US Policy Shifts on Sub-Saharan Africa

An Assessment of Contending Predictions

Ann Mezzell, PhD*

It is perhaps understandable that literature on US interests in Africa often focuses on the humanitarian-developmental problems that afflict the continent. Many, if not most, states in the sub-Saharan region are plagued by poverty, poor infrastructure, and violence. These issues sometimes do (and should) garner the attention of American policy makers. Yet, the region also poses challenges—threats as well as opportunities—of a more material nature. Contemporary research indicates that sub-Saharan Africa is a burgeoning hot spot of anti-Western terrorist activity; it further suggests that African leaders have become increasingly savvy about granting outside access to the region's wealth of natural resources.[1]

In the Horn of Africa, for example, lawlessness and state failure in Somalia and Sudan provide ideal conditions for the growth of militant Islamist and terrorist organizations.[2] In Central Africa, China continues to make progress in securing access to natural resources via bilateral "development deals." The United States, in turn, maintains tenuous economic relations with many of these states, largely due to the conditional nature of US investment and lending practices.[3] Though the United States maintains stronger trade ties with states in Western Africa, it has done little to address the risks stemming from heightened regional political instability. This is particularly true of the United States' role in Nigeria, the fourth-largest supplier of US crude oil imports.[4] In Southern Africa, finally, Robert Mugabe's continued hold on Zimbabwe threatens to destabilize the region. This could pose risks to South Africa, one of the United States' two strategic partners (South Africa and Nigeria) on the continent. Further, Mugabe's

*The author, who earned her PhD at the University of Georgia, is an assistant professor of political science at Lincoln University of Missouri, where she teaches classes in international relations and comparative politics. Her research interests include global security, US foreign policy, political violence, and failed states. She is currently working to build a data set that categorizes instances in which interstate and intrastate conflicts are magnified by nontraditional security threats.

rule contributes to the ever-present risk that the country's cholera-AIDS epidemic will spread through the region, and perhaps beyond.[5]

It is apparent that US policy makers face an ever-expanding array of challenges to American interests in sub-Saharan Africa. In today's increasingly globalized environment, they cannot afford simply to write off that area's problems as "local" or "regional" issues.

Sub-Saharan Africa in the Cold War Era

The United States' primary relationships with Africa stem from its former attempts to protect Western interests in the continent during the Cold War era. By the 1960s, President Kennedy's advisers had begun to establish relationships with leaders in the newly independent African states, fearful that Europe's retreat from the continent would allow for a power vacuum in which anti-Western (Soviet-communist) forces could thrive.[6] In the Horn of Africa, for example, Washington backed Ethiopia's Emperor Haile Selassie in an attempt to counter Moscow's support for Somalia's Siad Barre.[7] The Kennedy administration's efforts to "facilitate an orderly transition from colonialism to independence" were somewhat undercut by the subsequent redirection of American interests to the Vietnam War (under Johnson and Nixon).[8] Carter's subsequent shift towards a foreign policy anchored in human rights and development assistance was ultimately short-lived; the Reagan administration restructured the United States' Africa policy along regional security interests.[9]

By 1989 internal crises in the Soviet Union had prompted Moscow to cut ties with its client states in Africa. Washington, in turn, distanced itself from its Cold War allies in the continent. The absence of Cold War competition, along with reports of a growing rash of human rights violations, prompted the United States to suspend support for states like Sudan, Somalia, and Kenya.[10] Coupled with the lingering effects of Europe's colonial withdrawal from the continent, the crumbling of the US-Soviet rival bloc support system undercut Africa's progress towards good governance and economic development. Problems of weak infrastructure and limited force projection left African states, particularly those in the sub-Saharan regions, vulnerable to armed conflict and humanitarian crisis. In response, African leaders turned to increasingly authoritarian means of rebuilding their governmental and economic systems. This, in turn, provided additional justifica-

tion for the American trend towards severing ties with former African allies. Many predicted that US foreign policy makers would opt to fully disengage from Africa's "areas of marginal interest."[11]

Post–Cold War Africa: "New" Directions in US Policy?

