

DoD STRATEGY FOR SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA AUGUST 2001

Introduction

Sub-Saharan Africa is undergoing intense economic and political transition. Rather than being on the verge of an African renaissance, the region faces constant security, political, and economic crises. While certain countries have made great strides towards democratic governance, free elections, and market economies, ethnic conflicts, government corruption, economic decline, and humanitarian disasters threaten this progress. International terrorism, the spread of HIV and other diseases, drug trafficking, and environmental degradation further impede Africa's progress. A democratic, secure, and prosperous Africa remains a United States foreign policy objective. Support from the United States and the international community is critical to developing a secure environment in sub-Saharan Africa.

Despite limited national security interests, United States military forces deploy to the region frequently. In the last five years alone, U.S. forces have conducted noncombatant evacuation or security operations for U.S. embassies in Kinshasa, Freetown, and Monrovia. Following the terrorist bombings of two U.S. embassies in Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam in August 1998, U.S. forces also provided security, medical support, and investigation services. These trends and developments demonstrate the need for the U.S. military to remain ready to respond to potential crises on the continent. However, with the ever-increasing demand on U.S. military forces around the globe, the United States must strive to enhance existing African military capacity to resolve such crises on their own. The United States must devote its limited engagement resources toward activities that promote the stability necessary to further democratic freedoms and economic prosperity.

This document describes the desired strategic security end-state for sub-Saharan Africa, and how the Department of Defense will achieve specific defense objectives.

Africa and Its Importance to United States National Interests

Sub-Saharan Africa is important to the United States for national security reasons. The United States currently imports fifteen percent of its oil requirements from the region, an amount equal in volume to what it imports from the Middle East. The strategic value of African oil reserves will become more significant as African nations develop recently discovered sources of light, low-sulfur content crude. In the coming years, this non-Gulf source of oil will exceed twenty percent and U.S. investment in the energy sector will more than double. In addition to petroleum, the region has the world's most abundant deposits of gold, diamonds, copper, and bauxite as well as ample stores of uranium, manganese, and cobalt – all of which are critical resources for U.S. industries. The United States must recognize that the African marketplace, with nearly 800 million potential consumers, is similar to that of Latin America a decade ago.

At the same time, threats to U.S. global interests, as outlined in the *National Security Strategy*, include transnational dangers, such as the proliferation of weapons (particularly small arms) and materials for weapons of mass destruction, international organized crime, narcotics transshipment, and terrorist sponsorship. These problems manifest themselves to varying degrees in Africa and threaten the safety and well being of U.S. citizens living there.

Containing the spread of infectious disease is also important to U.S. national interests. Africa suffers from a number of serious health crises and is home to more than two-thirds of the world's HIV cases. The estimated decrease in life expectancy over the next decade due to AIDS will likely have grave political and socio-economic consequences throughout the region. Other diseases, including tuberculosis, are also on the rise and are increasingly virulent and drug resistant. The United States must work to combat this threat to help stabilize Africa as well as to prevent the spread of disease abroad.

Humanitarian crises and peacetime contingency missions have kept U.S. military forces involved on the continent far too often. Since the end of the Cold War, U.S. military personnel have conducted some thirty contingency operations in Africa. It is in the interest of the United States to reduce the likelihood of conflict in Africa and mitigate its impact when it occurs by improving the crisis response capacities of African militaries and regional and subregional organizations.

The Strategy

The Strategic End-State

The United States' security objectives for the region, broadly stated, are to promote stable, prosperous democracies and enhance African capabilities to conduct peace and humanitarian operations. Unfortunately, U.S. defense and security strategy has devoted far more resources responding to crises over the last decade than to conducting activities that shape the security environment toward a desired end state. The most recent Department of Defense *Quadrennial Defense Review* categorized military activities into three groups: shaping, preparing, and responding. In sub-Saharan Africa, it is imperative that the United States shifts the balance in favor of proactive shaping and preparing activities today, instead of responding to crises tomorrow. The role of the Department of Defense is to identify the proper activities in the defense and security realm and target its resources to help promote regional stability and to engender positive change such that:

- African military services adhere to the democratic principle of civilian control of the military;
- African military units conduct operations and training in a professional manner, respecting internationally recognized human rights and standards of military conduct;
- African ministries of defense design and organize their military forces to correspond with legitimate self-defense requirements, and that they effectively manage resources allocated by civil authorities;
- African military organizations have the capability to conduct internal self-defense unilaterally and can participate in sub-regional humanitarian relief and peace operations missions with limited international support; and
- African military leaders and soldiers are aware of the dangers of HIV/AIDS and actively seek to slow or stop its spread.

