

Staying the Course: Vital U.S. Interests on the African Continent

by

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**STAYING THE COURSE:
VITAL U.S INTERESTS ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT**

by

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ABSTRACT

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It is in the national interest of the U.S. to actively promote development of African nations in order to increase stability and self reliance that leads to economic growth. Another nation, China, has emerged as the leading competitor with the U.S. for influence on the African continent. Some argue this is cause for concern for U.S. policy makers, without any positive implications. Instead of viewing China purely as a competing power for influence on the African continent however, this paper will show there are aligned interests and aligning values for both nations there. The U.S. efforts to help African nations find solutions to African problems will require continued and well coordinated application of all instruments of national power, with U.S. Africa Command playing a crucial role as it builds on current successes. Despite the highly constrained current fiscal environment, and in the context of continued Chinese investment on the continent, it is critical that this and future administrations stay the course with regard to African development. Only by this approach will one of the world's most slowly developing regions become a stable and self-sufficient economic and diplomatic partner of the U.S.

STAYING THE COURSE: VITAL U.S INTERESTS ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT

The U.S. faces difficult choices with regards to Africa, which is both a continent of increasing geostrategic importance and a diverse set of developing nations in need of well-aimed assistance. This assistance is required for those African nations to achieve greater self-sufficiency and reach their collective and individual potentials. While ownership and primary responsibility for development ultimately rests within those nations' control, enduring success has eluded Africa and will remain unlikely without developmental partnering. The decision facing the U.S. is whether to commit the necessary means to foster a genuine period of growth and economic development in Africa or reduce engagement there as budgetary constraints restrict U.S. ability to act.

The degree to which the U.S. can assist African nations will be a reflection of our success in achieving the goals expressed in the 2010 National Security Strategy (NSS). In the introduction, President Obama indicated that the U.S. will "shape a world in which more individuals and nations could determine their own destiny, and live with the peace and dignity that they deserve."¹ Success requires overcoming a tradition of governmental corruption and extra-electoral transition of administrations since the end of colonization in the 1960s. Pressure from projected population growth that United Nations (UN) studies show outpaces any other developing region of the world also jeopardizes success.² For these and other reasons, African nations have shown only limited success in achieving their collective vision of "an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in [the] global arena."³ The successes that have been achieved have often been the result of programs originated or promoted by developed nations. Significant reductions in these

programs will have deleterious effects. Unless developed nations, led by the U.S., continue commitment to supporting African nations and regional economic entities along the path of responsible development, achievement of our stated national security goal of stability on the African continent will be unlikely.

Absent U.S. leadership, other nations will step in to lead the development partnership effort and their interests might not be consonant with ours. In recent years China has increased its financing and foreign direct investment on the continent. Although the trend of Chinese growth as a trading partner in Africa is unlikely to abate, the continent's needs extend well beyond the economic sphere. Two fundamental requirements for sustaining durable growth, enhancing governance and developing institutions, are ones in which the U.S. has committed resources and effort to African nations. As China embeds more deeply in the economic development of Africa their interest in improved stability that safeguards investment will be complementary to U.S. interests. Opportunities for cooperative endeavor can result from this relationship.

Within the construct of an African future for which the people of Africa must be ultimately responsible, the U.S. has a capability, and a national interest, to help create an environment supporting stability and development. The challenge for the U.S. is to provide consistent engagement over time which employs all instruments of national power. By doing so, African nations in which development will only succeed through "relentless struggle on several fronts and as a long-term endeavour [sic]"⁴ will attain self-sufficiency and come to view the U.S. as the security partner of choice for the twenty first century. This paper will first show why continued engagement is vital, and that investment in Africa rewards the U.S.

