

## CHAPTER 8

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# From the Cold War to the War on Terror, 1991–2010

When the Soviet Union disintegrated in 1991 and the Cold War ended, African client states were economically devastated, fraught with political divisions, and awash in weapons. No longer propped up by outside powers, dictators were driven from power and fragile states collapsed. In many instances, nascent prodemocracy movements were trampled as warlords, criminal gangs, and paramilitary groups devoid of political ideology or program moved into the power vacuums. The pervasive violence of the first post-Cold War decade was rooted in the political and economic crises of the Cold War era. As states and economies fragmented, opportunists mobilized the alienated, impoverished, and unemployed to claim their share of power and resources on the basis of their race, ethnicity, clan, or religion. Those who did not share these identities were excluded as unworthy and their claims as illegitimate. Marginalized out-groups were easy scapegoats for the countries' enormous political and economic problems. Thus, the politics of exclusion laid the groundwork for intergroup violence, ethnic cleansing, and genocide. Foreshadowed by the Cold War era wars of destabilization in Angola and Mozambique, in which antigovernment forces controlled indigenous populations through terror, the wars of the 1990s were characterized by widespread violence and atrocities against civilians.

Foreign intervention after the Cold War also assumed new characteristics. The state and its foreign backers no longer monopolized the means of coercion. The new wars were both privatized and globalized. Contests for control over power and resources were waged by private

factions – warlords, criminal gangs, rebel groups, renegade soldiers, and old-fashioned foreign mercenaries and their new transformations as private military companies. Foreign intervention during this period involved neighboring states as well as non-African powers. Intervention was sometimes bilateral, just as it was when former colonial powers or Cold War superpowers policed their privileged domains. In other instances, it was multinational, characterized by the involvement of UN, African Union, regionally based peacekeeping forces, or international humanitarian organizations.<sup>1</sup> Some of these bodies intervened to monitor and enforce peace accords or to facilitate humanitarian relief operations. In other cases, foreign powers and peacekeeping forces took advantage of state disintegration to promote their own strategic goals and to abscond with natural resources. They, too, preyed on local populations in actions that bore a striking resemblance to those of the warlords, rebel armies, and criminal gangs they came to oppose. Funding sources were also diversified in the post-Cold War period. The new wars were generally financed not by foreign patron states but by looting natural resources, pillaging local populations, commandeering international humanitarian aid, gunrunning, money laundering, and drug smuggling. Because many groups profited from the continuation of war, peace accords often failed.

In contrast to the Cold War period, during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries foreign states were criticized as much for their failure to intervene as for their intervention. Following the refusal of the international community to act to prevent genocide in Rwanda in 1994 and ethnic cleansing in Darfur in 2003–4, the UN took an unprecedented action. In 2005, the General Assembly adopted a resolution that held states responsible for protecting their citizens “from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity” and granted the international community the right to intervene militarily if states failed to meet their “responsibility to protect.”<sup>2</sup> The resolution contravened the principle of state sovereignty embedded in international law since the seventeenth century and enshrined in the UN Charter. In theory, respect for state sovereignty could no longer be used as an excuse to allow mass killings to proceed unhindered. In reality, the situation was far more complicated.

<sup>1</sup> The African Union replaced the OAU in 2002.

<sup>2</sup> UN General Assembly, “2005 World Summit Outcome,” paragraphs 138–9, adopted September 15, 2005, <http://www.who.int/hiv/universalaccess2010/worldsummit.pdf>.

Governments remained reluctant to set precedents that might be used against them in the future, and powerful nations rarely committed the resources or personnel necessary to implement the resolution. Notable exceptions occurred in 2011, when UN and French forces conducted military strikes against government strongholds in Côte d'Ivoire and NATO launched UN-approved air strikes against government tanks and artillery in Libya to protect the lives of civilians under attack by state security forces. While foreign intervention was justified on the grounds of protecting civilian lives, the application of external military power also supported local insurgencies that paved the way for regime change.

This chapter begins with an overview of the economic crisis that engulfed sub-Saharan Africa in the 1970s and 1980s, severely weakening a number of American Cold War clients. Examining the cases of Liberia, Somalia, Sudan, and Zaire, it explores the relationship between political and economic practices during the Cold War and the traumas of the first post-Cold War decade (1991–2001). Despite the large degree of American responsibility for the devastation these countries faced, concern for Africa was low on the U.S. agenda, and foreign aid and development assistance declined precipitously during the 1990s. Following the terrorist attacks on the United States in September 2001, however, terrorism replaced communism as the rallying cry for American overseas involvement. During the first decade of the global war on terror (2001–10), the United States revamped its Cold War African strategy, increasing support for repressive regimes in strategic states in exchange for cooperation on counterterrorism.

### **Economic Decline, State Collapse, and Competition for the Spoils**

As the Cold War drew to a close in the late 1980s and early 1990s, African states were in crisis, both politically and economically. Despite a massive influx of U.S. military and economic aid during the Cold War years, American clients such as Liberia, Somalia, Sudan, and Zaire were bankrupt. Although corruption, war, and economic mismanagement were responsible for much of the devastation, the position of these countries in the global political economy was also a crucial factor. In the decades after independence, most African countries continued the colonial practice of exporting low-priced primary

commodities and importing expensive manufactured goods from the West. Lacking developed oil resources of their own, they were forced to import petroleum products critical to their economic development. As a result, the worldwide economic crisis of the 1970s and 1980s had a catastrophic impact on much of the African continent.

Two economic traumas sparked the crisis. The first stemmed from dramatic increases in oil prices in 1973–74 and 1979–80, which forced African countries to deplete their foreign exchange reserves and intensify their debt burdens to pay for petroleum products. The second trauma – a sharp global decline in commodity prices – coincided with the second oil price increase. As worldwide prices for copper, cocoa, cotton, and coffee plummeted, African economies were devastated. Between 1980 and 1989, sub-Saharan African countries suffered from low export prices, high import prices, and mounting trade deficits, which resulted in a 28 percent decline in their terms of trade. Unable to produce the ever-greater amounts of cash crops and minerals needed to buy the oil, manufactured goods, and capital equipment required for development, African countries borrowed heavily from foreign commercial banks and governments. In many cases, the amount required for annual debt servicing was equivalent to the bulk of a country's gross domestic product or export earnings. As interest rates rose in the mid-1980s, many African countries were unable to pay the yearly principal and interest owed on their debts. Faced with insoluble debt crises, their governments turned to international financial institutions for assistance. Although these institutions were willing to help African governments repay their debts, their loans came with strings attached.

Driven by free market ideologies aimed at strengthening global capitalism, Western-dominated international financial institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank imposed stringent conditions on their loans. The IMF, which concerns itself with trade and currency imbalances, focuses on both short-term stabilization measures and long-term structural adjustment. To stimulate exports and decrease imports, the IMF typically requires currency devaluations. To promote free market ideals, it mandates reductions in government spending. The World Bank also focuses on the long term, stipulating changes to economic structures that are intended to remove the government from economic affairs. The IMF and World Bank structural adjustment programs invariably emphasize free trade (an end to government subsidies, price controls, tariffs, and marketing boards) and free enterprise (privatization of government-owned economic entities and

reduction in the number of government employees). Recipients of IMF and World Bank largesse are frequently compelled to implement measures that stimulate foreign investment, including currency devaluation, reduced taxation of foreign firms, and liberal profit repatriation arrangements.

By the late 1980s, economic decline and external prescriptions for addressing the crisis had led to severe political instability in many African countries. The IMF and World Bank stabilization and structural adjustment programs, imposed from above by unrepresentative regimes, sparked significant social unrest. People took to the streets in protest as compliant African governments ended food, seed, and fertilizer subsidies; cut spending on health and education; and laid off public employees. If these free market measures caused the greatest harm to the most vulnerable members of society, currency devaluations spread the pain more broadly, reducing profits on exports and increasing the cost of imports critical to development. Externally imposed reforms also disrupted longstanding patronage networks as retrenched soldiers and civil servants lost access to state resources. Although some elites benefited from privatization measures by snatching up state-owned enterprises, others were forced to seek new sources of income and power. Like the rulers of these weakened states, some ousted elites partnered with foreign entities, engaging in illicit economic activities such as money laundering and drug, weapons, and minerals trafficking. Some became warlords whose power was rooted in their control over commercial networks and the populations that produced the wealth.