To some extent, the aforementioned prediction proved valid. The United States' rapid exit from Somalia in 1993 and its nonresponse to the Rwandan genocide of 1994 were in keeping with speculation that American concern for Africa was on the decline. Further, many Western leaders adhere to the now-popular "African solutions for African problems" approach.[12] This, however, presents the possibility that African solutions may not align with Western preferences. Africa's post–Cold War leaders are committed to rebuilding strong governments and strong economies; they are not necessarily committed to ensuring that those governments are democratic or that those economies are rooted in open-market practices. Yet, Western-style democratic and economic reforms do not represent comprehensive solutions either. As Marina Ottaway notes, neither free elections nor open markets will necessarily lead to the prevention of political violence or humanitarian disasters.[13]

According to Ottaway, if "the most important precondition for a sustained revival in Africa entails restructuring its many failed states," then the West must be prepared to reassess its role in post–Cold War Africa.[14] One could argue that this is particularly true for the United States. Despite the spotty nature of past involvements and the tenuousness of present-day relationships, American strategic interests in Africa (particularly sub-Saharan Africa) are considerable. As the global war on terror continues, US leaders may be more likely to regard Africa's ungoverned territories as havens for Islamic extremists. Furthermore, given the seemingly ever-present threat of an energy crisis, they may be more inclined to pursue means of securing American access to Africa's wealth of hydrocarbon resources. Finally, some may come to view the region's humanitarian challenges, at least indirectly (insofar as they complicate America's other interests in Africa), as greater cause for concern.[15]

Academic and policy assessments of the United States' post–Cold War role in Africa, however, remain divided. Some contend that US involvements with the continent have lessened and continue to do so. Others suggest

that criticisms of nonengagement in the 1990s overshadow the United States' more recent efforts in the continent. The election of Barack Obama in 2008 both complicates and enhances this debate, as questions regarding the president's intentions for the scope and direction of US-Africa relations remain largely unanswered.

In an effort to shed light on the new dimensions of the "Africa policy question," this article examines various predictions regarding Africa policy under the Obama administration. It then compares the speeches of President Obama and Obama officials with those of previous presidents and their foreign policy advisers; in turn, it compares the new administration's initial actions in sub-Saharan Africa with the efforts of the previous three presidential administrations. The article uses these comparisons to identify trends in post–Cold War US-Africa relations and to develop predictions on the Obama administration's approach to the Africa policy question.

Obama's Africa: Competing Policy Predictions

1. *Change is on the horizon. Obama's election heralds a new era of heightened attention for sub-Saharan Africa. The administration will pursue "common priorities" of good governance (democracy), development, conflict resolution, and improved access to health care and education.*

Both policy analysts and Africa scholars advance the position that Obama's approach to sub-Saharan Africa will be more active and comprehensive than that of his predecessors.[16] Many claim that the president's heritage—particularly his Kenyan roots—will prompt him to seek closer US ties to Africa. Some suggest that his Senate record—his cosponsorship of the Darfur Peace and Accountability Act, condemnation of Zimbabwean dictator Mugabe, focus on health-related projects in sub-Saharan Africa, and attention to Kenya's postelection instability—will translate to continued presidential action on Africa. Others, in turn, cite the president's decision to surround himself with Africa experts—the appointment of Susan Rice as the US ambassador to the United Nations and the influence afforded to the assistant secretary of state for African affairs (Johnnie Carson)—as evidence of his commitment to addressing Africa's challenges.[17]

Adherents of this position dispute claims that Africa will remain a low-level priority under Obama. Fears that the president will be "distracted"

by domestic economic problems and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, they say, are largely overblown.[18] Rather, the president's goals for Africa (further integration of Africa into the world economy, improved levels of peace and security, and strengthened political and civil institutions) are well suited to the current environment. Numerous "hopeful developments" have occurred in the sub-Saharan region: improved economic growth, West Africa's transition from civil warfare to relative stability, and initial indications of successes for the Bush administration's HIV/AIDS and debt-relief programs.