The Case for Commitment in Africa

President Obama cemented U.S. commitment to the region in his 2010 National Security Strategy, indicating “as African states grow their economies and strengthen their democratic institutions and governance, America will continue to embrace effective partnerships.”⁵ His administration “will refocus its priorities on strategic interventions that can promote job creation and economic growth . . . and combat corruption while strengthening good governance and accountability.”⁶ The 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance subsequently reinforced the theme of building partner capacity throughout the developing nations of the world. As President Obama indicated in his introduction, “Working closely with our network of allies and partners, we will continue to promote a rules-based international order that ensures underlying stability and encourages the peaceful rise of new powers, economic dynamism, and constructive defense cooperation.”⁷ This further amplifies direction revealed in his landmark July, 2009, speech to Ghana’s parliament in which he indicated our ultimate commitment “must be measured by more than just the dollars we spend . . . The true sign of success is not whether we are a source of aid that helps people scrape by – it is whether we are partners for building the capacity for transformational change.”⁸

Only transformational change will overcome these challenges. The African population continues to exhibit the highest growth rate of any continent, and nations have thus far proven insufficiently capable of dealing with the growth. Within 40 years, populations are expected to “more than double in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda, reaching 147 million and 91 million, respectively. Smaller countries—such as Liberia, Niger, Mali, Chad, and Burundi—are expected to experience growth of 100 to 200%.”⁹ These are among the nations with the weakest governance, struggling

economies, the least infrastructure and the poorest ability to care for their population and minimize the conditions that foster instability.¹⁰

Population growth further increases pressure on the environment, and by extension, diminishes much needed agricultural development. On the continent in which desertification has its greatest impact,¹¹ taking action to minimize avoidable stress on the environment is an imperative. While environmental stress in isolation does not trigger genocide, “it is one strand within a complex web of causality, intertwined with a series of socioeconomic problems such as population growth, poverty, forced mass migration, hunger and starvation, political instability, and ethno-political tensions.”¹²

Africa’s population bulge can be a boon to social development; as the ratio of workers to dependents rise, stable growth can ensue if the population becomes better educated and employed. India’s growth as an economic power over the past 30 years exemplifies this relationship.¹³ The Asian Development Bank refers to the relationship of education to social development as a “virtuous cycle, created when greater skills lead to progressively greater benefits from the introduction of new technology which, in turn, will lead to the further development of human resources.”¹⁴ Recent examples of African successes in harnessing the talents of an emergent, better educated populace span the continent. They include the very successful 2010 World Cup Soccer competition in South Africa and the fact Ghana is now on track to be the first country in Africa to halve its rates of poverty and hunger by 2015.¹⁵ African governments will enact the policies that either benefit from, or suffer the effects of, their population growth. The actions of our nation and others to continue to help underpin an emerging trend towards economic development in parts of the continent can provide a bridging mechanism allowing

African nations time to develop long term African solutions to these problems.

Engagement by other nations will become increasingly important if budgetary constraints for the U.S. result in stagnation of foreign aid programs in Africa. Chinese investment that provides employment growth can be just such a mitigating influence.

Chinese Involvement in Africa will be Enduring

While the U.S. has moderately increased financial support to African nations over the past two decades,¹⁶ China has been also able to substantially raise investment levels throughout the continent as its own economy has prospered. Reliable statistics show that China overtook the U.S. as Africa's biggest trading partner in 2009, which is significant as in 2000, U.S. trade in Africa was three times as great.¹⁷ This increase does not necessarily signal a shift in strategic focus for China so much as it does an increase in Chinese capital available for foreign investment. China has long been a generous provider of aid on the continent, and between the years 1960 and 1989, fully half of their foreign aid monies were invested in Africa.¹⁸ In 2011, China released the first White Paper on their foreign aid program, and it claims growth rates of 30% per year on average since 2004.¹⁹ The report indicates also that nearly 46% of Chinese foreign aid is to African nations, with Asian nations the next most favored category at 33%.²⁰ This indicates consistent commitment to Africa by the Chinese, and that there are no economic trends that would signal a shift or potential reversal of that commitment.

Although China has enjoyed considerable trade advantage in Africa in comparison with the U.S. over the course of the past decade, the growth need not be viewed as inimical to U.S. interests on the continent.²¹ China's need to fuel the world's fastest expanding economy drives the thirst for trade, and particularly commodities

trade, throughout Africa. Their aggressive posture is not simply the result of a desire to deny U.S. access to these resources.²² Ninety percent of African exports to China are natural resources (oil and minerals) that come from five nations (in order of importance, Angola, Sudan, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Mauritania).²³ These are nations with which the U.S. does not maintain a significant trade relationship.