Foreign policies and practices in Africa during the Cold War had much to do with this troubling scenario, and the United States bore a major share of the responsibility. During the four decades of U.S.-Soviet competition, anticolonial nationalists, prodemocracy activists, and issues of good governance and development were ignored or opposed if they interfered with U.S. strategic interests. No regime was deemed too corrupt or repressive for American support so long as it allied with the United States in the Cold War. However, with the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the United States cut loose many of its longtime clients. Without American military and economic aid, repressive governments were vulnerable to the pressures of popular movements agitating against poverty, oppression, and corruption. As dictators were driven from power in the 1990s, either by popular democratic forces or by armed

insurrection, a number of countries lapsed into violent conflict. Unstable nation-states were flooded with weapons left over from the Cold War. In many instances, warlords stepped into the void, manipulating ethnicity, clan, or religion to establish new bases of power, while neighboring countries intervened to support proxy forces that would allow them to gain control over lucrative resources. The cases of Liberia, Somalia, Sudan, and Zaire, discussed here, are emblematic of many others.

## Liberia

A virtual colony since its founding by freed American slaves in the early nineteenth century, Liberia was a vital U.S. Cold War ally. For 133 years, Americo-Liberian settlers and their descendants, who constituted a mere 5 percent of the population, monopolized power and imposed a near feudal system on the indigenous population. In exchange for their services as regional policemen, a succession of Americo-Liberian dictators received substantial U.S. military and economic support. President William Tubman, who ruled Liberia from 1944 to 1971, built a powerful network of secret police and regarded the public treasury as his private bank. During his reign, the United States built or enhanced a number of important facilities in Liberia: a Voice of America relay station, which broadcast American propaganda throughout Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia; the Omega navigation station, which facilitated shipping along the West African coast; a critical CIA listening post; and Roberts Field, where American military planes landed and refueled on twenty-four hours' notice.

During the presidency of William Tolbert (1971–80), deteriorating economic conditions culminated in the rice riots of 1979. After Tolbert announced a major price increase in the dietary staple, unarmed protesters took to the streets. Police opened fire, killing at least forty and injuring hundreds more. As unrest mounted, dissidents in the Liberian army, led by Master Sergeant Samuel Doe, a member of the indigenous Krahn ethnic group, overthrew the Tolbert regime. Described as a strike against repressive Americo-Liberian rule, the coup d'état was initially applauded in Liberia and elsewhere. However, in short order, Doe suspended the constitution, declared martial law, banned political activities, and imprisoned or executed his rivals.

During his decade in power, Doe continued his predecessors' corrupt practices, as he and his associates stole some \$300 million from public coffers.

Throughout this period, Liberia remained one of America's most important African allies. During the Reagan administration, Liberia served as a staging ground for a CIA task force operating against Qaddafi's Libya, which the United States had designated a "state sponsor of terrorism."<sup>3</sup> The United States upgraded Roberts Field, which, along with the Kamina and Kinshasa air bases in Zaire, served as a key transit point for covert aid to the Angolan rebel movement, UNITA. In return, the Doe regime received enormous financial support. In 1982, Liberia was the largest per capita recipient of U.S. aid in sub-Saharan Africa. It received nearly \$500 million in military and economic aid from 1980 to 1985 – amounting to one-third of its operating budget.

In 1985, General Thomas Quiwonkpa, whom Doe had removed from his position as commanding general of the Liberian armed forces, attempted another coup d'état. Whereas most of the president's associates were members of his Krahn ethnic group, Quiwonkpa was of Gio origin. Doe responded to the failed coup with a brutal crackdown on the Gio and related Mano populations. When the reprisals were over, as many as 3,000 people were dead. With Washington standing behind Doe and all moderate opposition quashed, warlords seized on popular anger. The most notorious of these was Charles Taylor, an American-educated member of the Americo-Liberian elite. In December 1989, Taylor and his Libyan-trained rebels in the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) launched an attack from Côte d'Ivoire. Exploiting the rage of the brutalized Gio and Mano civilians, Taylor distributed weapons to alienated young men – including hundreds of boys whose parents had been killed in government raids. These recruits formed the first Small Boy Units – child soldiers, emboldened by drugs, who were urged to seek revenge against the Krahn and Mandingo populations. While Krahn soldiers had been responsible for many of the anti-Gio and Mano atrocities, Mandingos – who were primarily traders and small-scale entrepreneurs and possessed 60 percent of Liberia's wealth – were targeted for having prospered under the Doe regime. Taylor also stoked religious hatred, encouraging Christian

<sup>3</sup> The criteria for and consequences of the designation "state sponsor of terrorism" can be found on the State Department website, <http://www.state.gov/j/ct/list/c14151.htm>.

Liberians to attack Mandingos because they were Muslim. His crusade eventually attracted high-profile support from leaders of the American religious right. In the meantime, Doe's American-trained army responded to the rebel invasion with a brutal counterinsurgency campaign against Gio and Mano civilians. American Navy ships staffed with more than 2,000 Marines evacuated American citizens and other foreigners but refused to intervene to stop the slaughter, characterizing it an internal Liberian affair.

While the U.S. armed forces stood by, neighboring countries entered the fray, driven by diverse motives. As members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Nigeria, Ghana, Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Gambia were united in their desire for regional stability. Specific national interests were also at stake. Nigeria, under pressure to protect Liberian Muslims, demonstrated its regional dominance by leading the ECOWAS action. Ghana intensified its involvement to counter Nigerian domination. Guinea was also worried about the fate of Liberian Muslims, many of whom had Guinean business and family ties. Sierra Leone and Gambia were troubled by Taylor's recruitment and training of their own dissident nationals, whom he had incorporated into his rebel forces. In August 1990, ECOWAS sent troops to Monrovia to effect a cease-fire. Operating under the name Economic Community Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), the 4,000-man force – which rose to 16,000 three years later – was led by Nigeria and Ghana, with important contributions from Guinea and, to a lesser extent, Sierra Leone and Gambia. The ECOMOG intervention was strongly supported by the United States, which provided significant financial and diplomatic resources.

The prominent roles played by the United States and English-speaking African countries contributed to a new set of problems. France considered the ECOMOG operation further proof of Anglophone attempts to usurp its "traditional" sphere of influence in West Africa. French protégés in the region were hostile to American influence in Liberia and threatened by Nigeria's growing power. Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire countered Anglophone dominance by supporting Taylor's rebel movement. President Blaise Compaoré (Burkina Faso) helped equip Taylor's men, allowed them to traverse his country en route to and from Libya, and sent Burkinabe soldiers to fight alongside Taylor's forces. President Félix Houphouët-Boigny (Côte d'Ivoire) allowed Taylor to use his country as a rear base and transfer

point for weapons sent from Burkina Faso. Moreover, Ivoirian government officials and entrepreneurs made enormous profits by supplying Taylor with weapons and facilitating the illicit export of diamonds, gold, iron ore, timber, and rubber to finance his war effort.

As the peacekeeping operation floundered, Taylor further internationalized the war in March 1991 by opening a second front in Sierra Leone, where Joseph Momoh's government threatened his supply route. To undermine his nemesis, Taylor helped to organize, train, and equip a Sierra Leonean rebel organization, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). Led by Taylor protégé Corporal Foday Sankoh, the RUF modeled its strategy and tactics on those of the NPFL. The rebels press-ganged boys and girls into RUF forces, where they were used as soldiers, porters, miners, cooks, and sex slaves. Brutalized RUF recruits were taught to abduct, rape, amputate, and kill, terrorizing the Sierra Leonean countryside. They killed chiefs, elders, traders, and agricultural development workers – anyone who was prosperous or associated with the Sierra Leonean government.

Meanwhile, in Liberia, it had become clear that ECOMOG was part of the problem. Although touted as a stabilizing force, ECOMOG soldiers sucked the country dry, absconding with railway cars, mining equipment, trucks, and natural resources – anything they could sell abroad. Unable to beat Taylor outright, ECOMOG had encouraged the establishment of new rebel groups and provided them with arms in exchange for booty. Because they profited from the prolongation of the war, ECOWAS countries could not be counted on to end it.