According to Chinua Akukwe, the broad range of *probable* reasons for increased US involvement with Africa is perhaps less significant than the slightly narrower range of *necessary* reasons for increased US-Africa ties. The current international environment will prevent the Obama administration from ignoring Africa's value as a source of oil and trade. Although proponents of this view typically couch their statements in the language of cautious optimism, their position is clear: "Barack Obama . . . will pay attention to Africa."[19]

2. *There will be little change in the United States' post–Cold War approach to sub-Saharan Africa; the region will remain a low priority for foreign policy makers. Hopes that Africa will receive greater attention from the Obama administration will not be met; the administration will focus the great bulk of its efforts on addressing domestic economic concerns and higher-order international challenges (Iraq and Afghanistan).*

Numerous policy analysts questioned President Clinton's approach to sub-Saharan Africa, depicting it as a continuation of the continent's low-priority status under the George H. W. Bush administration. Clinton, claims Rachel Stohl, initially seemed "interested in helping undo the damage caused by years of neglect."[20] However, the president's pro-Africa rhetoric was largely undercut by two highly publicized foreign policy missteps: the rapid withdrawal from Somalia following the Battle of Mogadishu in 1993 and the nonresponse to the Rwandan genocide of 1994. Perhaps in reaction to criticisms of these choices, Clinton officials and their supporters in Congress adopted a new position: "African solutions for African problems."[21] Critics attacked the administration's lack of attention to the West African diamond conflicts and instability in the Horn of Africa, decrying the president's observation that the United States "cannot respond to every humanitarian catastrophe in the world."[22]

Observers were similarly quick to condemn George W. Bush's early take on Africa. When asked about his plans for Africa during the 2000 presidential campaign, he responded with "There've got to be priorities."[23] He commended Clinton's decision to avoid US intervention in Rwanda, claiming that he too would opt against direct US engagement in cases of African genocide.[24] Critics not only attacked these comments but also highlighted his decision to cut funds for international organizations that provided family planning and reproductive health services in Africa. They further criticized Bush's lack of support for proposals to allow Africa to "import or produce generic versions of HIV/AIDS medications."[25]

Many contend that Obama's Africa policy will represent a continuation of Clinton-Bush policy—that the current administration will fail to meet hopes for a more active and comprehensive approach to the continent. They depict expectations of increased US attention and support for Africa as unrealistic, suggesting that Obama's Kenyan heritage is no guarantee that his Africa agenda will "somehow be unique or different than his predecessor's."[26] Some argue that more pressing issues—economic troubles and ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan—will act as constraints against a more proactive Africa policy.[27] Most adherents to this viewpoint suggest that we would be foolish to "expect too much" of Obama's emerging Africa policy, but some have gone so far as to predict that "Africa may actually fare less well than it did under Bush."[28] Others have been quick to criticize the new president's early speeches on Africa, claiming that admonitions like "Africa's future is up to Africans" are misplaced and ill deserved.[29] They fear that there is little hope for an enhanced role for Africa on the US foreign policy agenda because Obama has essentially "repackaged the same old views in less diplomatic language."[30]

3. *Obama will make modest adjustments to Bush's post-9/11 "militarization" policy. Hopes that sub-Saharan Africa will play a greater role in US foreign policy will be partially met; the administration will support Bush's US Africa Command (AFRICOM) and counterterrorism initiatives.*

The previous two arguments share an assumption about the nature of the United States' post–Cold War involvements with sub-Saharan Africa; namely, that despite intermittent periods of increased attention, the region was a low-priority concern for American decision makers. Some depict this assumption as faulty, though, suggesting that recent administrations have

increasingly focused on Africa's importance to the United States (analysts remain divided on the appropriateness of this new focus). For example, Dana Hughes contends that, in certain respects, "Africa was a priority under former President Bush."[31] Aid to Africa exceeded $5 billion per year by the end of his second term, a number that far exceeds assistance levels under George H. W. Bush or Bill Clinton. Some trace this trend of renewed American interest in the continent to the late 1990s and early 2000s, citing leaders' concerns for the security risks posed by Islamic extremist organizations and for US access to African oil reserves. Presidents Clinton and Bush both took steps to counter al-Qaeda's influence in the Horn of Africa and surrounding regions. Further, both supported legislation that called for increased US trade ties with sub-Saharan Africa.[32]

Although Hughes lauds Bush's attention to Africa, particularly the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, others suggest that Bush's post-9/11 "fixation on security" has resulted in a dangerous militarization of US Africa policy.[33] The Bush administration, claim critics, went far beyond providing strategic assistance for counterterrorism activities—it launched a new unified combatant command, AFRICOM, in 2008. The administration defended the actions necessary for enhanced African stability and the progress of the global war on terror, but some fear that these steps will accomplish nothing more than "flooding [the continent] with even more guns."[34]

