THE UNITED STATES AND AFRICA: CYBERNETIC FOREIGN POLICY, CONTINENTAL DECLINE

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Introduction

> Enki is the [Sumerian] god of wisdom … His wisdom is not the wisdom of an old man, but rather a knowledge of how to do things, especially occult things. 'He astonishes even other gods with shocking solutions to apparently impossible problems … [M]aster of all the right commands, [h]is word can bring order where there has been only chaos and introduce disorder where there had been harmony'[1].
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> I'm the commander – see, I don't need to explain – I do not need to explain why I say things … That's the interesting thing about being President.[2]

In 1998, U.S. President Clinton spent 11 days touring Africa. His intention, he declared before the South African parliament, 'in part was to help the American people see the new Africa with new eyes, and to focus our own efforts on new policies suited to the new reality'[3]. His stated hope was to ensure that America becomes Africa's 'true partner': 'As Africa grows strong, America grows stronger … Yes, Africa needs the world, but more than ever it is equally true that the world needs Africa'[4]. The policies that grew out of the Clinton administration, however, looked painfully similar to those that had gone before it: a mix of Cold War containment (this time using African states and armed forces as proxies beyond their own borders), and highly politicised aid and

1 Stephenson, Neil, 1992, Snow Crash, (Harmondsworth: Penguin), quoting Kramer and Maier.
2 George W. Bush to Bob Woodward (Mail and Guardian, 2-7 April 2004).
3 Schraeder, Peter, guest editor, 1998, 'The Clinton Administration and Africa (1993-1999)', *Issue: a journal of opinion*, 26:2, page 1.
4 Swatuk, Larry A., 1998, 'The Clinton Administration and Africa: a view from Gaborone, Botswana', *Issue: a journal of opinion*, 26:2, p. 64.

trade programmes geared to benefit countries pursuing political and economic liberalisation.

Five years later, in July 2003, another god of the Western material world – U.S. President George W. Bush – alighted on the African continent, this time for five days. His words of wisdom: 'America supports democratic and economic reforms in Africa because we know the power of freedom to lift whole nations and bring new opportunities to millions. And in a time of growing commerce across the globe, we are working to ensure that the nations of Africa are full partners in the trade and prosperity of the world'.[5] Does saying it make it so? Are Bush's words likely to introduce order where before there was only chaos, or introduce disorder where there had been harmony? What are Bush's shocking solutions to seemingly impossible problems?

In this essay, I discuss current U.S. foreign policy toward Africa. My central argument is that while specific aspects of this policy are innovative, important and beneficial to all involved, the basic assumptions underpinning America's 'grand strategy' ensure that these benefits will be short lived, that chaos, far from being the 'African condition,' arises out of wider Western policy prescriptions, and that apparently impossible problems beg for more realistic solutions. These, however, are unlikely to be forthcoming – America's war on terror ensures a policy of containment for the continent for the foreseeable future.

5 U.S. Department of State, 2004, '*Remarks by US Ambassador to the UN John D. Negroponte to the Retreat on Economic and Security Issues in Africa'*, (January 20), available at http://allafrica.com/stories/200401210024.html.

(Mis)Understanding Africa

Such a narrowly self-interested U.S. foreign policy grows naturally out of Western engagement with Africa through history. For nearly 400 years, Europeans have regarded Africa's place in global affairs as a 'magnificent cake' of natural resources – from flowers and ostrich feathers to oil, diamonds and uranium – and a dauntingly complex human and geophysical space upon which to play geopolitical chess and try on a wide variety of hare-brained ideas. So, contemporary Western theories of 'development', 'democratic transition' and 'peacebuilding' have their historical antecedents in the 'white man's burden' and the 'mission civilatrice'.[6] The slave trade, the destruction of indigenous empires, the subjection of foreign peoples, and the formal annexation of territory – important in intra-European mercantilist competition – were justified by scientific 'facts' regarding the backwardness of people of colour and religious prejudices regarding Christian supremacy. Without doubt, elite Africans played a part in this unhappy history of imperialist conquest, as Europeans exploited historical differences, competition and prejudices. But the politico-economic reasoning underpinning such actions reflected the needs and interests of Europeans – not Africans.

For Hans Morgenthau (1978: 357), this proved that Africa itself had no history; at best it was a footnote in the grand narrative of the world's great powers: such has been and continues to be the arrogance of the European toward Africa.[7] This basic fact has not changed and, in my view, lies at the heart of most of Africa's problems today.

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[6] Swatuk, Larry A., 2001, 'The 'Brothers Grim': Modernity and International Relations in Southern Africa', in K. Dunn and T.M. Shaw, eds, Africa's Challenge to International Relations Theory, (London: Palgrave).
[7] Morgenthau, Hans, 1978, Politics Among Nations, 5th ed., (New York: Knopf).

