money. But it does — it has a tremendous business potential and representing huge amounts of different markets” (“Remarks by President Trump...”). This emphasis on trade rather than aid is not exactly an idea unique to the Trump presidency. A similar outlook can also be found in president Obama’s approach, who went as far as to reorient US-Africa policy towards trade, putting in place practical initiatives to achieve that end. Thus, the similarities in this aspect may be an indication of continuation with the Obama administration.

In the Trump era, trade advancement was listed as the first priority of the United States in Africa as stated by National Security Advisor John Bolton in his speech to the Heritage Foundation. In it, Bolton said that “enhancing U.S. economic ties with the region is

not only essential to improving opportunities for American workers and businesses, it is also vital to safeguarding the economic independence of African states and protecting U.S. national security interests.” A statement that gives economic relationships in Africa an additional dimension rooted in security concerns, specifically those posed by Russia and China.

In order to achieve its economic goals, the Trump administration introduced some new initiatives. For example, in 2018, Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross announced over 1 billion USD in private-sector deals, and signed various memorandums of understanding to promote public-private partnerships (“US Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross...”). Additionally, the Trump administration announced the creation of a new initiative, Prosper Africa, that same year. The initiative aimed to stimulate American investments in Africa, opening up possibilities both for American and African companies and employees (“The Trump Administration’s Prosper Africa Initiative”). Moreover, President Donald Trump’s Administration emphasized that the initiative is not a new program within the framework of US Foreign Assistance, but only a method of stimulating and harmonizing existing programs, as well as the resources and possibilities available to particular agencies and departments (Kłosowicz 275). The official inauguration of the Prosper Africa program took place in mid-2019 during the USA-Africa business summit in Mozambique. For the budgetary year 2020, the amount of 50 million USD was allocated for its implementation (“FY 2020 Congressional Budget Justification”).

Additionally, in 2018, as well, President Trump signed the Better Utilization of Investments Leading to Development Act (BUILD). The BUILD Act aimed at the creation of the International Development Finance Corporation (USDFC) that would support investments in developing countries to drive economic growth, create stability, and improve livelihood. At first glance, it may seem that the USDFC was created with the interests of

developing countries at its heart. However, upon further examination, it appears that the act was influenced by the idea of great power competition. The official description of the reasons behind the creation of the USDFC specifically states that it aims to “make America a stronger and more competitive leader on the global development stage, with greater ability to partner with allies on transformative projects and provide financially-sound alternatives to state-directed initiatives that can leave developing countries worse off” (“Overview”). A statement that evidently prods at Chinese economic practices on the continent. The presence of such an incentive for economic policies in Africa indicates that the continent itself is more or less considered as a means toward safeguarding the United States’ interest, be they in terms of profit or security. A characteristic sign of a continuing preference for a realpolitik approach in US-Africa foreign policy.

Conclusion

Examining the Trump administration’s record in Africa, it can be argued that its foreign policy towards the continent displayed a mix of continuity and discontinuity compared to previous administrations. Unlike his predecessors, President Trump’s approach to Africa lacked the same level of sincerity and depth. His engagement with the continent primarily revolved around transactional interests rather than building enduring partnerships based on mutual respect.

The Trump administration’s Africa policy focused primarily on economic considerations and security concerns. Economic partnerships were pursued, but often with a narrower focus on extractive industries and trade deals that primarily benefited the United States. This approach, although prioritizing American interests, did not significantly depart from the economic strategies implemented by previous administrations.

On the security front, the Trump administration continued to prioritize counterterrorism efforts, aligning with the longstanding concern of previous administrations.

However, unlike President Obama's attempts to recontextualize security tactics, the Trump administration's approach appeared less nuanced. Military interventions and increased military efforts in the region were pursued with a focus on eliminating security threats, sometimes leading to unintended consequences and further destabilization of certain regions.

Considering both the economic and security dimensions of Trump's Africa policy, it becomes evident that his approach leaned more towards Realpolitik rather than a genuine pursuit of positive-sum outcomes. While economic and security strategies were employed, they lacked the depth and transformative potential needed to bring about substantial change or break from the established patterns of previous administrations.