The most important of the anti-Taylor rebel movements was the United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy (ULIMO), which was founded in 1991 by exiled Doe supporters. Although ULIMO included both Mandingos and Krahn, the Krahn were dominant. Within a year, ULIMO fractured as Mandingos and Krahn began killing one another. Nigeria formed alliances with Krahn warlords, while Guinea supported their Mandingo counterparts. Guinean government officials also engaged in diamond and arms trafficking, profiting from strong ties between Guinean and Liberian Mandingo traders who smuggled Liberian diamonds and foreign weapons across the porous border.<sup>4</sup>

By the early 1990s, the Liberian war was no longer primarily ethnic in character – it was a free-for-all among warlords, their

<sup>4</sup> In Guinea, the Mandingo are called the Malinke.

personal followers, and external backers, with plunder as its goal. For the remainder of the decade, Liberia was run by organized criminal gangs that controlled its vast mineral resources, timber, and rubber. During his warlord years, Taylor is estimated to have amassed a personal fortune worth nearly half a billion dollars. Diverse interests in Europe, the United States, and Japan bribed Taylor for the right to illegally exploit Liberian resources. French firms were particularly egregious in this regard. By 1991, NPFL-controlled areas served as France's third-largest source of tropical timber, and Taylor allowed a French company to assume control of the world's largest iron mine.

By 1995, Taylor realized that he could not become president of Liberia without Nigerian backing. Making peace with the regional powerhouse, Taylor signed an accord in August 1995 and was installed as Liberia's de facto ruler. Two years later, he was elected president by voters who feared that his defeat would mean a return to war. However, the killing did not stop. By the late 1990s, at least seven rebel factions were operating in Liberia. All had external backers, some of which were simultaneously providing soldiers to the ECOMOG "peacekeeping" forces. The rebels mimicked the NPFL in both method and objectives, engaging in massive human rights abuses against the civilian population as they plundered the country's riches.

By April 2003, rebel factions had seized 60 percent of Liberia, including most of its diamond-mining areas. During the ensuing siege of Monrovia, hundreds of civilians were killed and hundreds of thousands were forced to flee. Throughout the month of July, UN officials, African heads of state, and European diplomats urged the United States, as the de facto former imperial power, to take the lead in ending the crisis. Ignoring the long history of American support for a succession of oppressive Liberian regimes, the George W. Bush administration charged that Liberia was the responsibility of its West African neighbors and the UN – not the United States. As the battle for Liberia wound down, Washington remained largely on the sidelines. In August, Taylor resigned and accepted refuge in Nigeria. The following week, the warring parties signed a peace agreement that provided for an interim government, elections, and a new national army that incorporated both rebel and government soldiers.

The war was over, but the cost had been enormous. In the wars that had consumed the country since the 1980 coup, at least 250,000 Liberians had died, more than a million had been displaced, and tens of thousands of women and girls had been raped. The country's

infrastructure and economy were devastated, and three-quarters of the population were living on less than one dollar a day. The country's \$3.7 billion debt, much of it incurred by the Doe and Taylor regimes, was worth almost eight times the value of its annual gross domestic product.

## Somalia

Across the continent in Somalia, another American client was also consumed by civil strife. During the Cold War, Siad Barre's regime had stifled political dissent and divided the opposition by encouraging clan rivalry. By the late 1980s, the divide-and-rule strategy had backfired. Clan-based militias and Islamic militants, who had been repressed by the Siad Barre dictatorship, began to compete for power. The regime cracked down hard, killing thousands of dissidents across the country. With the Soviet Union in dire straits, the Somali alliance was no longer critical to the United States. Washington distanced itself from the Somali dictator.

Without American support, Siad Barre was extremely vulnerable. In January 1991, the Hawiye clan-dominated United Somali Congress, led by former cabinet minister General Mohamed Farah Aidede, overthrew the Siad Barre regime. The congress's Ali Mahdi Mohamed was elected interim president. In 1991–92, a war between the Aidede and Ali Mahdi factions destroyed much of Mogadishu. As the central state collapsed, the formal economy ceased to function, and southern Somalia disintegrated into fiefdoms ruled by rival warlords and their militias. The war resulted in some 20,000 civilian casualties and one million displaced people.

One year after Siad Barre's ouster, the UN began to respond to the Somali crisis. In January 1992, the Security Council imposed an arms embargo, which prohibited the delivery of any weapons or military equipment to Somalia. Two UN military missions followed. In April, the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM I) was established to monitor a ceasefire and to escort and protect aid convoys. However, the UN operation was of little help to thousands of starving Somalis. Warlords, who controlled Mogadishu's port and airport, confiscated food aid and manipulated supplies for political ends, doling it out to their supporters, denying it to those who opposed them, and selling the remainder to purchase weapons. In December, the

Security Council authorized the establishment of the multinational United Task Force (UNITAF) to work with UNOSOM I to secure ports, airports, warehouses, feeding centers, and roads so humanitarian relief could be delivered. The United States announced that it would take the lead in the task force action, which it dubbed "Operation Restore Hope." The UNITAF endeavor, which involved 28,000 American troops as well as personnel from other countries, operated under a narrow mandate. It was not authorized to disarm or demobilize warring parties, to confiscate heavy weapons, or to intervene to stop fighting between rival groups. Its mission was solely to ensure the delivery of humanitarian relief to the civilian population. This continued to be the public face of the mission even after the American role had changed substantially.

Both UNITAF and UNOSOM I concluded in May 1993 and were followed by UNOSOM II, which was also led by the United States. Comprising 18,000 peacekeepers, including 4,200 Americans, UNOSOM II was assigned a mission that was far removed from the traditional UN peacekeeping role. Believing that mass starvation could be averted only if local militias were neutralized, the UN leadership prescribed a course of action that included the forcible disarmament of Somali militias, particularly that of Mohamed Farah Aideed.

Tension between the UN and Aideed broke to the surface on June 5, when Aideed's militia ambushed and killed two dozen Pakistani peacekeepers who were attempting to inspect his radio station and weapons depots. The Security Council quickly expanded UNOSOM II's mandate, authorizing it to arrest, detain, try, and punish those responsible for the killings. Having moved from the original mission of protecting aid convoys and relief workers to capturing, disarming, and punishing one faction in the fighting, the UN crossed the line from humanitarian intervention to choosing sides in a deadly conflict. As the mission's chief advocate and leader, the United States had become deeply embroiled in Somalia's civil war.

On June 11–17, American soldiers manning AC-130 gunships and Cobra and Black Hawk helicopters attacked several Mogadishu compounds believed to hold weapons caches, as well as the radio station Aideed used to direct his militias and denounce the UN. UN troops fired on the angry crowds that poured into the streets, killing and maiming a large number of civilians. In July, a similar airborne force assaulted clan elders, religious leaders, intellectuals, and businessmen who were meeting to consider a UN peace initiative.

Sixteen prominent members of Aideed's party and dozens of others were killed, including many who opposed Aideed's stance and anxiously sought peace. The massacre generated strong anti-UN and anti-American sentiment among a population that had welcomed the international humanitarian mission only a year before. In the view of many Somalis, the United States and the UN had declared war; their soldiers were now perceived as an occupation force. Violent retaliation was directed at all foreigners, causing numerous relief organizations to withdraw their operations.

Although the delivery of food aid was the priority of American soldiers during the fall of 1992, it was not their objective one year later. From late August to early October 1993, the American armed forces were bent on capturing or killing Aideed and his top lieutenants. The final raid took place on October 3, 1993, when 120 elite U.S. Army Rangers and Delta Force troops attempted to capture key leaders of Aideed's militia in one of Mogadishu's most dangerous neighborhoods. The militia shot down two Black Hawk helicopters, which crashed into children in the streets below. Angry crowds attacked the soldiers who survived the crash and those who came to rescue them. In the fighting that ensued, eighteen American soldiers and some 500 Somali men, women, and children were killed. Within days, President Clinton announced that all U.S. troops would be withdrawn from Somalia by the end of March 1994. Without American backing, the UN was forced to terminate its operation. However, foreign intervention and internal strife continued to plague Somalia. Nearly two decades after the American and UN withdrawal, Somalia still lacked a functioning central government. The ongoing conflict attracted the attention of neighboring Ethiopia, which, with American support, invaded and occupied Somalia in 2006–9 in an attempt to install a compliant government; and of al-Qaeda, an international terrorist network that harnessed Somali anger at the violation of national sovereignty to its own quest for global jihad.

## Sudan

From 1976 until the end of the Cold War, Sudan, like Liberia and Somalia, was an important American client. During the Carter years, Sudan was the largest beneficiary of U.S. aid in sub-Saharan Africa. The Reagan administration bolstered military aid to Khartoum in

order to counter Qaddafi's expansion into East Africa and Soviet influence in Ethiopia. Similarly concerned about Qaddafi's designs on western Sudan and Soviet interest in the Horn, President Jaafar Nimeiri allowed the United States to use Sudan as a base for covert operations against Libya and as a regional center of operations during the Cold War. In exchange for American largesse, Nimeiri permitted the U.S. Army's Rapid Deployment Force, charged with protecting vital American interests in the Persian Gulf, to operate from Sudan.