For some scholars, the end of the Cold War marked a chance for Africans to write their own history. With the demise of the Soviet Union, superpower 'overlay'[8] would disappear from regional relations, so making space for African issues to be treated by and for Africans.[9] Other scholars regarded this new form of regionalism as a necessary political response to the negative impacts of particularly economic globalisation.[10]

While there are aspects of a 'new regionalism' discernible on the continent, the end of superpower rivalry meant an end to artificial stability fostered by U.S. and Soviet support for a sordid range of dictators – Barre, Botha, Boigny, Doe, Mobutu, to name but a handful. In the absence of 'overlay' came new wars[11] [12] and hence new challenges for the triumphalist West.

These wars were explained to Western policy makers as a 'new barbarism': beyond the stability afforded by superpower rivalry, Africans had returned to their violent and backward ways. The new barbarism thesis was first explored by Robert Kaplan in an infamous article written for the U.S. publication *The Atlantic Monthly*.[13] Using Sierra Leone as his point of departure, Kaplan argued that the war was a product of social breakdown due to over-population and environmental decay. Moreover, the war was not an isolated phenomenon but an indication of 'the coming anarchy', the main title of his article.

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8 Buzan, Barry, 1991, People, States and Fear, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner).
9 Swatuk, Larry A., 2000, 'Power and Water: the coming order in Southern Africa', in B. Hettne, A. Inotai and O. Sunkel, eds, The New Regionalism and the Future of Security and Development, (London: Macmillan), p. 216.
10 Hettne, Bjorn, 2001, 'Regional Cooperation for Security and Development in Africa', in P. Vale, L.A. Swatuk and B. Oden, eds, Theory, Change and Southern Africa's Future, (London: Palgrave).
11 Kaldor, Mary, 1999, New and Old Wars: organized violence in a global era (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press).
12 Duffield, Mark, 2001, Global Governance and the New Wars, (London: Zed).
13 Kaplan, Robert, 1994, 'The Coming Anarchy', *Atlantic Monthly*, 273, no. 2, pp. 44-76

While Africanists around the world refuted Kaplan's thesis by demonstrating the way in which, in Richards' words, ''we' and 'they' have made this bungled world of Atlantic-edge rain-forest-cloaked violence together'[14] – and so shared responsibility also for its resolution – high-level Western policy makers were faxing Kaplan's article to their embassies throughout the world.[15] Kaplan's article seemed to confirm centuries worth of prejudice directed toward people of colour, particularly those on the 'dark continent'. It also helped absolve Western policy makers of any responsibility for this and other conflicts there.

Africa's condition – indeed, 'the African condition' – is pre-explained in Western policy making circles – from Washington to White Hall to Berlin. This pre-explanation permits the development of a sort of automated or cybernetic foreign policy making, where a perceived rise in continental temperature results in the application of certain forms of assistance intended as self-correcting mechanisms. The foreign policy goal, the rhetoric of 'partnership' notwithstanding, is to 'keep the lid on', to keep the African pot from boiling over. So, low economic growth requires structural adjustment; political instability requires peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations; widespread poverty requires support for health and education; political corruption requires transparent governance. It is like a game of 'connect-the-dots'. Given that the overall goal is system maintenance – i.e. to keep Africa from intruding not only in great power politics but upon Western consumerist lives[16] – rarely is it ever asked if these prescriptions 'work', that is lead to economic growth, political stability and poverty alleviation.

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[14] Richards, Paul, 1996, Fighting for the Rainforest: war, youth and resources in Sierra Leone, (Oxford: James Currey), p. xvii.
[15] Ellis, Stephen, 1999, The Mask of Anarchy, (New York: New York University Press), p. 19.
[16] Connelly, M. and P. Kennedy, 1994, 'Must it be the West against the Rest?' *Atlantic Monthly*, 274, no. 6, pp. 61-83.

What permits operation of this automated form of policy making is a combination of three things:

- Africa's entrenched place in the Western imaginary as the 'heart of darkness', as an unknowable 'other';
- Africa's continuing economic role as a resource cake for Western consumption (centrally oil and strategic minerals but once again including cheap labour); and
- The Western conviction that liberal democracy and the market economy marks the 'end of history' [17]

Given these assumptions, a nuanced foreign policy is not necessary. Moreover, as the 'African condition' is pre-explained, so too is failure: because the continent is chaotic and violent, it is unlikely that anything will 'work' there[18]; what can be expected is, at best, a sort of violence that is low-level, persistent, sub-national and diffuse.[19] In the context of America's 'war on terror', keeping the lid on the African pot is more important than ever.

Sub-national is a key term. For, whereas anthropologists, geographers, ecologists, linguists, musicologists and (perhaps) sociologists recognise diversity and complexity, the policy making community admits only to states, most of which in Africa are 'weak', 'failed' or 'collapsed'.[20] The U.S. has designated certain Sub-Saharan African states as 'key' to its overall foreign policy: South Africa, Nigeria, Ethiopia and Kenya. While not 'strong' states by traditional Westphalian or social-contractarian definitions, South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya are dominant actors in Southern, West and

[17] Fukuyama, Francis, 2002, 'History and September 11', in Ken Booth and Tim Dunne, eds, Worlds in Collision: terror and the future of global order (London: Palgrave).
[18] Ferguson, James, 1990, The Anti-Politics Machine, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press).
[19] Homer-Dixon, Thomas, 1999, Environment, Scarcity and Violence, (Princeton: Princeton University Press).
[20] This typology is interrogated in Luckham, R. and G. Cawthra, eds, Governing Insecurity, (London: Zed), 2003.