China's most potent instrument of national power is their economic one, and they presently enjoy a considerable foreign reserves advantage over the U.S. and the European Economic Community. China is leveraging that advantage throughout Africa to ensure they keep an implicit domestic promise; that "in exchange for social stability and, above all, the survival of the party, the government will ensure continuing economic growth."²⁴ That growth has seen Sino-Africa trade increase eleven-fold between 2000 and 2008, and with it, China's influence on the continent."²⁵ China sees itself as a "responsible power"²⁶ in Africa, defining that concept as: "accommodating its neighbours [sic], being a team player in multilateral organizations, using economic ties to make friends."²⁷

Stability that leads to African expansion as a market and as a source of inexpensive manufacturing capacity will benefit Africans, China, and the U.S. alike. As they do many regions of the developing world, China views Africa as an important market for manufactured exports. These relationships have collectively been one of the main growth stimulants for China's economic expansion. Their ability to maintain the high level of economic expansion seen in the past 30 years requires China to continually develop markets to avoid significant downturn that would pinch its

developing middle class. Any stagnation that results in a slowdown, or worse a reversal, of current growth rates could cause considerable strain internally for China.

The economic model China benefits from involves buying raw materials from African nations and selling them back manufactured goods. This deprives a potential African manufacturing sector of precisely the growth engine China has employed during its ascent. China competes very effectively against the developing world for export opportunities to the industrialized nations. In this case that competition conflicts with U.S. goals to foster economic advancement in the developing world. The continent would benefit greatly by expansion in the manufacturing sector, and any legislative initiatives on the part of the U.S. that could encourage that expansion would be welcome. One example of a program that has been supportive of the African manufacturing sector is the African Growth and Opportunities Act.²⁸ The law provides preferential access for imports from beneficiary Sub-Saharan African countries.

Challenges to Overcome for the U.S. and Paths to Success

As the world and U.S. economies slowly recover from the downturn of 2008, it is certain the Departments of Defense (DoD) and State (DoS) will work with diminished means in the decade ahead. This certainty will make interagency synergy of effort even more critical as the U.S. develops strategy and processes for continued engagement. In order to achieve national goals, it is essential to develop well-focused and cost effective ways of delivering aid. Well coordinated efforts through all elements of national power will be vital to ensure this strategy succeeds as evidenced by several on-going and recent initiatives that benefit Africans.

An example of this whole-of-government approach to engagement (and of a program under fiscal pressure despite its demonstrated value) is the Millennium

Challenge Corporation (MCC), established in 2004 during the George W. Bush administration. MCC is a DoS-chaired program that benefits participating nations while holding them liable to meeting strict self-sufficiency milestones. Though chaired by the Secretary of State, U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) programs often mesh directly with those developed through the MCC. Examples of this relationship will be seen later in the paper. Selection for the program is competitive, and eligibility requires nations to demonstrate performance in 17 independent and transparent policy areas.²⁹ The MCC provides two levels of grant; the Compact and the Threshold Program. Five year Compact grants are for those nations deemed fully eligible based upon the 17 point assessment, and Threshold Program awards are made to those nations which are demonstrating significant progress and commitment to achieving the goals. The nine-member MCC Board of Directors also includes the Secretary of the Treasury, serving as the vice chairperson, and the Director of the Agency for International Development. Currently, Threshold Program monies have been disbursed to 23 partner nations, with Compact nations numbering 24. Of those Compact programs, 11 are in Africa, with the average grant in the five to six hundred million dollar range. The two largest currently in force are with Morocco and Tanzania, both programs funded at nearly 0.7 billion dollars.³⁰

Although President Obama pledged (and requested) substantial increases in foreign aid to Africa, the fiscal environment since the 2008 Global Economic Crisis has meant aid decreases throughout the developing world. The corporation budget request from the White House was \$1.12B for FY2012. In final markup though, the House Committee on Appropriations returned the funding level to the lower \$.9B level (80% of

the requested amount), and in September of 2011 the Senate Appropriations Committee approved that lower amount.³¹ As a result of these cuts to the request, nations which were working to achieve results in key MCC assessed areas such as promoting good governance, providing adequate healthcare and fighting corruption will wait longer to win selection. A possible second order effect of the fluctuations is decreased confidence among participant nations that the U.S. will follow through for the full duration of the aid compacts.

