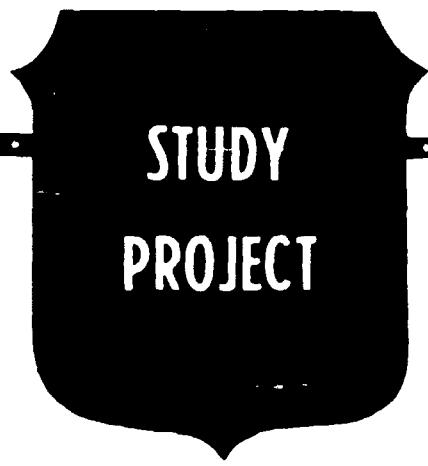
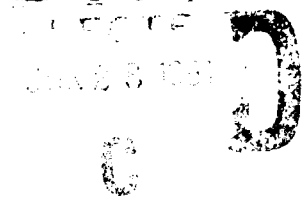
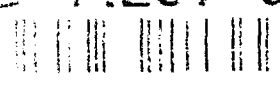


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A REVISIONIST VIEW OF NATION ASSISTANCE IN AFRICA

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL JOHN P. BASILOTTO  
United States Army

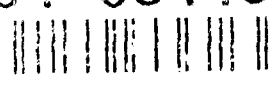
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A REVISIONIST VIEW OF  
NATION ASSISTANCE IN AFRICA

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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United States Army

Colonel David E. Shaver  
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U.S. Army War College  
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013

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## ABSTRACT

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## INTRODUCTION

For the past 40 years the United States focus on national security has been the rivalry between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. This rivalry, with its military, economic, and ideological dimensions, has dominated the national security agenda for government officials, soldiers, and the American public. 1

The centerpieces of national security were the nuclear deterrent, large standing forces, and forward deployment of a substantial portion of these forces. 2 The American public and our allies accepted this as the "status quo."

However, recent developments in the Soviet Union and Europe have markedly changed the international landscape. For the Soviets, economic development, rather than military growth, is now their number one priority. The imminence of the Soviet threat, widely accepted by the American public and our allies, is being analyzed and closely scrutinized by both the public and private sectors of our society. As the international system changes, so will the nature of the threat. Much of the so-called Third World has acquired quantities of modern armaments. These nations and even sub-national groups can now pose military threats—at least on a regional basis. 3 These factors have served to raise the costs and reduce the benefits of the direct application of military force. 4 These changes are beginning to have a profound impact on the very meaning of national security.

Future threats to national security will increasingly

emanate from economic and demographic issues, in addition to political or ideological differences. 5 The principal role of the military during the 1990s' will be to prevent and limit conflict.

Security Assistance in the form of economic and military programs has long been considered by the United States Government as an indispensable means of nurturing our relations with other nations. Foreign assistance has traditionally supported security objectives by strengthening allies and friends, bolstering regional security, deterring conflict, and securing base rights and access. 6 As tensions between U.S. and the Soviets diminish, these programs become more relevant. However, proponents of security assistance, have always struggled for program survival in the congressional budget process. 7

In this paper I examine military aid, (or more specifically-nation assistance), as a means to counter the threat to world stability in Third World nations. I review the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' contributions in nation assistance programs because the Corps is a principal player in this effort. I selected Africa as the backdrop for this analysis for two reasons: first, Africa has forty eight Third World countries; and second, Africa is a highly unstable region of the world due to political, economic, and cultural turmoil.

The political and economic instability of the developing



world may pose a threat to our national interests. An appropriate response to this potential threat is to attack the roots of this instability-poverty, debt, ignorance, and inadequate and disproportioned economic development. Nation assistance may very well be the tool to alleviate these deficiencies.

#### MILITARY ASSISTANCE AS A U.S. POLICY INSTRUMENT IN THE THIRD WORLD

Our government has long recognized that various forms of foreign assistance are indispensable tools in protecting U.S. vital interests abroad. An integral part and historically successful means of delivering assistance to Third World nations has been through "Nation Assistance." 8

In a contemporary sense, nation assistance can be defined as the use of preponderantly military forces (both indigenous and external) on projects which enhance lines of communications, health, sanitation, public works, transportation, communications, and other activities which promote economic and social development. 9 Fundamentally, it is the use of military resources to improve economic and social conditions within a nation.

Nation assistance is different from the larger arena of civic action conducted by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), in that the assistance is provided by the military. AID personnel come from other government

agencies. In most developing countries, the most stable institution often is the military. More specifically, it is the military that has the organizational, technical, and professional capability to help local people develop economically and socially. By working side by side with the military, the local population can contribute to its own well being. In the process people begin to respect their government. This process can only be successful if the projects undertaken have a direct and "real time" positive impact on the community.