East Africa respectively. Each is a multi-ethnic state with a large population (45, 114 and 31 million respectively), sharing borders with several other states. In the Nigerian case, roughly half of the population are Muslims. Islam plays a much less central role in either Kenya or South Africa, but as cosmopolitan countries with large port cities, located in regions with significant and growing Muslim populations, each is considered a potential conduit for terrorists. Nigeria also is a point from which to keep an eye on West Africa's growing oil exports to America. According to Lobe, West Africa is 'a troubled region that now provides more than 15% of all U.S. oil imports, a percentage slated to rise to 25% within 12 years'.[21] Ethiopia, strategically located vis à vis the Arab world, has a large population (63 million) of whom about 30 per cent are Muslims.

A key question for Western policy makers is how to strengthen weak states, or, if already failing or collapsed, how to contain the effects within national borders. Although former National Security Advisor Anthony Lake described this as a strategy 'of enlargement of the world's … community of market democracies', many observers regard this as reminiscent of the Cold War policy of containment.[22] According to Acting U.S. undersecretary of state for Africa, Charles Snyder, 'The continent's crises and conflicts, as well as the brutal HIV/AIDS pandemic, breed instability, which opens new safe harbors for our enemies. In short, for these reasons and others, what happens in Africa impacts the United States and our policy needs to reflect this reality … [U.S. Africa policy must] take away the reasons that people are susceptible to the approach by the fundamentalist hardliners'.[23]

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[21] Lobe, Jim, 2003, '*Pentagon's 'footprint' growing in Africa'*, (12 May) available at www.fpif.org.
[22] Farber, H. and J. Gowa, 1995, 'Polities and Peace', *International Security*, 20:2, pp. 123-46.
[23] Ellis, Susan, 2004, '*U.S. National Security Interests in Africa Outlined'*, (16 April), available at www.usinfo.state.gov .

The Specifics of U.S. Africa Policy

The basic approach to the continent under Bush deviates little from that under Clinton save for the urgent language of the war on terrorism: 'disease, war, and desperate poverty … threatens both a core value of the United States – preserving human dignity – and our strategic priority – combating global terror'.[24] Clinton's Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Susan Rice, articulated two broad objectives in U.S. Africa policy: '[I]ntegrating Africa into the global economy by promoting economic development, democracy, and respect for human rights, and conflict resolution', and 'defending the United States against transnational security threats emanating from Africa'.[25]

According to the White House web site identified above, there are three pillars to the Bush African Policy:

1. Strategic approach

    - Work with key anchor states in each sub-region
    - Support sub-regional organisation
    - Engage the African Union

2. Clear policy priorities

    - Combat HIV/AIDS pandemic
    - Advance political and economic freedom
    - Promote peace and regional stability

[24] The White House, 2004, 'African Policy', (25 January), available at www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/africa/.
[25] Copson, Raymond W., 2001, 'IB95052: Africa: U.S. Foreign Assistance Issues', CRS Issue Brief for Congress, available at www.ncseonline.org/NLE/CRSreports/Economics/econ-51.cfm.

3. Principles of bilateral engagement

- Good governance
- Economic reform
- Promote health and education

Let me briefly examine each in turn. With regard to the strategic approach, following the debacle of Somalia in 1993, further direct U.S. engagement in peace missions on the continent remains unlikely. 'The UN intervention in Somalia from 1992 to 1996, costing the United States $3 billion and 26 dead by 1994, stands as a warning of the pitfalls to officials of a conventional policy of direct intervention in Africa's 'failed states''.[26] Stabilising weak states, therefore, must be undertaken at one remove. This is being done through multilateral assistance. For example, the U.S. and European Union are paying for Ethiopian and Mozambican elements of the 3500 strong African Union-led African Mission in Burundi (AMIB), the peacekeeping force put in place following the 2001 Abuja Agreement.[27] In terms of U.S. Africa policy it is also being pursued through support for peacekeeping training activities via the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI); and through activities such as the Economic Support Fund (ESF), Foreign Military Financing (FMF) and the International Military Education and Training (IMET) programme. The ESF and FMF in the past have provided grants for strategically important countries to purchase U.S. military equipment. IMET provides small grants for training purposes. The total funds allocated through these channels are not great. For fiscal year 2001, $20 million was requested under the peacekeeping operations programme for the ACRI, and another $15 million 'to support initiatives that promote

[26] Reno, William, 1998b, 'The Clinton Administration and Africa: Private Corporate Dimension', *Issue: a journal of opinion*, 26:2, p. 23.
[27] *Mail and Guardian*, 26 March – 1 April 2004

regional peace and security'. $18 million had been allocated under FMF and, in general, allocations under IMET 'run well under $1 million per country, except for South Africa where $1.2 million [was] allocated for FY 2001'.[28] Overall contributions to international peacekeeping activities have been steadily rising – from approximately $33.3 million in 1999 to $88.7 million in 2000 and $260.5 million in 2001.[29]