Nimeiri also sought support from conservative Arab governments and turned to Sudanese Islamists in an attempt to strengthen his wavering domestic support.<sup>5</sup> In 1983, his government imposed Islamic law (sharia) throughout the country, sparking the resumption of a civil war that had long pitted the Muslim north against the predominantly Christian and animist south. Spearheaded by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), the southern struggle called for an end to northern and Islamic dominance and demanded greater southern control over the country's oil and mineral wealth, most of which was produced in the south. The SPLM's Marxist language and support from the Soviet Union, Cuba, and Ethiopia gave the United States the excuse it needed to continue its support for the Nimeiri regime.

The enormous costs of war, compounded by the worldwide economic crisis, triggered an economic meltdown in Sudan that was characterized by rising food and fuel prices, famine, and massive external debt. An IMF-imposed austerity program, implemented in exchange for new loans, resulted in protests, strikes, and, finally, the 1985 military coup that overthrew the Nimeiri regime. Following a brief return to civilian rule, Colonel Omar al-Bashir staged another military coup, toppling the civilian government in 1989.

Rising to power in the waning years of the Cold War, Bashir was more concerned about establishing his Islamist credentials at home and abroad than maintaining a relationship with the United States. He opened the country to radicals from across the Muslim world, including hundreds of mujahideen veterans of the 1979–89 Soviet-Afghan War, many of whom had been funded, trained, and equipped by the CIA.<sup>6</sup> Among these CIA protégés was Osama bin Laden, a Saudi

<sup>5</sup> Promoters of "political Islam" or "Islamism" believe that Islamic precepts should serve as the basis of the social and political order as well the personal lives of individual Muslims. They strive to establish Islamic as opposed to secular states.

<sup>6</sup> The Arabic term *mujahideen* is the plural of *mujahid* – that is, one who wages jihad, or holy war.

leader of the Afghan resistance and founder of al-Qaeda, an international terrorist network whose goal was to install Islamist governments throughout the Muslim world. Bin Laden established al-Qaeda training camps in Sudan and a network of cells and allied organizations that extended to nearly a dozen countries in East Africa and the Horn.

In 1991, the Soviet Union collapsed and the Ethiopian dictator, Mengistu Haile Mariam, was driven from power. The new Ethiopian government became Washington's strongest regional ally, while relations with Sudan deteriorated rapidly. In August 1993, the U.S. State Department designated Sudan a "state sponsor of terrorism" and imposed financial sanctions and an arms embargo. Following a 1995 assassination attempt against Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, a staunch American ally, Washington supported the imposition of UN sanctions against Sudan, which was accused of harboring the culprits. Under enormous pressure from the United States, Saudi Arabia, and the UN Security Council, Khartoum expelled bin Laden and his al-Qaeda network from Sudan in 1996. Washington barred American businesses and nongovernmental organizations from working with the Sudanese government, prohibited the transfer of bank loans and technology, and seized Sudanese assets in the United States. However, the Clinton administration was convinced that Khartoum's links to al-Qaeda persisted. In August 1998, after al-Qaeda operatives bombed the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, American missiles destroyed a Sudanese factory outside Khartoum. Although Washington charged that bin Laden was manufacturing chemical weapons components on the premises, independent investigators found no credible evidence to support the claim. Rather, they determined that the facility had been a pharmaceutical factory that produced the majority of Sudan's major medications, including veterinary, tuberculosis, and malaria drugs.

Increasingly isolated at home and abroad, Bashir was desperate for allies and international respectability. He desired an end to economic sanctions, which would open the door to foreign investment in Sudan's emerging oil industry and help pay down the country's \$22 billion debt. Toward this end, Bashir sidelined some of his more radical Islamic associates, who were threatening his position both internally and externally, and began to cooperate with American counterterrorism initiatives. Following al-Qaeda's attacks on the United States in September 2001, this collaboration increased significantly. At Washington's request, the Bashir regime arrested foreign Islamists

transiting Sudan and delivered them to the United States, helped the United States capture al-Qaeda operatives in Somalia, and permitted U.S. Special Operations Forces to detain alleged terrorists on Sudanese soil. However, as a result of Khartoum's ongoing atrocities against civilians in southern Sudan and, from 2003, in the Darfur region, Washington refused to lift sanctions or remove Sudan from its list of state sponsors of terrorism.<sup>7</sup>

## Zaire

Bordering nine countries in a mineral-rich, strategic region, Zaire (formerly the Congo) was the largest, most populous country in Franco-phone Africa. During the Cold War, it served as a regional policeman for both the United States and France, which joined Belgium as major lenders and donors. All three countries helped the Mobutu regime quash antigovernment insurgencies in the 1970s. Mobutu allowed the United States to use the Kamina air base in Shaba Province to train and supply UNITA rebels, while Washington provided Zaire with more than \$1 billion in military and economic aid between 1961 and 1990 and pressured the IMF and the World Bank to grant loans, reschedule debts, and relax lending conditions. Hoping to counter the regional influence of Anglophone Uganda, France also provided Zaire with generous loans, military hardware, and military training.

Like his counterparts in other American client states, Mobutu stood at the pinnacle of a corrupt patronage system. He treated Zaire's vast mineral resources, parastatal companies, central bank, and tax offices as his own and distributed the proceeds to family members and loyalists. During his thirty-two-year reign, he amassed a personal fortune worth an estimated \$5 billion–\$8 billion while Zaire's economy was ravaged by plummeting copper prices, food shortages, inflation, and an external debt that reached \$10.2 billion in 1990. As the Cold War waned, Mobutu and his collapsing state were abandoned by important foreign sponsors. In 1990, Belgium ceased all military and economic assistance. In 1991, the United States suspended its aid programs, the IMF barred Zaire from receiving further loans, and the World Bank withdrew support for the country's development projects.

<sup>7</sup> Following a peace accord in 2005 and a popular referendum in January 2011, South Sudan became an independent state in July 2011. However, violent conflict between north and south continued.

As Mobutu's hold weakened, internal prodemocracy forces exerted enormous pressure on the regime. However, it was an externally backed insurgency that finally drove Mobutu from power. The insurgency and its aftermath were intimately linked to the 1994 Rwandan genocide, which had claimed some 800,000 lives. A longtime supporter of Rwanda's Hutu extremist regime, Mobutu opened Zaire's borders to more than a million Rwandan Hutus who fled the advancing RPF – the Uganda-backed Tutsi army that had stopped the genocide. Perpetrators of the genocide quickly asserted their dominance over the UN-administered refugee camps, controlling the distribution of food, medicine, and other humanitarian aid, while relief agencies paid them kickbacks as the price of doing business. Mobutu turned a blind eye as camp leaders trafficked in arms, conscripted and trained military cadres, and conducted raids into RPF-governed Rwanda. Mobutu's soldiers joined Hutu extremists in ethnically cleansing eastern Zaire, displacing tens of thousands of indigenous Tutsis and killing thousands more.

The anti-Tutsi pogroms and the security threat posed by Hutu extremists on the Rwandan border led to the First Congo War (1996–97), which would eventually embroil most countries in the Great Lakes region. Rwanda, Uganda, and, to a lesser extent, Burundi pushed their own agendas in Zaire – at great cost to the indigenous population. In October 1996, the Rwandan army launched a raid into Zaire to destroy UN refugee camps and to encourage Zairian Tutsis to rebel. The Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (AFDL) was established a few weeks later. Rather than emerging from the local milieu, the rebel army was created by longtime Zairian exiles backed by the Rwandan government. It was trained, equipped, and led by the Rwandan army, and its spokesman, Laurent Kabila, was handpicked by the Kigali regime.

By November, the AFDL and its Rwandan backers controlled the borderlands from Uganda to Burundi. They quickly defeated Zaire's undisciplined army, which raped, looted, and killed as it retreated, and emptied the refugee camps, forcing as many as 700,000 Hutus back into Rwanda. Another 300,000 Hutus fled westward into the Zairian rainforest, pursued by AFDL and Rwandan forces, which slaughtered men, women, and children, making no distinction between former soldiers, government officials, and militia members, and innocent Hutu civilians. The response from the international community was muted, and the UN Security Council remained on the sidelines. Although France called for humanitarian

and military intervention, Rwanda, Uganda, and the United States rejected its call. Paris's preoccupation with its loss of influence to Anglophone countries and its previous support for the Hutu extremist regime in Rwanda weakened its claim of humanitarian concern. Moreover, officials in the United States and Britain, remorseful for having failed to act in 1994, refused to countenance criticism of the RPF, which had halted the genocide as the world community stood by.