#### HOW NATION ASSISTANCE WORKS

The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (with amendments) authorizes the use of foreign aid, consisting primarily of economic and military assistance. The Act authorizes the President to furnish military assistance, consisting of material, logistical support and related training--without charge, to eligible foreign countries. When military aid programs are coupled with the assistance program designed to foster economic development and growth, the total set of programs is referred to as security assistance.

Congress appropriates funds annually to cover the costs of security assistance; however, none of these costs are incorporated in the Department of Defense (DOD) budget.

Foreign aid is administered by the State Department, yet DOD (particularly the military services) actually provides

most of the equipment or services delivered as security assistance. As a result of the State Department's role as the protagonist for foreign assistance, the Foreign Relations committees of the Congress, not the Armed Services committees, have legislative jurisdiction over authorizations. 10 This arrangement makes it difficult for Congress to relate foreign aid to the other elements of national power as part of an integrated, long term strategy, and forecloses public understanding and support that might be aided by hearings in which proposed aid funding was related to national security strategy across the board. 11

#### THE KEY PLAYERS

The Foreign Assistance Act charges the Secretary of State with administration of the Security Assistance Program. The primary action office for Security Assistance within DOD is the Defense Security Assistance Agency (DSAA.) DSAA is responsible for planning, administering, and accounting for all DOD involvement with Security Assistance. The Director, DSAA, reports to the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, and works closely with the State Department.

The Security Assistance Organization or SAO (also known as Military Assistance and Advisory Group--MAAG--or as Military Group-MILGRP) is located abroad. SAOs are the principal coordinators of in-country nation assistance. The commander of the SAO is part of the Ambassador's country team

and is chosen by the DSAA in coordination with the regional Commander-in-Chief (CINC) and the Ambassador. 12

Nation assistance is undertaken abroad by small military elements assembled for a particular mission. This type of nation assistance takes two forms. The most prevalent form is that of training or technical assistance provided by ad-hoc teams --i.e. Mobile Training Team (MTT), Technical Assistance Team (TAT), and New Equipment Training Team (NETT)--composed of individuals drawn from different sources. The second form of nation assistance is embedded in U.S. military exercises, for example-U.S. military engineers deployed to build roads and airstrips, digging wells, assessing and upgrading water supplies, and flood control.

Another major player in the nation assistance process is the Military Construction Agency (MCA) consisting of both the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and U.S. Navy Civil Engineer Corps. The MCA reports to the regional CINCs.

The CINC's of the regional unified commands are responsible for planning and directing the employment of U.S. forces in their areas of responsibility. They are inherently interested in security assistance to achieve U.S. strategic objectives.

It is Congress that has the greatest influence over security assistance programs. As was stated above, it is the Foreign Relations Committees that appropriate funds. These committees may add conditions and other restrictions of their own.

## THE DRAW BACKS

Security assistance overall has no domestic constituency to influence votes in Congress. It is misunderstood by and is unpopular with the general public. 13 Israel is one of the few countries with a strong lobbying effort on Capitol Hill. Consequently, Israel gets a large slice of the security assistance budget. Security Assistance programs for small developing countries suffer disproportionately from any budget cuts. Furthermore, security assistance for developing countries seems to involve small, troublesome programs with few strong bureaucratic advocates in the Executive Branch. 14

Although it would appear that the use of military personnel in nation assistance is advantageous, some critics have expressed major concerns. First, there are critics who contend the use of the military in nation assistance presses the armed forces closer to the seat of government, and therefore gives the military too much power. These critics think this increases the possibility of a military coup. Second, the use of the military is in direct conflict with civilian labor organizations. In essence, contractors cannot compete with a cheaper military force. Third, if the military can devote resources to civic action, then it must be too large. 15

The implementation of foreign assistance and aid in the form of nation assistance is a deeply involved and complex matter. The number of agencies and people involved in

determining how much assistance is required; which countries should be provided the assistance; and when should the assistance be made available is a very cumbersome and time consuming process. 16 As stated earlier, security assistance involves a myriad of players within the United States. Coordination becomes extremely complex when the host nation "players" are also involved.