General Conclusion

This dissertation has conducted a comprehensive analysis of the United States' foreign policy towards Africa, spanning from the Cold War to the War on Terror, with a specific focus on the Obama and Trump administrations. Through an examination of key pillars guiding US engagement with Africa and an evaluation of continuity and discontinuity in their approaches, this study has shed light on the complex nature of US-Africa relations.

The pillars that underpin US foreign policy towards Africa throughout the historical period have remained relatively consistent. The United States consistently sought to support democratic transitions, promote civil society development, foster economic growth, and pursue strategic interests. These pillars reflected the core objectives of the US government in engaging with the African continent, and they remained significant factors shaping US policy decisions.

However, the implementation of these pillars varied across administrations, highlighting the differing priorities and approaches adopted by each administration. The Obama administration's approach to Africa demonstrated a notable sincerity and depth, emphasizing the importance of building enduring partnerships based on mutual respect and shared interests. President Obama's initiatives, such as the US-Africa Leaders Summit and increased engagement with civil society organizations, exemplified his commitment to forging meaningful connections with African nations.

Additionally, the Obama administration prioritized economic partnerships as a means to foster sustainable and mutually beneficial relationships with Africa. By focusing on economic development and trade, Obama sought to create a positive-sum dynamic, where both the United States and African nations could benefit from enhanced cooperation and economic growth. This approach reflected a departure from the purely security-focused

strategies of previous administrations, demonstrating a nuanced understanding of the importance of long-term engagement and mutually beneficial relationships.

However, despite these positive aspects, the Obama administration's security strategy in Africa exhibited a continuation of realpolitik considerations. The pursuit of counterterrorism efforts, while necessary for safeguarding US security interests, sometimes resulted in miscalculated interventions and unintended consequences. These actions inadvertently contributed to the destabilization of certain regions, such as Libya, and the agitated existing terrorist cells, illustrating the challenges of balancing security concerns with the potential ramifications for African states.

The Trump administration's approach to Africa displayed a mix of continuity and discontinuity compared to its predecessors. While economic partnerships were pursued, there was a transactional focus that primarily served American interests. The lack of sincerity and depth in US-Africa relations under Trump's administration hindered the development of enduring partnerships based on mutual respect and shared values. This transactional approach risked undermining the potential for long-term cooperation and sustainable development. This is not to mention the president's disdain for foreign aid and his multiple attempts to make substantial cuts in funds allocated towards areas like diplomacy and humanitarian efforts.

Furthermore, the Trump administration's security strategy in Africa appeared less nuanced compared to the Obama administration's efforts to recontextualize security tactics. Military interventions and increased military efforts often prioritized the elimination of security threats without fully considering the broader implications or potential unintended consequences. This approach could exacerbate existing conflicts and further destabilize certain regions, highlighting the need for a more nuanced and comprehensive security strategy in Africa.

Thus, the United States' foreign policy towards Africa during the historical period examined in this dissertation was guided by key pillars, but their implementation varied across administrations. The Obama administration demonstrated a balance between positive-sum outcomes and realpolitik considerations, emphasizing sincerity and depth in its approach to US-Africa relations. The Trump administration, on the other hand, exhibited a more transactional focus and lacked the same level of sincerity and depth, limiting the transformative potential of its policies. With that said, Administrative change may or may not indicate a pattern of continuity or discontinuity in relation to the forging of the United States' Africa policy. There is certainly a number of overlapping variables that may influence the policy, which makes it subject to an event-based decision-making process. Such variables may include: party support, internal and external developments, as well as politician character and personal ideology. These elements are well documented in Rosenau's framework of American Foreign policy.

The findings of this dissertation contribute to the existing literature on US-Africa relations by providing a comprehensive analysis of the complexities involved in balancing strategic interests, security concerns, and the pursuit of positive-sum outcomes. Moving forward, it is imperative that future US administrations prioritize long-term partnerships with African nations based on mutual respect and shared values. Additionally, it is crucial to consider the potential ramifications of security strategies on African states, ensuring that interventions are carefully planned and implemented to mitigate unintended consequences.

By adopting a more nuanced and comprehensive approach to US-Africa relations, future administrations can build enduring partnerships, foster sustainable development, and contribute to peace and stability on the African continent. Such an approach would recognize the agency and potential of African nations, acknowledging their role as equal partners in shaping their own destinies.

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