Some suggest that President Obama will continue to pursue the militarization efforts initiated under Bush, noting that he is "set to oversee significant increases in US security assistance programmes for African countries."[35] The current administration plans to uphold Bush's foreign military training and international military education and training programs; further, its 2010 budget included calls for increased spending for security assistance programs and AFRICOM operations. "This shows that—at least initially—the administration is following the course laid down . . . by the Bush administration."[36]

Assessing the Policy Predictions: Underlying Assumption of Predictions One and Two

Gauging the validity of the contending predictions first requires an assessment of the underlying assumption of the first two positions: since the end of the Cold War, sub-Saharan Africa has been a low-priority item for American foreign policy makers. A standard count-measure of presidents'

public statements (1989–2010) reveals little about the importance of the region (as compared to other regions) to administrations of the past two decades (table 1).

Table 1. Presidential attention to sub-Saharan Africa in the post–Cold War era: public statements (or papers) on sub-Saharan Africa versus other regions

Administration/Year	Africa	Asia	Europe	Middle East	Latin America
Bush 1989	69	85	275	46	44
Bush 1990	87	58	323	91	60
Bush 1991	76	76	252	145	31
Bush 1992	66	105	247	91	50
Clinton 1993	97	137	273	122	83
Clinton 1994	184	109	308	188	50
Clinton 1995	135	115	270	207	49
Clinton 1996	179	150	239	174	48
Clinton 1997	187	178	296	191	114
Clinton 1998	352	403	277	269	102
Clinton 1999	348	256	379	240	117
Clinton 2000	435	256	235	287	119
Bush 2001	157	162	250	194	44
Bush 2002	139	151	209	256	42
Bush 2003	294	122	253	341	19
Bush 2004	305	137	285	484	34
Bush 2005	199	160	284	312	29
Bush 2006	249	190	272	388	32
Bush 2007	281	177	287	339	95
Bush 2008	361	209	369	355	76
Obama 2009	159	133	174	139	35
Obama 2010	25	23	28	21	4

Source: Information obtained from the American Presidency Project, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/. Results derived from region-name search for each world region, for each presidential-administration year, and for the years 1989–2010. Count is based on those search results in which the title of the document highlighted the region name.

Applying the same statement count-measure to congressional floor statements on sub-Saharan Africa (1989–2009), however, yields somewhat more telling results. The 1989–2009 period included roughly 1,300 statements on Africa per Congress (average). In contrast, statements on other

regions exceeded 2,000 statements per Congress during the same period.[37] This provides at least some indication that African issues and challenges may have held less interest—or, at least, registered as lower-priority items—for members of Congress than issues and challenges stemming from other regions of the world.

The comparison of statement count-measures may provide only rough estimates of sub-Saharan Africa's relative importance to post–Cold War policy makers, but an analysis of the content of these statements allows for a more nuanced assessment. Table 2 provides an overview of the breadth of presidential-administration statements on sub-Saharan Africa (per year, for the 1989–2009 period); it also provides an overview of the nature and content of those statements (most common themes per year for the 1989–2009 period). As indicated, the immediate post–Cold War era was defined by George H. W. Bush's somewhat narrow—for 1989, nonexistent—take on US interests in sub-Saharan Africa. Clinton, who devoted very little attention to the continent during his first years in office, ultimately came to focus on issues such as US-Africa trade ties, democracy, and concerns about health and humanitarian aid. Pres. George W. Bush, in turn, adopted a seemingly expansive (and expanding) series of policy objectives for the region. In some respects, this information seems to conflict with the assumption that the United States has generally ignored Africa during the post–Cold War era.