### THE CHALLENGE

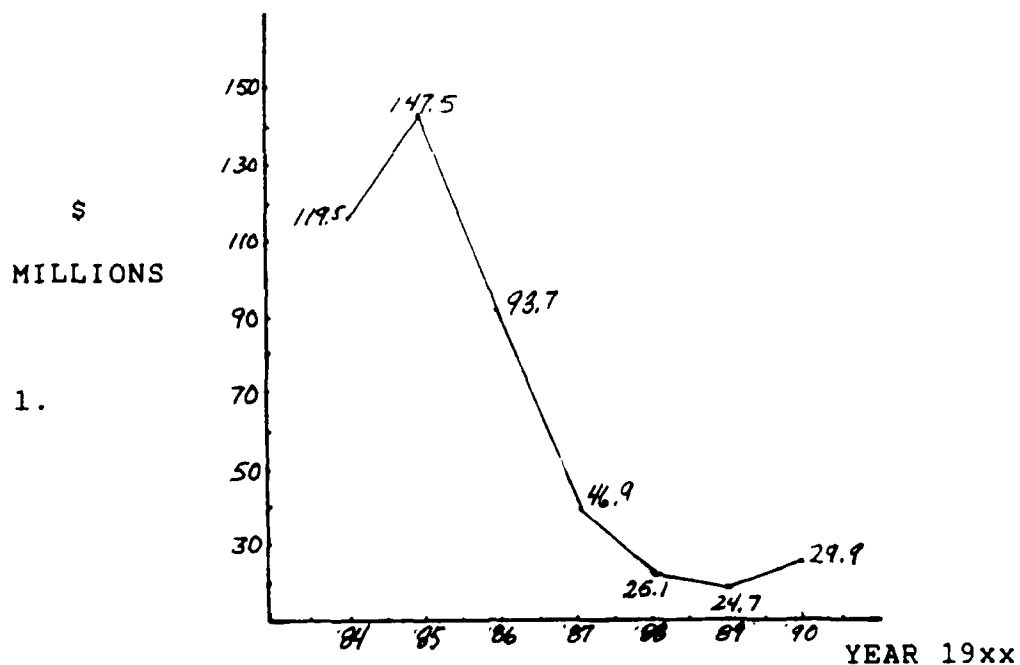
The Commission on Integrated Long-Term Strategy observed that "nearly all the armed conflicts of the past forty years have occurred in what is vaguely referred to as the Third World...in the same period, all the wars in which the United States was involved--either directly with its combat forces or indirectly with military assistance--occurred in the Third World." The Commission has held--as has virtually all other authorities on these issues over the past 40 years-- that a marginal dollar invested in security assistance buys more security for the United States than it could if allocated instead to U.S. forces. 17

### AFRICA--AN EMERGING CONTINENT

Human rights, economic needs, ideological competition, foreign intervention, great-power rivalry, local conflict situations, and competing foreign policy interests are combining to provide the toughest test yet of American credibility in Africa--tests not only of our obviously outdated assumptions, but also of our will, our principles, our perceptions, and our skill in responding to the challenges of a continent undergoing revolutionary transformations. 18

In 1988, total American Military Assistance Program (MAP) funding for all countries was \$4.7 billion. Of this amount, the African MAP program received only \$26 million. 19 This funding represents a small and shrinking apportionment. Figure 1 illustrates that assistance to Africa has been diminished to the point that whole country programs will have to be dropped. These facts seem to indicate that U.S. interest in Africa is peripheral to other interests, and it appears that Africa is of inconsequential strategic interest at present. Is this really the case? Will Africa be of strategic interest in the foreseeable future? Are there vital national interests in Africa? Should we increase foreign aid to Africa? These legitimate questions deserve answers if America expects to confront the challenges of a continent undergoing revolutionary change.

FIGURE 1.



## THE PROGNOSIS FOR AFRICA

No other part of the world has changed as dramatically during the last forty years as has Africa. The continent has evolved from a colonial hodge-podge into forty-six separate, independent countries. Having had virtually no voice in world affairs before the mid-twentieth century, Africa now has nearly a third of the votes in the United Nations General Assembly, substantial influence over many UN specialized agencies, and a considerable presence in other international organizations. 20

Many social-economic indicators in Africa are not good. Africa's population has the fastest growth rate--3.2 percent a year--in the world. At this rate, the population will double by the year 2005. 21 Complicating the potential growth rate, however, is an increasing AIDS--Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome epidemic across Africa, affecting large portions of the government, military and educated elite. 22 Although many parts of the continent are fertile and potentially productive, per capita food output has declined. 23 Africans in ever increasing numbers are going hungry. According to the World Bank, twenty-one of the world's thirty-four poorest countries are located in Africa. 24 According to the Economic Commission for Africa, the continent's average annual per capita income fell by 18 percent. 25 (The one obvious exception is South Africa.) Political instability contributed to the economic decline.



Africa's coup-per-country rate is the highest in the world. Only fifteen African nations have never undergone a successful coup. Today, half of Africa's people now live under military rule. Living under military rule was not the expectation of most Africans in the early sixties.