Recently, the U.S. announced the Pan-Sahel Initiative, 'an effort to engage governments in this region and build their capacity to effectively monitor their borders … including their extensive coastlines and offshore platforms' (Snyder, quoted in Ellis, 2004). This complements a similar $100 million initiative for East Africa announced by Bush during his African visit.[30]

Through these activities, the U.S. is able to pursue its interest in containment by enhancing the military, policing and surveillance capabilities of key states, sub-regional (such as ECOWAS and SADC) and regional (the African Union) organisations. But one should not overestimate U.S. interest in seeing African regional conflicts resolved once and for all. As Cox reminds us, America did not intervene in Rwanda 'not because it was unable to act but because it chose not to. The decision therefore was not symptomatic of a lack of leadership or power, as some have claimed, but rather a studied calculation about how best to utilise its assets in situations where it had no vital interest'.[31] Where no vital U.S. interest is at stake, sometimes very high levels of

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[28] Copson, Raymond W., 2001, 'IB95052: Africa: U.S. Foreign Assistance Issues', CRS Issue Brief for Congress, available at www.ncseonline.org/NLE/CRSreports/Economics/econ-51.cfm.

[29] Ibid.

[30] www.state.gov/secretary/trvl/22269.htm

31 Cox, Michael, 2002, 'September 11th and U.S. Hegemony – Or Will the 21st Century Be American Too?' *International Studies Perspectives*, 3:1 (February): p.66.

violence and instability (Rwanda, Burundi, Sudan, DRC, Sierra Leone) are tolerated, even where there would seem to be an historical responsibility to intervene (Liberia).

In terms of clear policy priorities, the Bush White House 'has declared that combating AIDS is a top policy priority'. In 2001, Bush supported the creation of the Global Fund to fight HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, and pledged $200 million per year. For Colgan, this pales in comparison to 'the $3.5 billion per year that would be an equitable U.S. contribution, based on the U.S. share of the global economy'.[32] In January 2003, Bush announced the $15 billion Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. Again, according to Colgan, 'to coordinate the new AIDS initiative, President Bush is creating a new U.S. bureaucracy that will compete directly with the Global Fund'.[33] Bush appointed a pharmaceutical company executive, Randall Tobias, as its Coordinator. Among other things, critics feel this to be an attempt on the part of the Bush administration to defend U.S. pharmaceutical companies against global manufacturers of generics.[34] Booker, Minter and Colgan describe this as a growing trend toward 'U.S. unilateralism' which 'is likely to be directly at odds with African interests in building multilateral approaches to its greatest challenges from HIV/AIDS to international trade rules and peacekeeping'.[35]

In pressing for political and economic freedom, the Bush administration continues the post-Cold War argument that global peace and prosperity are attainable via a combination of liberal democracy and market-driven economics (see Swatuk and Vale, 1999, for a critique). This is the familiar 'end of history' thesis which, despite the events

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[32] Colgan, Ann-Louise, 2003, 'The State of U.S. Africa Policy', presentation at Africa Action's first Annual Baraza, (October 3), available at http://www.africaaction.org/events/baraza/2003/policy.php.
[33] Ibid.
[34] http://www.africaaction.org/events/baraza/2003/policy.php
35 Booker, S., W. Minter, and A-L Colgan, 2003, 'Policy Report: Africa Policy Outlook 2003', (1 March) available at www.fpif.org.

of 11 September 2001 and subsequent developments, Fukuyama maintains 'remains correct':

> "The United States and other developed democracies will remain the dominant force in world politics, and the institutions embodying the West's underlying principles of freedom and equality will continue to spread around the world."[36]

However, far from some inexorable law of politics, there is a strong hint of the normative and contingent in Fukuyama's analysis: 'Western institutions hold all the cards and for that reason will continue to spread across the globe in the long run'.[37] Nevertheless, there has been a barrage of popular, academic and commissioned think-tank literature to justify such a policy position – the equally familiar 'democratic peace' analysis.

Washington wields much of its influence here indirectly – through its domination of key economic institutions, in particular the World Bank and IMF. These international financial institutions (IFIs) exercise massive power on the African continent, directly through structural adjustment programmes (SAPs), and indirectly through the broad Western consensus that to be eligible for new money from the IFIs (or any money from external lenders, for that matter), a borrower must show evidence of political reform toward liberal democracy. Fukuyama argues that '[e]conomic development in turn tends to engender liberal democracy – not inevitably, but often enough that the correlation between development and democracy constitutes one of the few generally accepted laws of political science'.[38]

36 Fukuyama, Francis, 2002, 'History and September 11', in Ken Booth and Tim Dunne, eds, Worlds in Collision: terror and the future of global order (London: Palgrave), p. 28.
37 Ibid., p. 35.
38 Ibid., p. 29.