Table 2. Scope and nature of presidential-administration statements on sub-Saharan Africa, 1989–2009

Administration/Year	Statements on Sub-Saharan Africa
Bush 1989	NA
Bush 1990	Humanitarian/refugees
Bush 1991	Humanitarian/refugees
Bush 1992	Humanitarian/refugees
Clinton 1993	NA
Clinton 1994	General: Africa as US foreign policy priority
Clinton 1995	NA
Clinton 1996	Free trade and development
Clinton 1997	Free trade and development
Clinton 1998	Free trade (African Growth and Opportunity Act [AGOA]), democracy
Clinton 1999	Free trade (AGOA), democracy

Table 2 (continued)

Administration/Year	Statements on Sub-Saharan Africa
Clinton 2000	Free trade (AGOA), disease, crime, humanitarian aid
Bush 2001	Free trade (AGOA)
Bush 2002	Free trade (AGOA), security, HIV/AIDS
Bush 2003	Free trade (AGOA), security, terrorism, HIV/AIDS
Bush 2004	Free trade (AGOA), Sudan crisis, HIV/AIDS
Bush 2005	Free trade (AGOA), democracy, humanitarian
Bush 2006	Free trade (AGOA), Darfur crisis
Bush 2007	Humanitarian/refugees, Darfur crisis, HIV/AIDS, poverty
Bush 2008	Humanitarian/refugees, disease, security, Darfur crisis
(Obama 2009)	Good governance, democracy, free trade (AGOA), violence in Central Africa

Source: Information obtained from American Presidency Project, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/. Results reflect the "year average" of presidential-administration messages. Results derived from content analysis of each presidential-administration statement on sub-Saharan Africa and for each presidential-administration year (for those search results in which the title of the document highlighted the region name).

One could argue that the willingness to support US interests in Africa with the use of force (table 3) is decidedly more limited than presidential-congressional rhetoric would indicate. The great majority of the United States' post–Cold War interventions in the sub-Saharan region were motivated by the concern for evacuating American citizens from areas of conflict. Yet, since the late 1990s and early 2000s, military interventions have increasingly (re)focused on US security and counterterrorism interests in the region. The validity of this trend is supported by related data on US foreign aid spending on sub-Saharan security concerns.

Table 3. Post–Cold War military action in Africa

Year	State(s)	Military Operation
1990	Liberia	Evacuation of US citizens
1991	Zaire	Transportation of Belgian and French troops and evacuees
1992	Sierra Leone	Evacuation of US citizens
1992	Somalia	Response to humanitarian crisis
1996	Liberia	Evacuation of US citizens
1996	Central African Republic	Evacuation of US citizens; embassy security
1997	Congo, Gabon	Standby evacuation forces
1997	Sierra Leone	Evacuation of US citizens
1998	Guinea-Bissau	Standby evacuation force
1998	Kenya, Tanzania	Medical and disaster relief following embassy bombings
1998	Sudan	Air strikes on suspected chemical (weapons) factory

Table 3 (continued)

Year	State(s)	Military Operation
1998	Liberia	Standby evacuation force
2000	Sierra Leone	Evacuation support operation
2002	Côte d'Ivoire	Evacuation of US citizens
2003	Liberia	Standby evacuation force; embassy security
2003	Djibouti	Counterterrorism assistance
2004	Djibouti, Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea	Counterterrorism activities
2007	Somalia	Aerial strike on al-Qaeda operative and Islamist fighters

Source: Information obtained from Ellen C. Collier, "Instances of Use of United States Forces Abroad, 1798–1993" (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 7 October 1993), http://www.history.navy.mil/wars/foabroad.htm; and Larry Van Horn, "United States Military Campaigns, Conflicts, Expeditions, and Wars," 2006, http://dir.groups.yahoo.com/group/KLOS_Impact/message/9508.

Significant increases in spending on security assistance occurred during the late 1990s and early 2000s, particularly in the immediate post-9/11 years (fig. 1). This information, coupled with the scope and themes of the Clinton and Bush administration statements on US interests in Africa, suggests that the underlying assumption of predictions one and two (regarding the lack of American concern for Africa following the end of the Cold War) is faulty. This possibility is further substantiated by data on other types of US aid (see below).