Africa placed its hopes in these first years of independence on the Organization of African Unity (OAU). However, one must now question the effectiveness of the OAU. Today, Africa remains divided. The continent has essentially split along ideological lines. Most African countries suffer from chronic political crisis. The stability of much of Africa's daily life now depends largely, or even entirely, on the personality and skill of individual national leaders.

Tribalism is itself a barrier to the development of national identity and pride in many African states. This sense of tribalism tends to focus loyalties on traditional or sectarian leaders, which has made it difficult for free-market as well as communistic institutions to assert themselves. In some places, the government has alienated itself with modernization; thus, in a traditional society like Sudan, a political leader sometimes tries to buttress his authority and assert his legitimacy by reverting to Islamic law and other fundamentalist doctrines. 26

There is no real mystery to Africa's poverty. Some of the same conditions that lead to political instability after independence--in particular, the creation of so many small,

separate national economic units--guaranteed financial disaster. The shortage of indigenous administrators, technicians, and entrepreneurs in most countries was an obvious handicap, as was the lack of decent roads and other basic elements of infrastructure. At independence, few people were involved in modern wage-earning activities, and most of those in agriculture were subsistence farmers who contributed little to the national economy. The geography and climate were mostly inauspicious. Much of the soil was poor and dry and had been improperly cultivated. Tropical conditions encouraged the spread of disease in people and animals, and discouraged many from searching for minerals or taking chances with investment. 27

Blame for the poor performance of recent years results from mistakes made by the new nations. Many expanded their public sectors too fast and in the wrong direction. When the going got rough, new governments borrowed on a massive scale and now cannot pay off the debt. As the financial situation deteriorated, they continued to borrow from their own banks. This in-house borrowing contributed to the already rampant inflation--worse in Africa than in most other parts of the world--which in turn decreased the buying power of the local currency. On those rare occasions when a surplus did develop in an Africa nation, it was often squandered on military hardware.

The most critical mistakes made in Africa appear to have

been severe neglect of agricultural development. Even when some countries recognized the need to improve agricultural capabilities, they invested in large scale irrigation projects, rather than bolstering the small independent farmer, whose farms offer promise of going beyond subsistence and contributing to a self-sufficiency in food production. This tendency has been reinforced by publicity conscious aid donors, who focus on technologically advanced, large scale projects at the expense of old fashioned, but potentially productive agricultural methods. In fact, most studies indicate that, where agricultural success has been achieved in Africa--in the Ivory Coast, Kenya, Malawi, Zimbabwe, and Cameroon, for example-- it has been mostly on small farms. 28

Ironically, the most significant contribution of the early 1980s in the region was made by Israel. In the early days of African independence, the Israelis had a major presence on the continent, building large hotels and government quarters, training military units, and sharing the agricultural expertise gained in the cultivation of the Negev desert. But many African states broke relations with Israel after it seized the Egyptian-held Sinai peninsula, officially regarded as African soil. In black African states, with a large Islamic population, there was a growing solidarity with the Arab, and especially the Palestinian, cause. And the North African presence in the OAU created substantial pressure on other African leaders, leading them to believe

that hostility toward Israel might earn them a guaranteed supply of oil and extensive new aid from wealthy Arab-oil producing countries. 29

That aid mostly failed to materialize. It became more difficult to maintain pro-Arab feelings in Africa, as rising oil prices devastated one economy after another. When Israel returned the Sinai peninsula to Egypt, many African countries reestablished relations with Israel; however, the rapid expansion of Islam in Africa makes any relation with Israel tenuous at best.

#### U.S. STRATEGIC INTERESTS IN AFRICA

Africa is important to the United States because of its geographic position vis-a-vis two critical theaters, the North Atlantic and the Middle East. The United States also has considerable strategic interests in access to African mineral wealth. Additionally, broad changes are occurring in the world's strategic environment that influence the importance of Africa. These changes have resulted in what is described as a new strategic map. 30 This strategic map is comprised of four components: (1) the diffusion of political, economic and military power to the less industrial world; (2) the increasing importance of resource interdependency for the Western industrial world, the Communist countries, and the less-industrial countries, (3) the changing patterns of Western and Soviet basing rights throughout the world, in

particular in the Indo-Pacific region and the Mediterranean; and (4) the new laws of the sea which are drastically altering the map of the world's oceans, seaways, and choke points. 31 Of note, this new map highlights the importance of the sea lanes and choke points as they pertain to the transportation of crude oil. So long as oil remains vital to Western economic and military power, threats to its security must be taken seriously.