Achieving this African defense and security end-state would help civilian leaders implement economic reforms, achieve sustainable development, and allow democracies to flourish in a climate of political stability.

ELEMENTS OF THE STRATEGY—THE WAYS

In order for the U.S. to achieve its desired national security end-state, the Office of the Secretary of Defense has established a **triad of strategic elements** for sub-Saharan Africa, described below. Following a description of each of these three elements are the corresponding **Defense Objectives** that will help DoD execute its strategy.

1.) **Promote civilian control of the military and defense reform.**

Reshaping the defense establishments in African states is perhaps the most important step the United States can take to create a secure and stable Africa. Defense reform involves actions that help African nations develop and reinforce apolitical militaries that can balance defense requirements, economic capabilities, and force structure. Engendering democratic concepts in the military realm is essential to developing military relationships and security partnerships with democratic governments, now and in the future.

- **Defense Objective 1: Promote constructive national and regional roles for African militaries.**

Encouraging African states to develop their militaries for legitimate national defense requirements and to use their armed forces to create regional stability and security is critical. The United States should help African governments develop appropriate civil-military relations; build respect for democratic ideals and institutions, human rights, and the rule of law within their defense forces; and prepare their militaries to respond to crises effectively with little or no outside intervention.

- **Defense Objective 2: Strengthen African strategic leadership to prepare for a new century.**

DoD will work with U.S. embassy country teams to foster the growth of democratic ideals in African militaries and to gain access to the next generation of African military leaders. This is essential to developing military relationships and security partnerships now and in the future. Military-to-military contact is a crucial element of building such partnerships.

- **Defense Objective 3: Strategically engage problem states.**

A base level of defense engagement can help build trust and expand influence even in problem states. By engaging with the militaries of select problem states in specific, targeted ways, the United States can begin to encourage better relations and increase stability in those countries.

2.) Build national and regional capacity to resolve conflicts and crises.

DoD programs should enable sub-Saharan African countries to prevent and resolve conflicts before they become destabilizing or cause more serious humanitarian emergencies. Sub-regional defense organizations can also play a crucial role in African peace operations and humanitarian responses on the continent. To achieve this goal, the United States - in partnership with its European allies and the greater African community - must first help build African military capacity to provide for country defense missions at the national level, and then assist in creating and promoting opportunities for national forces to conduct combined operations. Many African nations already favor regional approaches to resolving conflicts and crises. The desired outcome of this strategic element is to allow Africans to solve their own problems with less external military intervention.

- **Defense Objective 4: Develop defense partnerships with important states.**

DOD programs must support local U.S. embassy efforts to make and nurture partnerships with African governments of regional importance and those with which the United States has significant national security interests. United States' military operations in Africa can help the U.S. government increase its influence in the region by establishing and maintaining close working relationships with defense and military leaders.

- **Defense Objective 5: Actively engage sub-regional organizations.**

The U.S. military can assist the U.S. Department of State in helping African regional and sub-regional organizations become more effective at building stability and resolving conflicts in Africa. In particular, U.S. military forces can train and equip African militaries for combined peace operations and humanitarian assistance missions. Defense partnerships with sub-regional organizations can help reduce the need for the U.S. military to intervene in African crises.

3.) Develop military professionalism.

Developing disciplined national military forces that are capable of maintaining order and operating under the control of civilian leadership is critical to achieving U.S. objectives in sub-Saharan Africa. Mechanisms include training individual soldiers and units, improving command and control, and equipping units for peace operations. Combined exercises and training programs between African partners and U.S. military forces allow African militaries to prepare for multinational operations in crises and disasters. They also provide an excellent venue for training U.S. military personnel. Developing military competence and self-sufficiency provides a wide range of benefits to Africa and the United States in terms of collective security, stability, and peace.

- **Defense Objective 6: Enhance military training and educational opportunities.**
DoD can enhance international military training and educational opportunities for select African militaries through U.S.-based training programs, mobile training teams, and combined exercises. Foreign military assistance enables DoD to help improve the capabilities of African militaries by obtaining appropriate equipment and support.