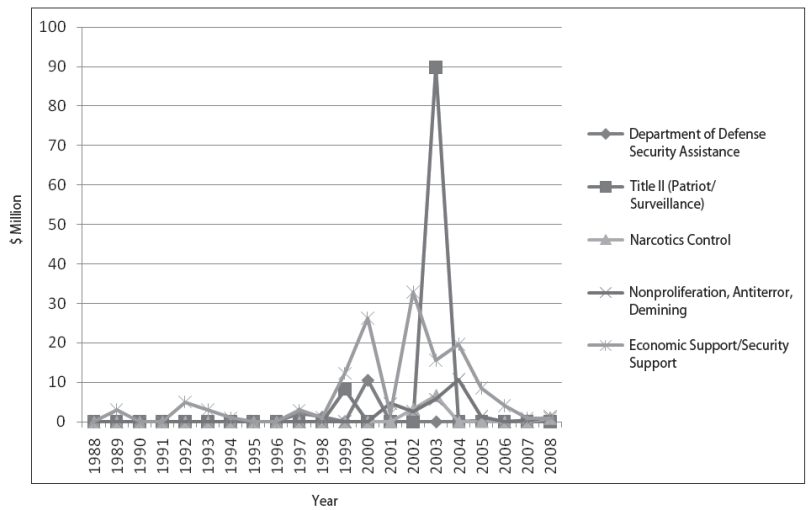

Figure 1. US security aid for sub-Saharan Africa, 1988–2008 (in millions of constant US dollars). (Information obtained from US Agency for International Development, *U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants, Obligations and Loan Authorizations, July 1, 1945–September 30, 2008* [aka the *Greenbook*] [Washington, DC: US Agency for International Development, 2008].)

US spending on development and humanitarian aid also evolved considerably during the course of the past decade (fig. 2). Funding for (through) aid programs has increased since the early 1990s; further, recent administrations have been increasingly likely to support a broader range of aid programs. Again, this information undercuts the notion that post–Cold War foreign policy leaders have tended to "ignore" sub-Saharan Africa.

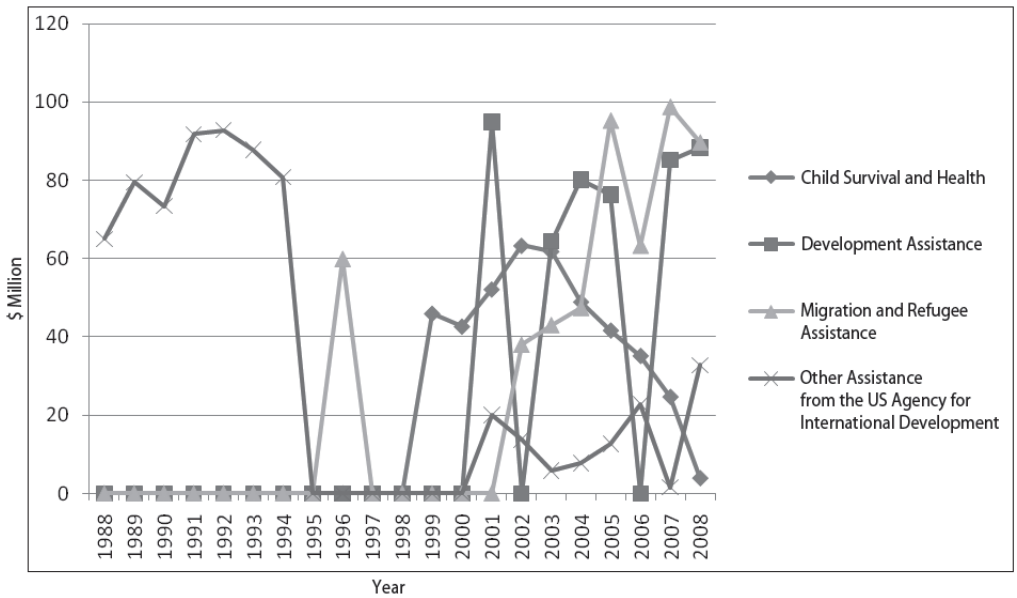

Figure 2. US development-humanitarian aid for sub-Saharan Africa, 1988–2008 (in millions of constant US dollars). (Information obtained from US Agency for International Development, *U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants, Obligations and Loan Authorizations, July 1, 1945–September 30, 2008* [aka the *Greenbook*] [Washington, DC: US Agency for International Development, 2008].)