By complementing these DoS led initiatives, the nation's prime instrument of military power in the region plays a crucial role in laying the foundation for transformational change. Among U.S. geographic commands, AFRICOM is unique in having two co-equal deputies -- a civilian and a military one. The Deputy to the Commander for Civil-Military Activities (DCMA) is the counterpart of the Deputy to the Commander for Military Operations. AFRICOM currently manages military-to-military relationships with 54 African nations, and planned or conducted 13 major exercises throughout Africa in 2011.³² Command personnel work closely with U.S. embassies in Africa to coordinate training programs to improve African nations' security capacity. Strategic communication regarding the work of the command emphasizes its supporting relationship with regard to the diplomatic and economic initiatives of the lead agencies of U.S. foreign policy. General Carter F. Ham, AFRICOM commander since March 2011, reinforced this theme when he presented the command's posture statement to the House Armed Services Committee, indicating "AFRICOM is not the lead for our nation's foreign policy, [and] we do not act until we garner concurrence and approval

from the U.S. Ambassadors and Country Teams before implementing a program end state.”³³

Several specific AFRICOM programs offer good examples of the multilateral and multiagency approaches to security assistance delivery, and of the vital role played by the DCMA in bridging gaps that formerly existed between military and diplomatic activities on the continent. AFRICOM’s first major program, the African Partnership Station (APS), is noteworthy in this regard. Operating since 2007, APS has focused on African capacity to address maritime security issues.³⁴ The main 2011 APS exercise was conducted in Lome, Togo, and involved 22 African nations and over 7,000 naval and coast guard personnel. In another 2011 example involving multiple entities of the U.S. government, APS provided assistance for the modernization and capacity development of São Tomé and Príncipe’s (STP) customs service. Improvements included physical infrastructure and systems that enhance the country’s border security capabilities, such as counternarcotics operations.³⁵ The project, funded through the MCC and the STP’s Ministry of Planning and Finance, was coordinated through U.S. Africa Command’s Counternarcotics and Law Enforcement Assistance Division.

Other programs which similarly combine the multilateral and multiagency approaches are the Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) program,³⁶ the State Partnership Program,³⁷ and Operation Enduring Freedom-Trans Sahel.³⁸ Each of these programs has been successful over multiple years.

These approaches increase the effectiveness of the aid, and establish linkages throughout the governments. The “integrated interagency effort requires understanding the institutional perspectives of each agency, as well as each agency’s statutory

responsibilities and authorities.”³⁹ It is critical that AFRICOM maintain the highest capabilities to employ the military instrument of national power when called upon. Equally important is the ability to complement those activities of Departments of State, Agriculture and Commerce, and other governmental agencies working in the information, diplomatic and economic spheres of national power. It should be noted that, at present, the approximately 2,000⁴⁰ members of the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, based at Camp Lemmonier in Djibouti comprise the only continuous presence of U.S. Forces on the continent. The DoD and successive commanders of AFRICOM have consistently emphasized that there are no plans to have a significant military basing presence on the continent. General Ham emphasizes “non-traditional military activities of the command are just as important as the military side, because those contribute [sic] significantly to the underlying causes of instability across the continent; perhaps those in the long-term are more important.”⁴¹

The U.S. security assistance framework focuses on bilateral relationships, and many of the successful programs cited above are examples of this. For African security assistance however, a purely bilateral approach may limit efficiencies. The African Union views the regional approach preferentially in economic issues as well as security programs. “Under this approach, the primary responsibility for peace and security rests with the Regional Economic Communities.”⁴² A lack of continuity between “policy objectives and the manner in which the United States currently executes security assistance--namely a highly promoted but perhaps hollow focus on regional organizations—should be addressed in order to maximize efficiency of aid.”⁴³ A small change to the Security Assistance language in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961

(FAA) can return benefits to U.S. relationships with African nations seeking to regionally guarantee security. Multilateral arrangements, through these regional entities, must be balanced with the current bilateral ones to facilitate the preferred African solutions to African problems. Language exists in the FAA as written that recognizes the value of regional cooperative efforts in Africa for projects associated with educational, health, agricultural and financial initiatives.⁴⁴ In partnership with DoS, and working with members of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees, defense-specific language can be inserted into the law. This will allow regional defense partnerships already making valuable contributions to stability in Africa to receive U.S. security assistance funding.