Two additional defense objectives under-gird all three elements of DoD's strategy for sub-Saharan Africa:

- **Defense Objective 7: Cooperate and coordinate, rather than compete, with Allies and friends.**
Combined engagement in sub-Saharan Africa provides an opportunity to strengthen overall U.S. relations with key Allies, other nations, and non-governmental organizations. It also demonstrates to African partner countries the transparency of U.S. activities and the desire to synchronize U.S. efforts with those of others.
- **Defense Objective 8: Prepare prudently and when necessary, respond decisively.**
To protect U.S. national interests, military commanders may have to conduct deterrence activities and if these fail, respond to threats decisively.

Tools of Engagement – The Means

The Department of Defense has several tools with which to execute its three-part strategy. Examples of existing engagement activities are:

1.) Civilian Control and Defense Reform

DoD programs to enhance civilian control of the military and defense reform assist African nations in restructuring and refocusing their defense establishments. The following programs help African governments better define the role of the military in their societies and to develop appropriate civil-military relations within their countries.

- Military education funded by the **International Military Education and Training (IMET) and the Expanded-IMET programs**, along with seminars held at the **Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS)**, provide instruction on civil-military relations, the role of the military in a democracy, and defense economics. In addition, programs offered by the Defense Resource Management Institute, the Naval Justice School, and service schools provide technical expertise on defense reorganization, international law, and military justice.

2.) National and Regional Capacity Building

Through capacity building programs and activities, the United States will help African militaries develop the capacity they need to handle their own security problems. This will reduce the likelihood of direct U.S. military involvement in future contingency operations on the continent.

- The Department of State-managed **African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI)** and U.S. engagement activities with sub-regional organizations are key means to foster multilateral conflict resolution and regional peace operations capabilities. DoD would like an evolved ACRI to be the centerpiece of its military-to-military activities in Africa, a proposition currently precluded by ACRI's limited curriculum and its management structure. A proposal for transferring ACRI program management to DoD and for transforming the program to include lethal offensive training is under review by DoD and DoS authorities.
- Regional and strategic conferences that build trust and open lines of communication also contribute to stability and identify future channels of conflict resolution. Providing equipment through **Foreign Military Sales, excess defense articles**, drawdowns, and other programs that upgrade command and control structures and assist in land-mine removal also enhance peace operations and humanitarian relief management capabilities.

3.) Military Professionalism

Combined exercises and training programs between African partners and U.S. military forces provide unique opportunities for training DoD personnel. They also help African militaries prepare for multinational operations during crises.

- **The International Military Education and Training (IMET) and Expanded-IMET programs** are low cost, apolitical programs that expose African students to U.S. professional military organizations and procedures, and the manner in which they function under civilian control.
- The **International Health Resources Management (IHRM)** program targets the strategic issues related to health care management and provides instruction in disaster preparedness, emergency response, and healthcare collaboration between countries.
- **Humanitarian Assistance programs** provide another means for the United States to help improve the professional competence of African militaries while helping African communities. Working through the Unified

Commands, the Department of Defense trains these militaries to support civil society in such areas as disaster preparedness, vaccinating children, building medical clinics, and digging wells.

- Under the ***GLIDER Act (Global Leadership in Developing an Expanded Response)***, the Department of Defense assists African militaries in reducing the HIV prevalence rate within their ranks.
- **Foreign Military Financing (FMF)** funds can strategically complement those efforts that reinforce the role of a military as a contributing element to a democratic society.

CONCLUSION

The United States remains engaged and committed to supporting sub-Saharan African nations that strive for democratic freedoms, regional stability, and economic prosperity. This support is geared to helping build sustainable African capabilities to resolve conflicts and crises on the continent. The initial years of the 21st century will undoubtedly be a period of limited foreign operations and defense engagement resourcing for the United States and other nations. Cooperation, communication, and consultation will be essential within DoD, Interagency working groups, and the international community. A comprehensive and coordinated strategy is needed to ensure that adequate resources are applied appropriately. The DoD strategy for sub-Saharan Africa, as outlined in this paper, has been developed in the spirit of coordinating U.S. security objectives in the region and delivering resources with maximum effectiveness.