The war quickly became a regional one. As Kabila's rebel forces moved north and west, the Ugandan army moved in to assist them. As they approached Angola, UNITA guerrillas teamed up with Mobutu's army, drawing the MPLA government into war on the side of the AFDL. In response, Mobutu recruited European, South African, and Angolan mercenaries to bolster his undisciplined forces. Zaire's third-largest city, Kisangani, fell to the rebels in March 1997. A few days later, the rebels took Mbuji-Mayi, capital of the diamond-mining province of East Kasai, from which the government drew much of its revenue. In April, the AFDL arrived in Lubumbashi, Zaire's second largest city. Capital of the Shaba Province, Lubumbashi stood at the center of the country's copper and cobalt production.<sup>8</sup> American, Canadian, and South African mining interests initiated contacts with the AFDL. Zambia allowed the rebels to launch attacks from its territory, and Zimbabwe provided them with military equipment. By the middle of April 1997, Kabila, his army, and his foreign backers controlled all of Zaire's sources of revenue and foreign exchange.

Of Mobutu's many Western allies, only France supported him to the bitter end. The United States stood by while its longtime protégé floundered, ignoring pleas even for humanitarian intervention. In the final weeks, the Clinton administration urged Mobutu to step down. France, in contrast, embarked on a covert operation on the dictator's behalf. Vehemently opposed to Kabila, whom Paris considered a Ugandan proxy furthering Anglophone interests, Paris provided the Zairian regime with combat aircraft, pilots,

<sup>8</sup> During Mobutu's rule, the names of several cities and provinces were changed. Léopoldville became Kinshasa; Stanleyville became Kisangani; Elisabethville became Lubumbashi; Bakwanga became Mbuji-Mayi; and Katanga Province became Shaba. The rebellious province of South Kasai, which had rejected central government authority from 1960 to 1962, included parts of the provinces later known as East and West Kasai. Bakwanga (later Mbuji-Mayi) was the capital of both South and East Kasai.

and mechanics – as well as hundreds of French, Belgian, Serbian, Ukrainian, and South African mercenaries.

On May 17, 1997, Mobutu fled the country. Zairian soldiers, whose wages had been pocketed by their officers, refused to risk their lives to defend the capital, and the AFDL took Kinshasa without a fight. Kabila immediately declared himself president and changed the country's name to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). He rejected the notion of a broad-based coalition government and refused to work with the internal opposition that had resisted Mobutu for years. Following Mobutu's lead, he outlawed opposition parties, prohibited public demonstrations, imprisoned opponents, and ruled by decree. Like Mobutu, Kabila ran the country through his relatives and cronies, among whom he divided the spoils. Nonetheless, the United States immediately rallied to Kabila and blocked UN Security Council condemnation of his regime.

The Second Congo War began in 1998, initiating more than a decade of violence and upheaval that claimed some 5.4 million lives, a 2002 peace agreement notwithstanding. Eight of the nine Great Lakes countries joined what came to be known as Africa's First World War – with only Tanzania refraining. During this round, Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi turned on Kabila, disgruntled by his growing reluctance to follow their instructions. Determined to install a compliant regime that would allow them to protect their borders and divert DRC resources for their own development, Kabila's neighbors conspired to overthrow him. They backed disparate Congolese rebel factions with little popular support, including Congolese Tutsis linked to the Rwandan government, Mobutu cronies who hoped to return to power, disappointed office seekers denied positions in Kabila's government, and leftist intellectuals disenchanted with Kabila's corrupt personal rule.

As Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi sought to undermine Kabila, a dozen African nations came to his rescue. Zimbabwe, Angola, and Namibia cited the Southern African Development Community (SADC) security pact as the basis for their intervention.<sup>9</sup> Zimbabwe sent 12,000 troops, funding its war effort with the DRC's own resources. Although Zimbabwe had no legitimate claim to security concerns in the DRC, it did have economic interests. Kabila was

<sup>9</sup> SADC was reformulated as SADC in 1992, eventually broadening its membership to include fifteen African countries.

indebted to Zimbabwe for military equipment and supplies delivered during the 1996–97 war, and Zimbabwe was anxious for repayment. Moreover, the Zimbabwean regime hoped that unfettered access to the DRC's riches would appease powerful domestic constituencies that might otherwise protest their own government's failed policies. Zimbabwean political, economic, and military elites thus plundered the country's copper and cobalt wealth while Zimbabwean soldiers looted diamonds from Kasai and stashed profits from the illicit diamond trade in their private coffers.

If Zimbabwe did not have security interests in the DRC, Angola did. The MPLA government was anxious to protect Angola's oil and diamond regions, especially the oil-rich Cabinda Enclave, which was separated from the bulk of Angola by a wedge of Congolese territory. The Luanda government was concerned about collaboration between UNITA and anti-Kabila forces in western DRC, the threat of renewed attacks from Congolese soil, and UNITA's illegal mining of Congolese diamonds to finance its war against the MPLA. Beyond these immediate concerns, Angola was disturbed by the growing power of Uganda and Rwanda in the Central African region and their support for rebel forces that included Mobutu stalwarts. Namibia's concerns dovetailed with those of both Angola and Zimbabwe. Like Angola, Namibia was anxious to weaken UNITA, which supported a secessionist movement in the Caprivi Strip, while Namibian elites, like those in Zimbabwe, had developed extensive mining interests in the DRC.

Reminiscent of the Belgian colonial rulers in another era, the Great Lakes countries bled the DRC dry. The UN Security Council charged Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi with the systematic looting of the country and implicated Zimbabwe in the depredations. Together with Congolese officials and rebel warlords, these countries stole billions of dollars worth of diamonds, gold, coltan, cobalt, copper, tin, timber, and cash crops. The wealth extracted from the eastern war zone was transmitted into the global economy through Rwanda and Uganda and used to finance their own development. From 1996 to 2009, Rwanda controlled the mineral-rich provinces of North and South Kivu – effectively integrating them into its domestic economy. In the same vein, Ugandan soldiers took control of gold-bearing regions in the east and forced the local population to extract the gold for Ugandan interests. Following the signing of peace accords in 2002, Rwanda and Uganda withdrew from the DRC but supported rebel proxies who continued to battle for control of the mines and trade routes.

## The Global War on Terror (2001–10)

During the first post–Cold War decade, Africa was low on America’s radar screen, even as former clients like Liberia, Somalia, Sudan, and Zaire descended into chaos. After the September 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, however, existing policy was reevaluated. Economic deprivation and political chaos concerned the United States anew. Impoverished nations with weak state apparatuses were viewed as potential breeding grounds for political extremism – which during this era was understood to be terrorism rather than communism. As a result, Washington again sought to strengthen military alliances, provide financial assistance and training, and open military bases in dozens of African countries. The George W. Bush administration’s “global war on terror” became the new anticommunism.

Just as domestic insurgencies sparked by local grievances were mistaken for “communist aggression” during the Cold War, the vague rubric of “international terrorism” was used to explain a range of civil disturbances in the early twenty-first century. African dictators who had appealed to the West by playing up the communist menace were replaced by a new generation of strongmen who won support by cooperating in the fight against terrorism. American foreign assistance became increasingly militarized. The Pentagon assumed responsibility for many humanitarian and development assistance programs previously under civilian authority, and the human security and human rights agenda of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) was eclipsed by the counterterrorism program of the Defense Department. As war and instability engulfed the Middle East, America’s access to its traditional sources of foreign oil were threatened. By the early twenty-first century, the United States had revised its Africa policy to focus on countries rich in oil and natural gas and those considered critical to the American war on terror.