Another challenge for finding the right solutions in Africa is ensuring the interagency dynamic is capable of bridging the cultural chasms between some of our governmental key constituencies. In his July 23, 2008 testimony before the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, J. Stephen Morrison of the Center for Strategic and International Studies painted a picture of “. . . a sullen standoff, mired in interpersonal and institutional recriminations. This is a juvenile outcome that damages AFRICOM reputationally [sic] and feeds doubt in Africa, the U.S. and elsewhere.”⁴⁵ While progress has certainly been apparent, even as recently as April 2011, General Ham saw the need for further improvement. He indicated to the House Armed Services Committee the command “would benefit from increased interagency support from other USG agencies and departments.”⁴⁶ Though not as significant a barrier to achieving strategic objectives on the continent as is the budget issue, enhancing cooperation across agency lines will improve processes and results.

African Regional Economic Communities such as the Economic Community of West African States and the Southern Africa Development Community also lead to regional security arrangements which the US can support. The National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2011 included the new DoD African Partner Cooperation Authority (10 U.S.C. § 1050a).⁴⁷ This provision allows payment for “the travel, subsistence, and similar personal expenses of defense personnel of developing countries in connection with their attendance at a bilateral or regional conference, seminar, or similar meeting, with certain restrictions.”⁴⁸ With peacekeeping training centers being developed in many African nations, opportunity exists to promote expansion of a capability much in demand throughout the continent. These authorities can be used to fund travel for individuals working in the security sector to these regional Centers of Excellence in order to enhance interoperability.⁴⁹

Another of the ways in which the U.S. is achieving its strategy of promoting greater self-sufficiency on the continent is through the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). This initiative represents the largest ever commitment of resources against a single disease internationally, and is the cornerstone of the U.S. Global Health Initiative. Most importantly, and reflective of finding African solutions to African problems, it provides the strongest support to those nations which are exhibiting leadership in response to their epidemics, and increasingly cooperates with multilateral organizations among the regional economic communities.⁵⁰ In that it rewards those nations which demonstrate the most self-initiative towards their developmental goals, PEPFAR follows the Millennium Challenge model. AFRICOM also plays a key role in the program. It supports African militaries in establishing HIV/AIDS prevention programs

through its Partner Military HIV/AIDS Program (PMHAP), helping reduce the spread of the disease among military personnel in African nations.⁵¹

Funding increases for foreign aid related programs are 'tough sells' during times of domestic economy difficulty, and our nation is likely to be in that environment for some time. This reluctance to champion programs that invest overseas is especially strong during an election year in which our own economic performance is at the forefront of debate between the candidates. From 2011 through early 2012, the Republican Party showed a reluctance to commit to increased levels of aid. In July 2011, House Republicans sent a bill forward from the House Foreign Affairs Committee that recommended cutting \$6.4 billion from the \$51 billion presidential budget request. Focused cuts included the U.S. Agency for International Development and payments to the United Nations.⁵² Additionally, Republican presidential candidates uniformly maintained their positions that further cuts will be made in this area if they were to be elected. This was likely election year pandering to a populace that believed foreign aid comprises a far more significant portion of the federal budget than it actually does. However, it reflected the view a change in administration in January 2013 would result in additional downward pressure on foreign aid appropriations.