The cross conditionality of political reform is evident throughout U.S. Africa policy. For example, the 1996 international agreement on debt reduction for highly indebted poor countries (HIPC) ties debt forgiveness and soft loans directly to political and economic liberalisation. Thirty-one of Sub-Saharan Africa's 48 states are classified as highly indebted and low income. Total continental debt hovers around $300 billion, while annual interest payments are in the area of $15 billion. These totals far outstrip OECD aid to the continent (total U.S. Africa aid is in the neighbourhood of $1.7 billion per year), resulting in a net outflow of capital from the continent to the rich countries of the global North.[39]

The two flagship U.S.-Africa economic programmes, the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA), engage African states in bilateral agreements that give privileged access to U.S. markets for producers who, among other things, are undergoing consolidation of democracy. The MCA is a global initiative for which Bush has asked $1.3 billion for 2004. To be eligible for funds, countries must pass a strict assessment 'based on 16 indicators, six for 'governing justly', four for 'investing in people', and six for 'promoting economic freedom' … [A]ll indicators are based on data provided by a narrow range of institutions: 10 indicators from the World Bank, 2 from the IMF, 2 from Freedom House, 1 from *International Investor* magazine, and 1 from the Heritage Foundation'. Ghana, Senegal and Uganda are likely to be the only African countries to qualify for funds.[40] While AGOA increases African trade in manufactures with the U.S., a variety of restrictions exist ensuring that these manufacturing enterprises continue to operate as little more than Export

[39] See Adar, Korwa, 1998, 'The Clinton Administration and Africa: a view from Nairobi, Kenya', *Issue: a journal of opinion*, 26:2, pp. 70-74, for one view.
40 Booker, Minter, and Colgan, 2003, at www.fpif.org

Processing Zones (EPZs), where site, service and labour are provided by Africans and spun textiles are sourced from U.S. manufacturers.

Colgan argues that 'U.S. trade policies, exemplified by AGOA, have succeeded in perpetuating the continent's role as a source of raw materials and cheap labour.[41] The U.S. continues to insist on free market solutions to Africa's development challenges, and to promote the interests of American corporations. But it refuses to dismantle trade barriers and level the playing field in the global economy'.[42] What should also be mentioned here, of course, are the many anti-democratic and unsavoury links promoted by private sector actors in Africa, most prominently continuing U.S. corporate dependence on private security companies to safeguard resource extraction.[43]

A major conduit for U.S. assistance to Africa is the U.S. Agency for International Development. USAID's focus is increasingly sub-regional and issue oriented (e.g. health, education, environment). Sub-regional involvement may be through formal organisations (e.g. SADC, ECOWAS, IGAD), or more creative networks based on, for example, stakeholders in river basins and rain forests. This trend away from bilateral aid programmes is in line with OECD trends: the European Union, the Nordics together and separately, Canada and the Netherlands, to name several, all pursue assistance programmes targeting a specific issue (e.g. water policy reforms) within multi-state and multi-partnership frameworks (so including, *inter alia*, private companies, universities, NGOs). In the case of USAID, a good example is CARPE – the Central African

41 Colgan (2003)
42 Ibid.
43 Reno, William, 1998a, Warlord Politics and African States, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner).
Also see Reno, William, 1998b, 'The Clinton Administration and Africa: Private Corporate Dimension', *Issue: a journal of opinion,* 26:2, pp. 23-28.

Regional Programme for the Environment. Within the ambit of CARPE, USAID has initiated the Congo Basin Forest Partnership (CBFP) wherein '[t]he U.S. government will invest up to $53 million … over four years (2002-05), of which approximately $48 million will be provided by USAID through CARPE. Partner NGOs such as the World Wildlife Fund, World Conservation Society, and Conservation International have committed to matching this contribution'.[44] The goals of CBFP are to:

1. Provide people with sustainable means of livelihood through well-managed forestry concessions, sustainable agriculture, and integrated ecotourism programs;

2. Improve forest and natural resource governance through community-based management, combating of illegal logging, and enforcement of anti-poaching laws; and

3. Help the Congo Basin countries develop a network of effectively management parks, protected areas, and ecological corridors.

While the CBFP will include state and non-state institutions and organisations in Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Republic of Congo, its specific geographical focus will be 'landscapes', not states. Similar transboundary initiatives are underway in West, East and Southern Africa.[45] The fundamental starting point for such innovative approaches is that for world order values – peace, economic growth, ecological sustainability – to be realised in the continent, Africa's states must move together, on the basis of a shared 'regional vision'. Based on this premise, USAID/Regional Centre for Southern Africa outlined three strategic and two special objectives in its 1997-2003 strategic plan. The strategic

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[44] Fact Sheet, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, Washington, DC., December 2, 2002 *Congo Basin Forest Partnership: U.S. Contribution*. Fournd at www.state.gov/g/oes/rls/fs/2002/15617.htm

[45] See Swatuk, Larry A., 2002a, 'The New Water Architecture in Southern Africa: reflections on current trends in the light of Rio +10', *International Affairs*, 78:3. and Swatuk, Larry A., 2002b, 'Environmental peacemaking in Southern Africa', in Ken Conca and Geoffrey D. Dabelko, eds, Environmental Peacemaking, (Washington: Johns Hopkins University Press).