Since September 2001, a cohort of American policy-makers have warned that “Islamic terrorism” is threatening American lives and security. However, the appellation is more confusing than enlightening. The Islamic groups designated “foreign terrorist organizations” by the U.S. secretary of state include diverse movements, organizations, cells, and individuals.<sup>10</sup> Many have local origins and grievances

<sup>10</sup> The criteria for and consequences of the designation “foreign terrorist organization” can be found on the website of the National Counterterrorism Center, <http://www.nctc.gov/site/other/fto.html>.

that have little if anything to do with the United States. However, the American security establishment has tended to view them as part of a vast, monolithic global conspiracy. As a result, the U.S. Special Operations Command, which coordinates the covert operations of all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces, has engaged in counterterrorism activities that have alienated local populations and undermined Washington's long-term security interests. In 2006, for instance, the CIA enlisted warlords in its fight against terror suspects on Somali soil, while U.S. Special Operations Forces participated in the Ethiopian invasion of Somalia that removed the popular Islamic Courts Union from power and sparked an antiforeign insurgency. The insurgency provided an opportunity for international terrorist organizations like al-Qaeda to embrace local Islamist groups that previously had been independent.

Hostility toward the West – and particularly the United States – stems from a number of issues. Many Muslims have been angered by the presence of American troops in Saudi Arabia, site of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina; the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Somalia, which have resulted in the killing of hundreds of thousands of Muslims; and the decades-long plight of Palestinians in Israeli-occupied territories. Other Muslims resent American exploitation of Middle Eastern and African oil and U.S. support for repressive regimes that violently suppress local populations. From Egypt to Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco, U.S.-allied governments have banned Islamic fundamentalist parties and arrested thousands of militants. In some instances, homegrown guerrilla organizations emerged from the outlawed parties. Only later did al-Qaeda seize the opportunity and offer its support.

The global war on terror radically transformed longstanding American practices. Among the first casualties was a decades-old ban on foreign political assassinations. In 1975, the U.S. Senate's Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities published an in-depth investigation of American involvement in the assassination of foreign leaders. In response, President Ford issued a 1976 executive order that forbid U.S. government involvement in political assassinations abroad. For more than twenty-five years, this directive remained U.S. policy – at least, officially. However, shortly after the September 2001 attacks, President Bush issued an order that permitted the CIA and the Pentagon to ignore the assassinations ban and to capture or kill al-Qaeda militants worldwide. In the spring of 2004, the Bush administration authorized

the U.S. Special Operations Command to conduct covert military operations to capture or kill suspected terrorist leaders anywhere in the world. The executive order granted U.S. forces the authority to engage in such activities in countries that were not at war with the United States – and without those countries’ consent. The Pentagon subsequently sent Special Operations troops into African and Asian nations to collect intelligence and to capture or kill alleged terrorists – a practice that continued under the Obama administration. Repressive regimes played up the international terrorist threat as a means of obtaining American funds and military assistance – just as their predecessors exaggerated the communist menace during the Cold War. Security forces trained and financed by the United States were used to crack down on internal opposition and to fight regional wars. Rather than winning hearts and minds, American intervention often rendered local populations even more susceptible to the appeals of international terrorist organizations.

The new focus on counterterrorism also resulted in a surge of American military activity in Africa. East Africa and the Horn constituted Washington’s first African front in the global war on terror. In 2002, a U.S. military base was established at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti – the first American base to be opened in Africa since the Cold War. Strategically located at the juncture of the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden – opposite Yemen and adjacent to Somalia – Camp Lemonnier was home to the new Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA), which included some 1,800 military and civilian personnel. CJTF-HOA’s mission was to discover and destroy international terrorist networks in the Horn, East Africa, Yemen, and adjacent Indian Ocean islands. Toward that end, it conducted patrols of the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, and Indian Ocean and assisted in training the military forces of Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Kenya. During the 2006 Ethiopian invasion of Somalia, the CJTF-HOA provided the Ethiopian army with satellite photos and other intelligence so it could locate Islamist fighters.

In 2003, the United States launched the East Africa Counterterrorism Initiative (EACTI), a \$100 million program to combat terrorist activities in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Djibouti. Personnel from these countries were trained in border, coastal, and aviation security and in general police work. EACTI also established programs to thwart money laundering and terrorist financing, as well as education programs to undermine the appeal of extremist

ideologies. The United States counted on Ethiopia and Kenya to support its attacks on al-Qaeda suspects in Somalia, and U.S. Special Operations Forces launched numerous strikes from bases in those countries.

Washington identified the sparsely populated, lightly governed western Sahel as the second African front in the global war on terror. In 2002, the U.S. government launched the Pan-Sahel Initiative (PSI), which included Mauritania, Mali, Niger, and Chad. The PSI's mission was to coordinate and enhance border control against terrorist movement and arms and drug trafficking, which were believed to thrive in the Sahel's large "ungoverned" spaces. In 2005, the PSI program was extended and transformed into the five-year interagency Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative (TSCTI). Like its counterpart in East Africa, TSCTI's mission was to help countries with large Muslim populations curtail the proliferation of extremist ideologies and the appeal of terrorism by extending aid to the disaffected. TSCTI's military program, Operation Enduring Freedom–Trans Sahara (OEF-TS), provided equipment, logistical support, and training to regional forces in border control, rapid response capabilities, and terrorism prevention. Under these auspices, U.S. Special Operations Forces were widely reported to have engaged with their African counterparts in offensive operations as well as training operations. TSCTI's civil component included USAID programs to promote education and good governance; State Department programs to enhance airport security; Treasury Department aid to curb money laundering; and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) assistance in tracking down illegal operatives. By 2010, the renamed Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) included eleven North and West African countries, including Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad, Senegal, Nigeria, and Burkina Faso. A number of these countries joined the United States in military exercises, including Flintlock 2005, which was the largest joint military operation between the United States and Africa since World War II.

Washington's failure to understand the complex situation on the ground and its pursuit of short-term counterterrorism objectives over long-term human development goals embroiled American personnel in local conflicts that intensified anti-American feelings. Washington's bolstering of the Idriss Déby regime in Chad is a case in point. Notoriously repressive and corrupt – Transparency International designated Chad the world's sixth most corrupt country in 2010 – the military

regime engaged in serious human rights abuses, including arbitrary arrests, torture, rape, and murder. Although foreign-backed rebels rather than international Islamic extremists were the regime's primary security threat, the United States justified its support on the grounds that it was helping Déby combat international terrorism. U.S. Army Special Forces trained Chadian military battalions, including one charged with protecting the Déby regime from a possible coup d'état. In essence, the United States helped a dictator maintain his hold on power under the guise of counterterrorism. U.S. military involvement in Mali and Niger also had unforeseen and problematic consequences. In 2007–8, U.S. Army Special Forces assisted the Malian government with combat support as it fought against a Tuareg insurgency that had emerged from local grievances, while American-trained troops in Niger engaged in atrocities against Tuareg civilians. Other consequences surfaced in March 2012, when Mali's democratically elected government was overthrown in a coup led by an American-trained army captain. Bolstered by weapons and fighters that had flooded Mali following the NATO-assisted overthrow of Qaddafi's Libyan regime in 2011, Tuareg rebels seized the opportunity presented by the coup to gain control of much of Mali's north and to announce the formation of a secessionist state. By June, Islamist factions, some of which were associated with Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, had ousted the Tuareg nationalists and established a harsh regime that brutalized the civilian population.

Western diplomats, terrorism experts, and human rights organizations criticized American policies in the Sahel, charging that the terrorist threat in the region had been exaggerated. The vast majority of conflicts and insurgencies had local roots and little, if any, connection to international terrorist organizations. Many of the target groups blended religious fanaticism with illegal ventures such as drug and weapons trafficking, providing livelihoods to people with few alternatives. The dire political and economic conditions of Sahelian countries, long stricken by drought and famine, made it relatively easy for such groups to attract adherents. When U.S.-backed military operations removed their means of survival, Washington lost the battle to win their hearts and minds, and international terrorist organizations sometimes profited from the anger that ensued.

The capstone of America's increasingly militarized Africa policy was the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM). In February 2007, President Bush announced plans to create a unified military command

that would oversee U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine activities in Africa. This development was significant. During the Cold War and its aftermath, responsibility for American military activities on the continent had been divided between the European, Central, and Pacific Commands, attesting to Africa's adjunct status in the geopolitical arena. The European Command (EUCOM) had jurisdiction over forty-three African countries, most of which were in sub-Saharan Africa and all of which had been European colonies – with the exception of Liberia. The Central Command (CENTCOM) had jurisdiction over Egypt and the Horn, including Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, Djibouti, Sudan, and Kenya, as well as the Middle East and Central Asia. The Pacific Command (USPACOM) covered the Asia-Pacific region, from the west coast of the United States to Madagascar, Seychelles, and the other Indian Ocean islands. Seen through the lens of U.S.-European relations or the Cold War, Africa as a self-contained entity was not high on the U.S. priority list. The establishment of AFRICOM was concrete evidence that Africa had migrated from the periphery to the core of American security concerns.