The possibility that any new Republican administration would retrench from what has been a higher level of commitment by the Obama administration bodes ill for African developmental aid. In historical context, the FY 13 submission to Congress by the Obama administration already showed foreign aid requested falling below 1% of the federal budget for the first time since FY 2002.⁵³

The Case for U.S.-Chinese Cooperation in Africa

President Obama's words in welcoming President Hu Jintao to the White House last year offer a good context with which to view a relationship with a China soon to become a peer economic power:

We have an enormous stake in each other's success. In an inter-connected world, in a global economy, nations – including our own – will be more prosperous and more secure when we work together. The United States welcomes China's rise as a strong, prosperous and successful member of the community of nations. Indeed, China's success has brought with it economic benefits for our people as well as yours, and our cooperation on a range of issues has helped advance stability in the Asia Pacific and in the world.⁵⁴

In his remarks before the National Committee on U.S. – China Relations, Robert Zoellick of the State Department had previously touched upon that theme. He summarized the Chinese approach to the international community thus: "While not democratic, China does not see itself in a death struggle with democracy around the globe. While sometimes mercantilist, it does not see itself in an ideological conflict with capitalism."⁵⁵ The common ground for cooperation available for the U.S. and China is substantial, and American policy makers should reject the realist tendency to view power as a finite commodity that comes for one nation at the expense of the other. This is especially fallacious reasoning when applied to economic power. What China earns does not come at America's expense, as indicated by a rise in the value of the global economy from just below twenty three trillion dollars to over fifty three trillion between 1990 and 2007.⁵⁶ China's growth benefits America in two ways; as another wealthy trading partner offering a market for U.S. goods, and as a nation that tends more towards a more democratic model as its own middle class grows. "Politically, there is no reason why China should not follow the precedent of other former autocratic states

whose oppressed citizens increasingly demanded a greater voice in how their new-found wealth was spent.”⁵⁷

China and the U.S. have many overlapping economic and diplomatic interests, both worldwide and on the African continent specifically. The stated positions of leadership at the highest levels of both governments acknowledge that fact. In their remarks before the opening session of the May 2011 U.S.- China Economic Development Talks, both Secretary of State Clinton and her Chinese counterpart, Vice Premier Wang Quishan, highlighted the positive aspects of the relationship. As Secretary Clinton indicated:

Some in our country see China’s progress as a threat to the United States. Some in China worry that America seeks to constrain China’s growth. We reject both those views. We both have much more to gain from cooperation than from conflict. The fact is that a thriving America is good for China and a thriving China is good for America. But to work together, we need to be able to understand each other’s intentions and interests. And we must demystify long-term plans and aspirations.⁵⁸

Premier Wang’s comments, though focused much more sharply in the economic realm, keyed in on the Clinton theme that the respective nations derive benefit from the success of the other, acknowledging that the two nations are each other’s second largest trading partners. He said that the “China-U.S. relationship has far exceeded the bilateral scope and has acquired growing global significance. We are witnessing profound and complex changes in the world economic landscape, changes that are driven by globalization.”⁵⁹

General Ham also contends the African continent should be viewed as an area ripe for cooperative venture with the Chinese. He rejects the notion it should be the playing field for a new ‘great game,’ indicating so in remarks given at the Center for

Strategic and International Studies in Washington on 4 October, 2011. “I am not concerned about us falling strategically behind China in Africa. . .there are areas where our interests are shared and we should further explore these”⁶⁰ This sentiment is also present in State Department policy statements, such as the one delivered in June 2008 to the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee’s Subcommittee on African Affairs. Deputy Assistant Secretary Thomas Christensen cited good communications between Chinese and U.S. embassies as the two countries worked together building Liberian military bases in the vicinity of Monrovia.⁶¹ He closed his testimony praising China’s contribution to Africa’s economic development, and indicated there could be an even greater impact in the future. “In that spirit we engage at multiple levels to influence Chinese actions on issues such as good governance, human rights and transparency – issues that we believe should play as prominent a role in Chinese Africa policy as in ours.”⁶²

While many strategic interests have been shown to be complementary within the Sino-American relationship, there is also friction. The new strategic guidance announced by President Obama in early January 2012, following the November announcements of U.S. Marines beginning a basing agreement with Australia for the use of Robertson Barracks near Darwin, may keep China’s concerns at an elevated level for some time.⁶³ The October 2011 deployment of 100 U.S. Special Forces personnel into a region where China maintains keen interest due to abundant resources is also likely to be of concern in Beijing. Johnnie Carson, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, addressed that issue when he spoke on Dec 7, 2011 before the U.S. Institute of Peace in Washington, D.C. He indicated “. . . this deployment is focused on the LRA [Lord’s Resistance Army] and the LRA only. Second, although they are

equipped for combat in case that they need to defend themselves, the U.S. forces in this operation are there to play a supportive role to the UPDF and national militaries pursuing the LRA.”⁶⁴