objectives are increased regional capacity to influence democratic performance; a more integrated regional market; and accelerated regional adoption of sustainable agriculture and natural resource management approaches. The two special objectives are the promotion of transboundary natural resource management, in particular water and wilderness areas; and development of a regional capacity for more informed decision making.[46]

USAID's vision for Africa is one where goods, capital, services, and labour move freely; where economies of scale are realized; and where international private and public capital and technical expertise are actively involved in the construction of an increasingly complex regional road, rail, port, telecommunications, energy, and industrial grid that stretches from the Cape to Cairo. For this vision to be realized, and a more integrated continental market to emerge, 'reduced barriers to entry in the regional market require liberalisation policies, taxes and regulations that reduce investment barriers, rationalised or reduced tariff and non-tariff barriers, and increased use of financial services'.[47] These criteria have been reiterated in its 2003-2008 draft plan.[48] Such a vision mirrors that presented in the various continental development plans mooted over the last six or seven years: Mbeki's 'African Renaissance' first articulated in 1996; his subsequent New Africa Initiative; Wade's Omega Plan; the 2001 World Economic Forum-launched Millennium African Recovery Plan (MARP). All have since crystallised into NEPAD, the New Partnership for African Development – a neo-liberal

46 U.S. Agency for International Development/Regional Centre for Southern Africa, 1997, Regional Integration Through Partnership and Participation: RCSA Strategic Plan 1997-2003 (Gaborone, August).
47 Ibid., p. 2.
48 USAID/RCSA, 2002, *Draft RCSA Strategic Plan 2003-2008*, mimeo.

manifesto the tenor of which the West happily supports with words but little capital investment.[49]

While many of these USAID programmes are innovative and important – transboundary resource management, community based development – one might rightly question whether all this activity enhances regional peace and security. As Luckham points out: '[H]umanitarian interventions including emergency assistance, peacekeeping, conflict resolution, post-conflict reconstruction and support for democracy have assumed increasing importance.[50] However, this new international humanitarianism has paid disappointingly meagre dividends'. Luckham goes on to argue that analysts and policy makers 'still have an enormous amount to learn about the most basic issues: how to prevent and resolve conflicts; how to contain the spread of violence within and across national boundaries; how to demobilise combatants (politically, as well as militarily); and how to build a sustainable democratic peace'.[51]

This brings me back to Fukuyama and the 'laws' of democratic development. All policy documents emanating from the U.S. emphasise the simultaneous promotion of liberal democracy and open-market economies. Ikenberry labels this 'liberal grand strategy', while Nau calls it 'national security liberalism.[52] Such a perspective has led, in the most unlikely situations, to a post-conflict rush to the ballot box: elections are slated for Burundi in November 2004; and for the DRC and Côte d'Ivoire in 2005. How likely is it that democracy will be consolidated in places where the signing of 'peace accords' is

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[49] See for details, Vale, Peter and Sipho Maseko, 1998, 'South Africa and the African Renaissance', *International Affairs*, 74:2. and Taylor, Ian and Philip Nel, 2002, ''New Africa', globalization and the confines of elite reformism: getting the rhetoric right, getting the strategy wrong', *Third World Quarterly*, 23:1, 163-80.

[50] Luckham, 2003, p. 12.

[51] Ibid.

52 Cox, Michael, J. Ikenberry and T. Inogouchi, eds, 2000, American Democracy Promotion, (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

simply an excuse to rest and re-arm?[53] And what sort of democracy can abide in states with no middle class, where the economy is a rent-economy and the leading class is a bourgeoisie dependent on access to state power?[54] Moreover, in the one state where America pins most of its hope for success – South Africa – a key fact of economic liberalisation has been cumulative job losses of more than 1 million people since 1994. While the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) continues to partner with the ANC in its Government of National Unity, one wonders how long it will be before the coalition splits. The answers to these questions should be self-evident.

Liberal democracy is most robust where capitalism has put down deep roots. There is little evidence to suggest that anything other than a shallow sort of patrimonial democracy can survive outside vigorous capitalist development. Yet America's 'grand strategy' extended to Africa does nothing to foster such development. Indeed, in the one state where capitalism is deepest, South Africa, liberalisation is actively digging up these roots.[55] Liberalisation undermines local firms whose economies of scale are no match for even average-sized foreign firms. It thus leads to heightened levels of unemployment, and continent-wide deindustrialisation. It is no accident that South African companies, unable to compete with international producers in their home market, are now investing heavily in the continent. As imported goods produced by globalised American and European firms wreak havoc on producers at home, so South African goods strangle production in, among others, Zambia, Uganda, Kenya and

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[53] Clapham, Christopher, 1995, 'Problems of Peace Enforcement: some lessons from multinational peacekeeping operations in Africa', in Jakkie Cilliers and Greg Mills, eds, Peacekeeping in Africa, (Johannesburg: Institute for Defence Policy).
[54] See Luckham, 2003.and Callaghy, Thomas, 1987, 'The State as Lame Leviathan: the patrimonial administrative state in Africa', in Zaki Ergas, ed., The African State in Transition, (New York: St. Martin's).
[55] Bond, Patrick, 2002, Unsustainable South Africa: environment, development and social protest, (Natal: University of Natal Press).