AFRICOM was also significant because of its new focus on interagency cooperation. Rooted in the security-development discourse that had come to characterize U.S. aid policy, AFRICOM's premise was that poverty, corruption, and failed states breed discontent and provide fertile ground for terrorism. To counter the threat effectively, the United States must link strategic and humanitarian interests. Stressing security, good governance, and development, AFRICOM's programs included personnel from the State Department and USAID as well as the Defense Department. However, Defense was by far the strongest partner in terms of resources and authority, and counterterrorism initiatives like CJTF-HOA and TSCTI continued to dominate AFRICOM's agenda.

Criticisms of AFRICOM have been many. As during the Cold War, target countries were chosen on the basis of political and economic interests, without regard for good governance or respect for democracy and human rights. AFRICOM's priorities were to secure American access to energy resources and to fight international terrorism. As a result, AFRICOM focused on countries that were rich in oil, natural gas, or uranium; in close proximity to strategic communications routes; or near sites of Islamist activities. Its detractors warned that if military priorities dominated the agenda, humanitarian initiatives would be suspect, and the long-term objective of

winning hearts and minds would be undermined by short-term military considerations. They charged that AFRICOM had militarized police and development functions that were better left to civilian authorities. As the Pentagon took over humanitarian and development initiatives previously under the domain of USAID, soldiers engaged in activities for which they were not trained – and trained experts were shunted aside. Critics asserted that AFRICOM personnel frequently conflated local unrest with international terrorism and strengthened the military capacity of countries whose armed forces were used to attack civilians. In resource-rich countries, AFRICOM enhanced military capabilities without addressing the inequitable distribution of wealth, thereby harming rather than helping African peoples. Because American rather than African security concerns dominated the agenda, AFRICOM and its constituent programs risked intensifying rather than reducing international terrorist threats. These criticisms will bear ever greater scrutiny as U.S.–Africa policy evolves during the second decade of the twenty-first century.

### Beyond the War on Terror

Despite their prominence in American military strategy, the global war on terror and the systematization of U.S. military involvement through AFRICOM were not the defining features of foreign military intervention in Africa during the first decade of the twenty-first century. This period witnessed a wide range of interventions, including bilateral operations by African and non-African countries and multi-lateral actions by global, continental, and regional organizations. In many cases, the lines between intervention on behalf of political and economic interests and those based on humanitarian and peacemaking concerns were blurred. A more detailed examination of these interventions and their implications is the subject of a future book, but it is worth noting here three of their most salient characteristics.<sup>11</sup>

First, with the formation of the African Union in 2002 and the expansion of regional organizations such as ECOWAS, SADC, and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), African international organizations, often in collaboration with UN or ad hoc

<sup>11</sup> See Elizabeth Schmidt, *From State Collapse to the War on Terror: Foreign Intervention in Africa after the Cold War* (Athens: Ohio University Press, in progress).

international initiatives, played a more prominent role in both diplomacy and peacekeeping efforts. Although African organizations could boast some success, their activities were frequently hampered by a lack of resources, discordant interests among the states involved, and problematic resolutions that opened the door to future conflict. In 2004, for instance, the African Union and IGAD worked with the UN and the European Union to establish a central government in Somalia, and the African Union contributed peacekeeping troops. However, the transitional government had virtually no support inside Somalia, and many Somalis considered the African Union troops to be unwelcome intruders. The African Union and IGAD also helped to negotiate the 2005 peace agreement that ended Sudan's civil war. However, the agreement was rife with unresolved problems, and it paved the way for further strife.<sup>12</sup> The African Union was also involved in attempts to settle the Darfur conflict in western Sudan. In 2004, it sent an underfunded and ill-equipped peacekeeping force to the region to monitor a ceasefire agreement. Three years later, the ineffective force was bolstered by an infusion of UN aid and the establishment of a joint African Union-UN mission. A peace agreement was signed in 2011, but it failed to include the most significant rebel groups, thus ensuring further conflict. In West Africa, a UN-backed ECOWAS mission in Côte d'Ivoire was authorized to enforce a 2004 ceasefire between the government and rebel forces and to protect civilian and humanitarian workers. In 2008 and 2009, SADC played a key role in conflict resolution during crises of governmental authority in Zimbabwe and Madagascar, respectively. A notable UN initiative involving African, Asian, and Western nations was the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, established in 2009 to suppress activities that threatened international shipping, humanitarian relief, and human security. In contrast to organizations focusing on counterterrorism, the contact group recognized piracy as a symptom of the general breakdown of Somali society and emphasized the need to address such issues as illicit fishing and toxic waste disposal in Somali waters as contributory factors to the development of an outlaw economy.

<sup>12</sup> The agreement provided for a referendum on self-determination that led to the independence of South Sudan in 2011. Unresolved disputes over boundaries and the division of oil revenues gave rise to renewed violence shortly after South Sudan's independence.

Second, emerging powers such as China, India, Brazil, Turkey, and the Middle Eastern Gulf states increased their economic involvement in Africa during the first decade of the twenty-first century. Although these countries initially played only limited diplomatic and military roles, their presence gave African states more flexibility and opportunity in forming international alliances. These benefits did not always trickle down to the general population. Interested in African oil, minerals, and agricultural land, the emerging powers often dealt with repressive regimes that promoted their own interests at the expense of the population at large. In some instances, however, outside powers used their influence to persuade their allies to compromise. Such was the case in the 2012 conflict between Sudan and South Sudan, which threatened to escalate into a wider war. With significant oil and infrastructure investments in both countries, Beijing joined the African Union, the United States, and other powers in pressuring both sides to pursue peace.

Third, the growth of public pressure for “humanitarian intervention” in response to African crises became a significant factor in political decision making. In the United States, this phenomenon was best illustrated by the campaigns of the Save Darfur Coalition, a broad-based movement that sought international intervention to stop atrocities in Darfur, and the nonprofit organization Invisible Children, which mobilized support for action against Joseph Kony’s brutal Lord’s Resistance Army in Central Africa. Although their advocacy emerged from a humanitarian impulse, similar to that underlying the UN R2P resolution, these groups generated criticism as well as praise. Although both organizations brought mass atrocities to world attention and rallied support for action to protect civilians, critics claimed that they oversimplified complex issues, ignored human rights abuses committed by individuals and entities they supported on the ground, and proposed military solutions that could have adverse effects on civilian populations. Detractors warned that the organizations’ support for foreign military intervention, in particular, risked perpetuating a trend toward simplistic military solutions that failed to address the fundamental political, economic, and social issues underlying the crises.

By the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, there was little consensus in ongoing debates about foreign intervention in Africa. In the United States, those who shaped Africa policy did

not speak with one voice. As was the case during the years of decolonization and the Cold War, advocates of caution and negotiation were often found among Africa specialists in the State Department, while those who supported counterterrorism and counterinsurgency measures were generally found in other sectors of the State Department, in the Pentagon, and in the various national security agencies. The resulting policies were criticized both domestically and internationally. Some critics warned that aggressive intervention could be counterproductive, fomenting rather than reducing antiforeign sentiment and deepening regional insecurity. Others charged that American responses to terrorism or to humanitarian crises were too timid.

As calls for multilateral diplomacy evolved into appeals for military intervention under the mantle of responsibility to protect, there was sharp disagreement over the motives of those intervening, the means used, and whether the outcomes provided protection or increased insecurity. Some multilateral interventions gained widespread support from the UN and from African regional organizations, while others were weakly supported or opposed. In countries and regions affected by conflict, people and governments were often divided on the merits of outside intervention, whether by neighboring states, international organizations, or external powers. When outside entities supplied arms and training to repressive regimes beset by rebel insurgencies, African commentators and civil society groups demanded that all parties responsible for human rights abuses be held accountable – governments as well as rebel movements. They remained skeptical of outsiders' motives and their capacity to bring peace, even when their actions were part of an approved multilateral initiative. These concerns did not diminish as the new century's second decade began.

### Suggested Reading

Several works establish a framework for better understanding the events that transpired in post-Cold War Africa. Michael Clough's *Free at Last? U.S. Policy toward Africa and the End of the Cold War* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1992) lays the groundwork with an overview of U.S.-Africa policy during the Cold War and its effects, examining the "dismal balance sheet" in six countries where the United States spent the most resources. Nicolas van de Walle's *African Economies and the Politics of Permanent Crisis, 1979–1999* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001) examines the African economic crisis that began in the 1970s, which is critical to understanding post-Cold War political events. For a fascinating case

study, see Isaac A. Kamola's "The Global Coffee Economy and the Production of Genocide in Rwanda," *Third World Quarterly* 28, no. 3 (2007): 571–92, which analyzes the 1994 Rwandan genocide in the context of the international coffee economy, economic crisis, and structural adjustment.