As Joseph Nye opined in a 2008 essay, the U.S. has a compelling national interest in maintaining a good relationship of mutual respect with China. “If America treats China as an enemy today, it will ensure future enmity. While we cannot be sure how China will evolve, it makes no sense to foreclose the prospect of a better future.”⁶⁵ Africa can be a continent in which shared Sino-American interests provide opportunity for rapprochement and a stronger relationship throughout the twenty first century.

China Will Not Disengage: The U.S. Must Stay the Course and Build on Success

When the President addressed the Ghanaian Parliament in 2009, it was the importance of weaning developing nations of aid he spoke of when saying, “the purpose of foreign assistance must be creating the conditions where it is no longer needed.”⁶⁶ While not advocating against the path of assistance he believes the U.S. should follow, he was speaking to an American audience weary of sending tax dollars overseas, and an African audience to whom he was stressing the importance of African solutions. All indications are that Chinese investment on the continent will continue; the U.S. must remain engaged, despite the current financial pressures, in providing principled assistance building enduring governance and developmental programs for Africans.

Increased prosperity fosters a stability that allows even further progress along the path to self-sufficiency. Many African indicators are moving in the right direction; the number of Africans with a middle class income (\$3,000 per annum) is expected to nearly double to one hundred million people by 2015 and the rate of foreign investment

has increased nearly tenfold since 2000.⁶⁷ And that investment is not all simply the result of Chinese interest and trade. Increased confidence among many nations is fueling African investment, and may provide the catalyst for greater expansion in the light manufacturing sectors that can fuel further economic growth. Much of the momentum is attributable to improved governance and a more peaceful continent. “For three decades after African countries threw off their colonial shackles, [only a single one] peacefully ousted a government or president at the ballot box. But since Benin set the mainland trend in 1991, it has happened more than 30 times.”⁶⁸ Programs like the MCC and PEPFAR are making a difference, and can vanguard the long term commitment needed to ensure Africa does not slide backwards.

The President’s Strategic Guidance of January 5, 2012, stated that enhancing the conditions for developing nations to succeed will be a priority mission for the U.S.⁶⁹ Only a well coordinated fusion among instruments of national power will foster African nations achieving the conditions necessary for further development. In this period of declining national resources, capacity building represents a force multiplier for aid investment. The more African nations and regional organizations can do for themselves, the less will be required of the U.S. in the form of deployment of larger numbers of Americans to come to the assistance of failing or failed states, or to protect American lives at home or abroad. As General Ham indicates in the introduction to his testimony before the House Armed Services Committee, “we assist our African partners in building capacities . . . in many instances the positive effects we achieve are disproportionate to the modest investment in resources.”⁷⁰

AFRICOM's approach to greater integration of other U.S. government agency personnel in its command will contribute to improved results in dealing with African issues involving diplomatic, military, and economic components. Where interagency rivalries and differences in approach exist, as well as restrictive laws and policies that limit our reach, the U.S. must overcome them to become the ally of choice for emerging African nations. The period of growth Africa finds itself in, when economic performance of many African nations exceeds that of most European nations and the U.S.,⁷¹ is the period in which to establish enduring relationships. To the extent China is seen as a rival for influence on the continent, let it also be an opportunity to develop mutual interests. It is China's internal vulnerability; urbanization and a resultant need for continuous economic expansion that drives its need to tap Africa's resources. If responsible co-development of African governance capacity serves both power's needs, can the U.S. and the People's Republic of China find the common ground to cooperate there? The answer is yes—if both nations can take the long view and understand it serves them equally for African nations to join the global marketplace as stable, contributing partners.