The United States has several strategic interests in Africa, two of which fall into the critical areas of global strategy, and military intervention, either by force or sale of weaponry. 32 Belligerent control or access to the ports, airfields, and support facilities in the bulge of West Africa and in the Horn of Africa pose serious threats to the vital sea lines of communication between North America and Western Europe, to and from the Persian Gulf region. Also, belligerent control or access to major facilities in southern Africa, especially South Africa, pose threats to the Cape route. This route has direct military importance for the West and is also an extremely important sea route for maritime commerce. The war with Iraq has underscored the importance of the Cape route. This route, important as a vital sea lane for raw materials, and "supertankers" carrying oil, is also the principal route for deploying maritime forces into the Indian Ocean-Persian Gulf region. 33

Competition for the strategic mineral resources located

on the African continent provide yet another threat. Access to Africa's rich mineral resources by the West could not be guaranteed were belligerent countries to control or threaten them. 34 These geographical interests are by far the most important. In this context the preferred U.S. goal is not so much to control the logistical facilities of Africa, but rather to deny the belligerents such control. 35

One finds conflicting views, regarding the question of access to African resources, as to the strategic and long-term economic importance of Africa mineral wealth. For instance, access to Nigerian oil is important, but pales in comparison to the accessibility of Persian Gulf supplies. There are alternative sources and in some cases substitutes for the many minerals such as gold, diamonds and the platinum groups found in South Africa, (FIGURE 2 below). On the other hand, hostile control of the minerals could lead to cut-offs, cut-backs, cartels, and perhaps, chaos on the money market. If South African gold production were to come under belligerent control, it could give rise to a monopoly unfriendly to the United States and create difficulties for the stability of Western currencies.

FIGURE 2  
U.S. RELIANCE ON SELECTED AFRICAN MINERALS

	<u>USES</u>	<u>% IMPORTED</u>	<u>% WORLD RESERVE</u>
CHROMIUM	STAINLESS STEEL	75	99 [NSS]
COBALT	GAS TURBINE BLADES	84	53
COLUMBIUM	CRYOGENTIC ELECTRONICS	100	3 [NSS]
MAGANESE	BATTERIES, STEEL ALLOYS	100	52 [NSS]
PLATINUM	CATALYSTS, ELECTRONICS	93	88 [NSS]
TANTALUM	ELECTRONICS	89	23

NSS: NO SATISFACTORY SUBSTITUTE

## POSSIBLE THREATS TO U.S. STRATEGIC INTERESTS

The threats to U.S. strategic interests are numerous. They extend from the "low-level" threats posed by "neutral" black regimes unwilling to provide the U.S. Navy with bunkering facilities to "high-level" threats such as a Soviet naval presence in a liberated South Africa, the Horn of Africa and West Africa. Certainly, threats across this spectrum would lead to instability, something the United States doesn't want. However, an analysis of various scenarios suggests that only one contingency poses a serious threat to the West, namely a major Soviet maritime presence in the bulge of Africa, the Horn, and South Africa. 36

With all the uncertainty concerning future events in sub-Saharan Africa, most experts agree that conflict and violence will continue. So long as these occur, the possibilities for some form of U.S. intervention have to be considered. The option that seems most viable for the United States would be strict military neutrality. Since the future suggests a reduction in American military force projection, the rationale for neutrality is based on the hope that a peaceful, negotiated solution to such conflict could be found.

The United States faces hard choices in several areas as it pursues policies which will contribute to its overall foreign policy objectives, the major one of which is promoting stability. While there is little doubt that a major

Soviet military presence in sub-Saharan Africa would pose a strategic threat to the West, there is less consensus as to whether the Soviets will pursue this objective in view of the Soviet "restructuring." In the broader, geopolitical context of Sub-Saharan Africa and of the surrounding southern seas, appropriate military policies for the United States are rather clear cut. In order to balance and deter any belligerents, low-cost U.S. initiatives to maintain a military footing, keyed mostly to the interdiction of drug trafficking in the South Atlantic, the Indian Ocean, as well as mainland Africa should be continued. 37 However, experts conclude that the preferred policy for the United States should be to adopt an active "pro-black," "pro-human rights" policy toward Sub-Saharan Africa and avoid the temptation to be drawn into providing either covert support or arms supplies. Instead, nation assistance in the form of economic, diplomatic, and humanitarian efforts should be stressed.

#### THE UNITED STATES ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS' ROLE IN NATION ASSISTANCE

Since World War II, the Corps has participated in a wide variety of foreign assistance programs sponsored by the United States. In the 1940's, foreign policy and assistance emphasized Europe, Greece and Turkey. In Greece, the Corps restored a badly mauled transportation and communications network. They cleared the Corinth Canal, restored the port of



Piraeus, and built or repaired more than 3,000 kilometers of roads.