Nigeria. Supporters of neo-liberalism would say that this is all to the benefit of consumers, but in the context of jobless growth, these 'consumers' constitute a narrow band of already well-placed, empowered African elites.

Given what I have just stated, America's principles of bilateral engagement – that African states pursue good governance and economic reform, and promote health and education – look to me an odd mix. Pressing for elections in weak states made weaker and more unstable by structural adjustment reforms creates at best a smattering of what Steve Smith labels 'low intensity democracies' scattered across the continent – Ghana, Kenya, Botswana.[56] At worst, it fans the flames of physical violence where structural violence in the form of endemic poverty already weighs heavily upon fraught populations – Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire, DRC.[57] Promoting health and education, therefore, appears little more than a sop to Africanists interested in seeing a U.S. Africa policy which puts Africa first and to African populations long ignored in the making and carrying out of U.S. 'grand strategy'. To quote John F. Clark: 'As in the past, U.S. aid serves more to signal U.S. preferences and to reward 'good behaviour' as much as to promote real development, for which purpose it is entirely insufficient'.[58]

Where to go from here?

U.S. Africa policy is made by and for Americans. This is not atypical: all Western policy toward Africa is designed, in the first instance, to further Western state and corporate interests nationally and, in the second instance, vis à vis each other. Given

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[56] See, Smith in Cox, etal, 2000, Graf, William D., 1996, 'Democratization 'for' the Third World: Critique of a Hegemonic Project', *Canadian Journal of Development Studies*, special issue, pp. 37-56. and Luckham, 2003.
[57] See Vale, 1999. and Poku, Nana, ed., 2001, Security and Development in Southern Africa, (Westport, CT: Praeger).
[58] Clark, John F., 1998, 'The Clinton Administration and Africa: White House involvement and the Foreign Affairs Bureaucracy', *Issue: a journal of opinion*, 26:2, pp. 8-13.

that fully 70% of world trade is intra-core (U.S.-European Union-Japan), this is not surprising.[59] Sometimes these interests overlap and lead to multilateral forums, institutions and approaches. But these instances of global governance may also provide the locus for inter-state competition – hence the so-called neo liberal-neo realist synthesis.[60] Leaders of African states, as bit actors in this big power drama, are forced to adapt to a situation not of their own making, with NEPAD being the latest manifestation of this historical condition. Western hegemony manifests in the continent as both hard and soft power[61] – not only in terms of military and monetary power, but in terms of ideas regarding proper forms of states, and legitimate economic and social practices. Underpinning Western hegemony is a mix of what Weber calls conscious and unconscious ideologies: liberalism in the case of the former; but, more perniciously, 'chaotic, violent, backward Africa' in the case of the latter.[62]

Given this formidable mix of interests and ideologies, it is difficult to see a way beyond the neo-neo synthesis in Africa. It is not as if there are no alternatives to containment, political co-optation and economic exploitation. A casual perusal of the papers presented by scholars at the annual meeting of the American-based African Studies Association reveals a consensus on the necessary first steps forward.[63] These include: unequivocal debt forgiveness and unqualified access to American and European markets for African goods. African states have paid off the principle of their oil-shock induced debts a hundred times over. Deepening capitalism in the continent

[59] Stallings, Barbara, ed., 1995, Global Change, Regional Response: the new international context of development, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
[60] Ruggie, John G., 1998, Constructing the World Polity: essays on international institutionalism, (London: Routledge).
[61] Nye, Joseph, 1990, Bound to Lead: the changing nature of American power (New York: Basic Books).
[62] Weber, Cynthia, 2001, International Relations Theory: a critical introduction, (New York: Routledge), p. 5.. See also Peterson, V. Spike, 2003, A Critical Rewriting of Global Political Economy, (New York: Routledge), chapter 2.
[63] Visit www.sas.upenn.edu/African_Studies/Home_Page/ASA_Menu.html.

(for that is what ultimately America and the West claim to want) requires long-term capital investment for industrial production (be it consumptive, as in joining an automotive producer-driver commodity chain via the making of windscreens from the glass produced from Kalahari sands, or non-consumptive, as in eco-tourism). Instability encourages an unenviable combination of national capital flight, international capital speculation, and resource predation (as in blood diamonds or clear-cut logging). Korwa Adar rhetorically asks why there is no 'Marshall Plan for Africa'.[64] The answer, of course, is that America's primary policy goal in Africa – keeping the lid on – is a sort of foreign policy that is inexpensive and requires very little thought. In Bourmand's view, this is 'the darker side of U.S. hyper-power'.[65]

However, history shows that capitalist, industrial development precedes liberal democracy. In the absence of this sort of economic development, it is unlikely that democratic transitions, peacekeeping/making/building efforts, transboundary resource management projects, among other things will be sustainable. The blind commitment to the simultaneous pursuit of structural adjustment and liberal democracy ensures instability in the continent.[66]