The 2012 Chinese leadership change, as Xi Jinping accedes to the presidency in the fall, may represent an opportunity for the U.S. to shape a new relationship with its nearest peer nation outside of the European bloc. With China on course to overtake the U.S. in more key economic metrics over the course of this decade, a relationship based upon mutual respect is the one most likely to result in a stable world order. The U.S. and China must find ways to co-facilitate the development of those African nations striving to escape the cycle of insolvency and instability. As indicated in the newly

released U.S. strategic guidance, “we will seek to be the security partner of choice, pursuing new partnerships with a growing number of nations – including those in Africa . . . whose interests and viewpoints are merging into a common vision of freedom, stability, and prosperity.”⁷² Nothing in that vision runs counter to an increased level of interaction across the full spectrum of national power with Chinese governmental agencies and commercial entities in Africa. Aid cannot achieve enduring results without governance, particularly so in cultures where corruption has existed at all levels of government, industry and the society as a whole. Finding the national resolve and resources to continue U.S. commitment to fostering the development of nations on the African continent remains the compelling strategic challenge.

Endnotes

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² The United Nations Population Division reported in 2008 that African population doubled to 722 million people between 1976 and 2005. With growth this decade projected in the 2.3 to 2.5% range annually, the continent has the highest growth rate of any.

³ *The African Union Home Page*, <http://au.int/en/about/vision> (accessed February 20, 2012).

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Obama, *National Security Strategy*, 45.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Barack H. Obama, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership*, (Washington, DC: The White House, January, 2012), 2.

⁸ Barack H. Obama, “Speech to Ghanaian Parliament,” July 11, 2009, http://huffingtonpost.com/2009/07/11/obama-ghana-speech-full-t_n_230009.html (accessed October 17, 2011).

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¹⁰ Each of the nations cited is on the latest United Nations list of nations with the most significant developmental challenges. "United Nations Least Developed Countries," 2010, http://www.un.org/esa/policy/devplan/profile/ldc_list.pdf (accessed February 29, 2012).

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¹⁷ France and the UK were once the primary commercial partners in Africa, but China recently became the largest trading partner, with trade of US\$90 billion in 2009. The United States ranked 2nd, with \$86 billion. "World Trade Statistics," linked from *The World Trade Organization Home Page* at "Statistics," http://www.wto.org/english/res_e/statis_e/its2010_e/its2010_e.pdf (accessed November 23, 2011).

¹⁸ Deborah Bräutigam, *Chinese Aid and African Development*, (New York, NY: St Martin's Press, Inc., 1995), 44.

¹⁹ Claire Provost, "China Publishes First Report on Foreign Aid Policy," *The Guardian*, April 28, 2011, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/china/2011-04/21/c_13839683_3.htm (accessed November 12, 2011).

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²⁶ As Deputy Secretary of State, Robert Zoellick developed a detailed definition of what it means to be a responsible stakeholder. In short, responsible stakeholders work to protect and strengthen the international system as it is currently constituted; they do not merely derive benefits from it. With its inward focus, China sees its own internal stability as a key factor in international responsibility. With one fifth of the world's population, maintaining control in China enhances the world's overall stability. This is a large part of the Chinese self-perception as a responsible power. Dan Blumenthal, "Is China at Present (or Will China Become) a Responsible Stakeholder in the International Community?" http://carnegieendowment.org/files/Blumenthal_Responsible%20Stakeholder%20Final%20Paper.pdf (accessed December 26, 2011).

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³² “United States Africa Command: Fact Sheet,” linked from *The United States Africa Command Home Page* at “Fact Sheet,” <http://www.africom.mil/fetchBinary.asp?pdfID=20110713140246> (accessed February 22, 2012).

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⁴⁴ As the FAA states, "(b) It is further the sense of the Congress (1) that where problems or opportunities are common to two or more countries in a region, in such fields as agriculture, education, transportation, communications, power, watershed development, disease control, and establishment of development banks, these countries often can more effectively resolve such problems and exploit such opportunities by joining together in regional organizations or working together on regional programs, (2) that assistance often can be utilized more efficiently in regional programs than in separate country programs, and (3) that to the maximum extent practicable consistent with the purposes of this Act assistance under this Act should be furnished so as to encourage less developed countries to cooperate with each other in regional development programs." *Sec. 209 Foreign Assistance Act of 1961*, Public Law 87-195, 87th Cong., 1st Sess. 95 (August 1, 1961).

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⁴⁷ Varhola and Varhola, "Regional Engagement," 109.

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