The Corps operations in Greece established several major precedents, including:

- \* The provision of technical assistance in conjunction with economic aid;
- \* The practice of training indigenous contractors and artisans to perform as much of the actual work as possible; and;
- \* The commitment to helping a friendly nation to help itself, as manifested in projects aimed at restoring the economy

The period from 1950 to the mid-sixties emphasized military and economic assistance. The Corps produced major engineering studies for 17 different countries. These studies dealt with beach erosion problems, river hydraulics, transportation networks, and entire public works programs. In eight countries, the Corps became involved in construction of airports, highway systems, and ports. 38

An important prelude to the next decade occurred in Saudi Arabia. The Corps enhanced the Kingdom's defense capabilities in return for restricted use of Dhahran for American military air transport services. Using \$44 million in U.S. Air Force funds, the Corps completed airfield paving and lighting, housing, base utilities, and petroleum, oil, and lubricants storage and handling facilities. 39

In the sixties, the Corps became involved in reimbursable programs funded by recipient nations, instead of

by United States loans and grants. The first of these was funded by the government of Saudi Arabia. This included a variety of civil projects such as construction of radio and television communications installations. As part of this effort, the Corps also trained Saudi military and civilian engineers in construction management and quality control.

In the seventies and eighties the majority of the Corps' nation assistance effort was provided to Saudi Arabia. This was due to the enormous increase in Saudi oil revenues and the work being performed on a fully reimbursable basis. As work in Saudi Arabia reached completion, attention turned to Central America. However, most of the nation assistance provided in Central America was performed by engineer troop units as part of the Deployment for Training (DFT) program. This work included road building, school and hospital construction.

In Africa, the Corps is currently involved in small civic action programs in 19 nations which costs \$11 million. 40 Projects include low-cost housing, a primary school, bridges and bridge repair, improvements to medical clinics, and several water facilities. The projects are suggested by the host country and approved by the U.S. embassy. All engineering and construction are done by African indigenous forces. The Corps' role is to evaluate the proposed projects for technical feasibility, monitor the status of the construction, and occasionally provide some procurement services.

The role of the Corps of Engineers in nation assistance has yet to be fully exploited. Anticipating a reduction in the funding levels for domestic projects, the Corps now has the opportunity to adjust its mission to accommodate the security assistance role, while simultaneously preparing for its wartime mission in a peaceful environment.

#### PROGNOSIS FOR THE FUTURE

The changes that are taking place in the international system are bewildering in their number and diversity. They can, however, be grouped under three main headings: 41

First, there are systematic changes in the structures of domestic and international politics. These include: the emergence of a truly global economy and of a powerful transnational economic organization; the electronic revolution in communications; the global movement toward democratic political systems and market economies; and the intensification of national and ethnic identities. Perhaps the most important consequence of these changes is the shift in importance from military power to economic power.

Second, there are changes in the distribution of power in the international system. These include the relative decline of American economic power; the rise of Japanese economic power; the unification of Germany and its potential to become the preeminent European power; and the rise of locally dominant powers in many Third World regions. Most

significant of the power changes is the decline and perhaps the collapse of Soviet power.

Third, there are changes in the relations among countries. During the Cold War, relations among countries were relatively clear. There were allies, antagonists and neutrals. Overall, it seems likely that the new world will have a welter of ethnic, national, religious, economic and cultural antagonisms. International relations are likely to be more volatile. Today's friend may be tomorrow's enemy, and vice versa. Additionally, relations among countries are likely to be more ambivalent; the world of 'good guys and bad guys' will give way to a world of 'grey guys'. 42

In this new environment, the overall strategic interest of the United States lies in preserving an equilibrium and in preventing the emergence of new threats.

As stated previously, nation assistance in the form of economic and military programs has long been considered an indispensable means of nurturing our relations with other nations. In other words, nation assistance is a way to preserve the "equilibrium" and prevent the emergence of new threats. However, U.S. funds to support nation assistance programs will most likely decrease in the foreseeable future.