A number of books explore state collapse, warlordism, and political violence in the 1990s. Especially recommended is William Reno's *Warlord Politics and African States* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1998), which offers important insight into the failure of the bureaucratic state in post-Cold War Africa and its replacement by warlords whose goal was to control economic resources rather than to mobilize citizens. See also the chapter "Warlord Rebels" in his book *Warfare in Independent Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011). Mary Kaldor's *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999) explores the causes of increased ethnic violence in the 1990s and the reasons the international community failed to stop it. Continuing the focus on the international community, Adekeye Adebajo's *UN Peacekeeping in Africa: From the Suez Crisis to the Sudan Conflicts* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2011) examines UN peacekeeping missions in Africa since the end of the Cold War, exploring the reasons for their success or failure. Elizabeth Schmidt's *From State Collapse to the War on Terror: Foreign Intervention in Africa after the Cold War* (Athens: Ohio University Press, in progress) examines intra- and extra-continental intervention in African political and economic affairs during the two decades following the Cold War.

The following sections offer suggestions for the cases studies of Liberia, Somalia, Sudan, and Zaire. For Liberia, besides Reno's *Warlord Politics and African States* (mentioned above), Stephen Ellis's *The Mask of Anarchy: The Destruction of Liberia and the Religious Dimension of an African Civil War*, 2nd ed. (New York: New York University Press, 2006) is especially recommended. Ellis's book explains the origins and process of the Liberian civil war, focusing on corruption, the collapse of the state bureaucracy and patrimonial political system, the manipulation of ethnicity by politicians and warlords, and the role of indigenous religious belief systems. Bill Berkeley's *The Graves are Not Yet Full: Race, Tribe and Power in the Heart of Africa* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), a clearly written journalistic account, also explores the ways in which Doe and Taylor manipulated ethnicity to gain access to power and resources and pays special attention to the role of the United States in the Liberian catastrophe. Mark Huband's *The Liberian Civil War* (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1998) is a riveting personal memoir of the early years of the Liberian civil war by a journalist who was captured by Taylor's forces. The related war in Sierra Leone is examined in David Keen's *Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone* (Oxford, UK: James Currey; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), which investigates the crisis of the patronage-based

political and economic system and the response of the dispossessed. Lansana Gberie's *A Dirty War in West Africa: The RUF and the Destruction of Sierra Leone* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), an insider account by a Sierra Leonean journalist-historian, offers insights into the disintegration of the state, the nature of the RUF, the role of Liberia, and the impact of British and UN intervention.

For Somalia, several works examine the failed U.S.-UN intervention in the early 1990s. Mohamed Sahnoun's *Somalia: The Missed Opportunities* (Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace Press, 1994), written by the senior UN representative in Somalia in 1992, provides a critical account of the failed UN operation. For the perspective of Robert B. Oakley, the U.S. special envoy for Somalia in 1992–94, who led the humanitarian phase of the operation, see John L. Hirsch and Robert B. Oakley, *Somalia and Operation Restore Hope: Reflections on Peacemaking and Peacekeeping* (Washington, DC: U.S. Institute of Peace Press, 1995). For a critical account of the operation's misunderstandings, missteps, and failures by a humanitarian relief worker, see Kenneth R. Rutherford, *Humanitarianism under Fire: The US and UN Intervention in Somalia* (Sterling, VA: Kumarian Press, 2008). Mark Bowden's *Black Hawk Down: A Story of Modern War* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1999), based on interviews and primary documents, offers a gripping account of the failed October 1993 U.S. Army Ranger Task Force operation.

For Sudan, besides Berkeley (mentioned above), several books are especially recommended. Douglas H. Johnson's *The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007) provides a historical overview of north-south conflicts; differential distribution of power and resources; manipulation of ethnicity and religion; and the role foreign governments, institutions, and aid organizations. Peter Woodward's *US Foreign Policy and the Horn of Africa* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006) examines the evolution of U.S. policy toward the Horn of Africa, with special emphasis on Somalia, Sudan, and Islamist movements. Donald Petterson's *Inside Sudan: Political Islam, Conflict and Catastrophe* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1999), an insider account by the American ambassador to Sudan from 1992 to 1995, covers such topics as U.S. relations with Sudan, civil war, terrorism, and Islamic fundamentalism. Two recommended books focus on Darfur. Gérard Prunier's *Darfur: A 21st Century Genocide*, 3rd ed. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008) is a highly accessible comprehensive account of the Darfur conflict, its historical underpinnings, and the key players. Julie Flint and Alex de Waal's *Darfur: A New History of a Long War*, revised and updated (New York: Zed Books, 2008) introduces the history of the conflict, the main participants, and the response of the African Union and the broader international community.

Three recommended books focus on the Congo/Zaire/DRC. Crawford Young and Thomas Turner's *The Rise and Decline of the Zairian State* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985) provides an overview of Zairian politics from the Belgian colonial state through the Mobutu regime. It examines the transformation of the colonial bureaucracy into a corrupt, personalized, patrimonial state and explores the consequences of economic decline and the role of Western countries and corporations. Michael G. Schatzberg's highly accessible *Mobutu or Chaos: The United States and Zaire, 1960–1990* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1991) focuses on U.S. policy toward Zaire from independence to the end of the Cold War. Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja's *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila: A People's History* (New York: Zed Books, 2002), written by a Congolese scholar and activist, offers a valuable historical overview that includes a detailed history of the Congolese prodemocracy movement.

Four recent books explore late-twentieth-century political violence and wars in Central Africa and the Great Lakes region, with particular emphasis on the DRC, Rwanda, and Burundi. They focus on the causes, internal dynamics, and effects of the conflicts, as well as the role of outside powers and corporations. See René Lemarchand, *The Dynamics of Violence in Central Africa* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); Gérard Prunier, *Africa's World War: Congo, the Rwandan Genocide, and the Making of a Continental Catastrophe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Filip Reyntjens, *The Great African War: Congo and Regional Geopolitics, 1996–2006* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); and Jason K. Stearns, *Dancing in the Glory of Monsters: The Collapse of the Congo and the Great War of Africa* (New York: Public Affairs, 2012).

Several works focus on the militarization of U.S.-Africa policy in the early twenty-first century. Robert G. Berschinski's *AFRICOM'S Dilemma: The "Global War on Terrorism," "Capacity Building," Humanitarianism, and the Future of U.S. Security Policy in Africa* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, November 2007), <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/>, critiques the United States' post-9/11 model of military engagement in Africa, military involvement in humanitarian and development operations, and Washington's misunderstanding of many antigovernment movements. Malinda S. Smith's edited collection, *Securing Africa: Post-9/11 Discourses on Terrorism* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), which includes contributors from several continents, focuses on the impact of the war on terror on African societies across the continent. John Davis's edited collection, *Africa and the War on Terrorism* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), explores the evolution of the war on terror in Africa, with special attention paid to the role of the African Union and U.S. Special Forces. Daniel Volman and William Minter's "Making Peace or Fueling War

in Africa,” *Foreign Policy in Focus*, March 13, 2009, <http://www.fpif.org> critiques Washington’s emphasis on the strengthening of bilateral military ties and its reduction of resources for the UN and other multilateral institutions, as well as its focus on counterterrorism and access to natural resources, rather than humanitarian concerns.

Four recommended books focus on militant Islam and U.S. policy in the Horn of Africa, which is considered the African front line in the American war on terror. Besides Woodward (mentioned above), Alex de Waal’s edited collection, *Islamism and Its Enemies in the Horn of Africa* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), examines the emergence of new forms of radical Islam and their relation to American political and economic power, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and U.S. intervention in the Horn. Robert I. Rotberg’s edited collection, *Battling Terrorism in the Horn of Africa* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press and the World Peace Foundation, 2005), focuses on the Horn as a front line in the American war on terror and Washington’s use of regional powers to promote U.S. interests. Gregory A. Pirio’s *African Jihad: Bin Laden’s Quest for the Horn of Africa* (Trenton, NJ: Red Sea Press, 2007) offers a narrative account of al-Qaeda’s presence in East Africa and the Horn, focusing especially on Sudan, Somalia, Kenya, and Tanzania.