When there are positive developments in U.S. Africa policy it is usually the result of a well-placed bureaucrat pushing very hard in the opposite direction (on occasion, Herman Cohen when he was Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs; former Department of Commerce Secretary Brown), or concerted lobbying by the Congressional Black Caucus (whose historical behaviour is in line with the 'new

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[64] Adar, Korwa, 1998, 'The Clinton Administration and Africa: a view from Nairobi, Kenya', *Issue: a journal of opinion*, 26:2, pp. 70-74.
[65] Bourmand, Daniel, 1998, 'The Cliniton Administration and Africa: a view from Paris, France', *Issue: a journal of opinion*, 26:2, pp. 47-51.
[66] See Vale, 1999. and Graf, 1996.

humanitarianism' in global governance).[67] Their central importance aside, the beauty of debt forgiveness and access to markets is that these are issue areas where the American state can act and have a direct positive impact on conditions in Africa.

Beyond these basic policy positions, 'actionable' policy becomes more difficult. A hallmark of Africa is the way in which the colonially-imposed Westphalian state form sits lightly upon the continent.[68] By and large, ordinary Africans do not regard the state as necessary to their survival. (There are some exceptions to this rule, of course: Botswana, Namibia, South Africa.) It is for this reason that those in charge of the post-colonial state have regarded it as a personal fief – as a means of capital accumulation and patronage.[69] Since Western expectations of the Westphalian state form (particularly as clients of dominant foreign powers) require surveillance and control of populations, African 'leaders' have long used the state as a mechanism of repression with superpower blessing. Many academics have pointed out that this is merely the continuation of the way in which colonial powers behaved within the juridical boundaries of the colony. It also explains the average African's general suspicion of 'the state'. The post-Cold War era may have changed Western policy makers' perceptions of the purpose of the African state and African leaders, but it has not changed the fact that much of what goes on in the continent continues to be far beyond formal political control. Terms such as the 'informal sector', 'shadow states', and 'warlord politics' only hint at the extent of self-governing civil society in Africa.[70] Myriad Western actors are

[67] See the various contributions to Schraeder, Peter, guest editor, 1998, 'The Clinton Administration and Africa (1993-1999)', *Issue: a journal of opinion*, 26:2.; also, Cohen, Herman, 2000, Intervening in Africa: superpower peacemaking in a troubled continent, (London: Palgrave).
[68] Herbst, Jeffrey , 2000, States and Power in Africa, (Princeton: Princeton University Press).
[69] Callaghy, 1987.
[70] Clapham, Christopher, 1996, Africa and the International System, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press). And Reno, 1986a.

also involved – from chambers of commerce to church groups, from environmental NGOs to arms merchants – all busy conducting, if you will, their own personal 'foreign policies'.[71] 'Africa' may connote a particular physical geographic region, but it is clearly a globalised space. This fact renders impotent most, if not all, of the simplistic state-centric remedies of 'good governance' on offer from the U.S. State Department.

Coming to terms with this is not easy. It involves, at minimum, speaking with and listening to Africanists outside of routine policy networks. The last person to give you an accurate picture of Africa is a policy wonk working for the U.S. or the United Nations in Africa. The second last person to give you an accurate picture is an African consultant who will, in truth, never contradict the paymaster. In any event, it is far easier to retain a simplistic typology of states – weak, strong, developed, developing, collapsed, transitional – from which to derive policy options, than it is to interrogate the genesis of and basis for a particular state form, including its social relations of production.[72] Given policy makers' preference for simplicity – in analysis and practice – this suggests one basic strategy for African leaders: if you are designated one of the chosen few, you must by all means make the most of this before U.S. attention is drawn elsewhere. In the context of American hegemony within a neo-liberal world order, the same must be said for 'civil society' – use the current Western fascination for democratic space wisely. It will not last forever.

At the end of the day, it seems to me, none of this matters in the corridors of U.S. power anyway. U.S. grand strategy revolves around maintaining a global system in

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[71] Callaghy, Thomas, Ronald Kassimir and Robert Latham, eds, 2001, Intervention and Transnationalism in Africa, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

[72] Cox, Robert W., 1987, Production, Power and World Order, (New York: Columbia University Press). And Swatuk, Larry A., 1999, 'Remaking the State: Assessing South Africa's Developmental Agenda', in K. Mengisteab and C.K. Daddieh, eds, **State** Building and Democratization in Africa: faith, hope, and realities, (Westport, CT: Greenwood) for the South African case.

which American primacy is the basic principle of order.[73] Africa's place is marginal at best. At worst, it is regarded as the source of the 'coming anarchy', thus requiring a *cordon sanitaire*. With recent American moves toward rapprochement with Libya's Qaddafi and the thugs who run Equatorial Guinea, it appears that construction of the cordon has already begun: one that keeps the oil flowing out and the terrorists in.

[73] Brzezinski, Zbigniew, 1997, The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives, (New York: Basic Books).

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