The distribution of nation assistance funds will most likely be applied to areas where the U.S. has substantial concrete interests. Unfortunately, the United States does not

have a grand strategy that would otherwise delineate these areas. 43 According to one expert, Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, the northern tier of South America, and the Persian Gulf (as long as the U.S. and its allies depend on imported oil) are the areas of substantial interests to the U.S. 44 Additionally, a case could be made, for historical and political reasons, that Israel and South Korea are also solid interests to the United States. Apparently, Africa is not considered an area in which the United States has concrete interests. This fact is substantiated by the reduction in foreign aid to Africa over the last decade. 45 The United States' stated interests and objectives in the 1990s clearly list "Institution-building, economic development, and regional peace...", as the goals of the U.S. policy in Africa. 46 Furthermore, it is the U.S. stated position that "Our security assistance programs are a crucial tool with which we can help them [friendly nations] help themselves." 47

In the coming decade the United States will continue to have an interest in promoting democracy, economic development, peace and other general goals in the Third World. Our changing relationship with the Soviet Union, however, will substantially remove the competitive impetus to involvement in this arena--especially in Africa.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Historically, nation assistance (building) has been regarded as an indispensable means of nurturing our relations with other nations and, in turn, protecting our vital interests. Although there is a fair amount of information concerning our efforts to help nations help themselves, there is virtually no evidence that foreign assistance directly protects the United States' vital interests. In fact, one could make the point, using Vietnam as a case study, that our nation assistance program was a failure. A current example of a foreign assistance failure is Somali. During the best of times in U.S.-Somali relations in the 1980s, when the United States sent more than \$700 million in military and economic aid to the regime of Mohamed Siad Barre, it was "the place" to counter the Soviet threat in Africa. Certainly, this was consistent with the U.S. grand strategy of containment to protect U.S. vital interests. But in January 1991, support for Somalia became an embarrassment as rebel groups took over the capital and ending Siad Barre's 21-years of authoritarian rule. According to Congressman Howard Wolpe, chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa, "It is a clear failure of American policy...." 48

On the other hand, the enormous achievement in the middle east--namely Saudi Arabia-- is a sterling example of nation assistance contributing to alignment with the West in general, and, enhanced regional stability. Ironically, the

nation assistance provided to Saudi Arabia was accomplished at no expense to the U.S. taxpayer.

The conclusion to be drawn from historical accounts of nation assistance is that it does contribute to regional stability and the protection of U.S. vital interests, but not in all cases.

Nation assistance is provided by both the U.S. Army, Navy, and Air Force Engineers. These agencies report to the regional CINCs. Even though the CINCs are inherently interested in security assistance, the level of assistance is limited by the funds that Congress will appropriate both directly for foreign assistance and indirectly for Deployment for Training operations. In short, nation assistance is directly proportional to the amount of funds that are available. The priority for allocation of these funds is established by the Department of State. Presumably, funding priorities are a function of the United States' vital interests. Vital interests are political in nature. It is very appropriate that decisions concerning nation assistance be made by the State Department. Unfortunately, the country teams do not have an engineer consultant that can provide an ongoing assessment of opportunities and progress pertaining to nation assistance projects. For Africa, an Army Engineer Captain, stationed in Winchester, Virginia, provides the single point of contact for all nation assistance projects. Even if this individual was the very best the Corps had to

offer, he or she would not have the clout necessary to oversee a viable nation assistance effort, let alone recognize a viable nation assistance project--one that nurtures relations with the host nation, and that supports U.S. security objectives. Many senior officers would have difficulty performing this task.

Clearly, the present system is not providing the greatest return on investment because project selection is not closely related to the overall purpose of the nation assistance program--the protection of U.S. security interests.

Further evidence of the incongruity of the present nation assistance program in Africa is the nature of the projects. For example, the average project value is \$710,000. Most of the more expensive projects are airfield renovation projects, with Niger receiving the most assistance. 49 Compare this with the reimburseable billions spent in Saudi Arabia. No wonder the nation assistance effort in Saudi Arabia was a huge success.

The threat to sea routes and minerals no longer exists because of the changes taking place in the Soviet Union. Today's new threat to the U.S. is instability and the affect it can have on world economies, including our own. The use of military force will most likely give way to programs that enhance a nation's ability to prosper and become a full-fledged member of the world economic community. Nation



assistance programs, in principle, can move nations in this direction.

Does nation assistance contribute to the protection of the United States' vital interest? Yes it does, but only when the interests are clearly identified and the effort is directly related to these interests. Several changes to the present system are necessary for nation assistance programs to work. These changes are envisioned as follows:

1. There should be a dedicated member of the CINC's staff whose only responsibility is nation assistance planning and coordination. This individual should be an Army or Navy Engineer at the grade of Lieutenant Colonel or Commander, and a War College graduate. It would be his or her responsibility to coordinate all nation assistance projects in the CINC's area of responsibility. [Presently the command engineer has oversight responsibility for this function along with a myriad of other duties.]

2. Projects should be selected based on ability to contribute to U.S. security objectives. This means that available funding may have to be allocated to a smaller number of nations, with the majority of nations receiving no military assistance.

3. In all cases, the U.S. should require the nations receiving assistance to reciprocate in some manner, similar to the arrangement that was made with Saudi Arabia when the U.S. provided airfield development in exchange for basing

rights. Another possible exchange could be for POMCUS sites and or approval to use African territory for deployment training.

4. The deployment of both active and reserve component engineer battalions should assume an expanded role in nation assistance because it is beneficial to the nation receiving the assistance, as well as to the military units involved. In the case of National Guard and Army Reserve units, these missions can be accomplished as annual training requirements, incurring little or no additional cost to funded budgets.

5. Engineer Districts should be aligned with the CINCs' areas of responsibility to assist with the design, contract administration and quality control of all projects.

Although the needs of Africa certainly attract and deserve American attention, American interests in Africa cannot receive priority emphasis. The United States must first look to bolstering its domestic well-being in concert with focusing a primary interest in the affairs of the Middle East, Central Europe, and Latin America. However, America can play a key and stabilizing role in Africa by assisting with nation building efforts that enhance an improved quality of life. The objective should be one that promotes the potential for a growth in a stronger and more democratic, self-sufficient ideal across the continent, and one fostered by the Africans themselves. Such efforts would cast America in the role of humanitarian and not warfighter as it helps

African nations develop the ability and confidence they need to emerge as sufficient and democratic institutions. Africa may not--and right now cannot-- be priority one on the American agenda. However, Africa must have a priority, for in a world that is growing smaller and where neighbors are moving closer, the welfare of everything and everybody are becoming vital to a world stability that promotes peace.

#### ENDNOTES

1. Lieutenant General Henry J. Hatch, "Beyond the Battlefield-The Other Dimension of Military Service," Engineer, JULY 1990. p.14
2. Ibid. , p.15
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid. , p.16
5. Ibid. , p.17
6. George Bush, National Security Strategy of the United States., MARCH 1990. p.18
7. Ibid. , p.18
8. "Nation assistance," is a recent term that replaced "nation building." These terms may be used interchangeably. Civic action, foreign assistance, and security assistance are often mistakenly used in place of "nation assistance." In this paper, nation assistance is work performed by military engineers.
9. U.S. Department of the Army, Field Manual 41-10, Civil Affairs Operations, 17 December 1985, p.1-6 and 3-2.
10. Commission on Integrated Long-Term Strategy, Commitment to Freedom, May 1988. p.23.
11. Ibid. , p.24
12. The CINC is responsible for the performance evaluation of the commander of the SAO.
13. Commitment to Freedom, p.27.
14. Ibid.
15. Dennis C. Cochrane, Lieutenant Colonel, US CIVIC ACTION: A pragmatic and potentially decisive foreign aid option for developing nations in the pacific basin. p.19.
16. Tommy A. Lundberg, Lieutenant Colonel and Robert N. Martin, Lieutenant Colonel, Third World Developmental Assistance: The Engineer Contribution. p.8.
17. Commitment to Freedom, p.1.

18. Council on Foreign Relations, Africa and the United States Vital Interests. p.ix.
19. John W. De Pauw and George A. Luz, Winning the peace: The Strategic Implications of Military Civic Action, p.30
20. Sanford J. Unger, Africa The People and Politics of an Emerging Continent , p.441.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid. , p.442.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid. , p.443.
25. Ibid. , p.452.
26. Ibid. , p.455.
27. Ibid. , p.457
28. Ibid. , p.466
29. Council on Foreign Relations, p.8.
30. Ibid. , pp.121-122.
31. Until recently, it was assumed that any war involving Africa would be between the U.S. and the Soviets. However, regional experts think that any regional war is less likely to be between the super powers and more likely among Arabs and the West. In this paper, belligerent is used to denote any threat to U.S. interests.
32. Council on Foreign Relations, p.123-124.
33. Ibid. , p.126.
34. Ibid. , see footnote p.126.
35. Ibid. , pp.131-140.
36. Ibid. , p.149.
37. Ibid. , p.150.
38. Joan F. Kibler, "Phase Out in Saudi Arabia," The Military Engineer, No.527, MARCH-APRIL, 1989, P.82.
39. Ibid.

40. Interview with Robert DeMart, CPT, EN., Winchester, VA.  
10 Jan 91.
41. Samuel P. Huntington, "America's Changing Strategic  
Interests," Survival , January/February 1991, p.4.
42. Ibid. , p.6.
43. Ibid. , p.5
44. Ibid. , p.14
45. De Pauw and Luz. p.30.
46. National Security Strategy of the U.S. p.13.
47. Ibid. , p.28.
48. Neil Henry, "Somali Civil War Slaughter A Legacy of Cold  
War Feuds," The Washington Post , 8 Jan 91. p.?
49. Extracted from the African Coastal Security Project  
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