The Obama Administration on Sub-Saharan Africa: Presidential-Administration Statements, Initial Indicators

Content-based analysis of Obama's speeches allows for some degree of insight into the president's understanding of US interests in Africa (see table 2). An assessment of the president's statements from his first year in office suggests that he intends to focus on the following issues: good governance, democracy, free trade (via the African Growth and Opportunity Act), and violence in Central Africa. However, given that these statements are derived from a limited time period, it is important to consider additional

sources of information. Not surprisingly, an analysis of Obama officials' statements from 2009 to 2010 indicates a significant level of alignment with the president's "Africa message." In some areas, though, members of the Obama foreign policy team appear to branch out—considerably—beyond the president's key themes on US interests in Africa.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton gave several Africa-themed speeches in 2009. Most of these focused on the president's commitment to upholding the "Africa objectives" he outlined during the 2008 campaign. In her testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 2009, however, Clinton offered greater detail on Obama's plans for US action on sub-Saharan Africa.[38] The president's agenda for Africa, she noted, included broad-ranging commitments to security, political, economic, and humanitarian interests. She gave particular attention to development-humanitarian goals such as improving access to public health and education, fighting the spread of HIV/AIDS, and addressing the ongoing crisis in Darfur. Yet, she also focused on a series of security- and stability-related issues. Obama's foreign policy team, she asserted, was committed to "combating al-Qaida's efforts to seek safe havens in failed states in the Horn of Africa; helping African nations to conserve their natural resources and reap fair benefits from them; stopping war in Congo; [and] ending autocracy in Zimbabwe."[39] Clinton characterized the troubles of Africa's failed states—piracy along the coast of Somalia, corruption and human rights abuses in Zimbabwe, and unchecked violence in Eastern Congo—as problems that threatened the stability and progress of the continent as a whole. Africa's failed states, Clinton indicated, not only are "breeding grounds . . . for the worst abuses of human beings" but also are "invitations to terrorists to find refuge amidst the chaos." The secretary of state argued that emphasis on the president's "social development" policies would be essential to the realization of American interests in Africa.[40]

Clinton's depiction of the Obama administration's interests in sub-Saharan Africa appears to be largely in keeping with (and influenced by) themes advanced by Johnnie Carson, the assistant secretary of state for African affairs. During the first year of the Obama administration, Carson repeatedly drew attention to Africa's continued and growing importance to the United States.[41] "Despite the serious and well known challenges that confront Africa today," said Carson, "we remain committed to Africa's future."

He focused on the continent's changing role in the post–Cold War environment, saying that "the 21st century will not be shaped merely in the capitals of the super and near superpowers, but also by the continent of Africa and its leaders as well."[42] The Obama administration, said Carson, would devote efforts to "five areas of critical importance" for the United States and Africa: strengthening institutions of democracy and good governance, fostering sustainable economic development, improving public health care, preventing and resolving interstate and domestic conflicts, and addressing new global threats (narco-trafficking, climate change, resource exploitation, pandemic diseases, and energy security).[43]

An overview of the administration's stated positions on sub-Saharan Africa provides a useful jumping-off point for assessing predictions on future US involvements in the region. However, statements alone cannot be afforded too much predictive value; they must be considered within a broader context (against administration efforts to back up its "Africa message" with action). A review of the president's 2010 budget offers at least some indication that the administration intends to uphold its commitments to Africa.

With respect to development-humanitarian aid, Obama called for a 63 percent increase, or an additional $550 million in funding for the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) (more than half of MCC beneficiaries are African states). Ultimately, Congress voted to increase the MCC budget by 26 percent. However, this did raise the total MCC budget to roughly $1.1 billion. Numbers for health-related issues remain less certain. For example, the 2010 budget did not call for increased funding for the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief although the proposed 2011 budget does request a 2.2 percent increase. The 2010 budget does include increased or new funding for several peacekeeping programs: $42 million for continued implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Accords (Sudan), $10 million for creation of a professional peacekeeping force in Liberia, $67 million for the African Union (peacekeeping mission in Somalia), and $96.8 million for the Global Peace Operations Initiative (which provides, in part, training for African peacekeeping forces).[44]

Security-stability assistance programs for Africa fared relatively well under Obama's 2010 budget. The administration called for increased funding for the foreign military financing program, which provides loans for

weapons and purchases of military equipment. It also requested $25.6 million for arms sales to Africa for fiscal year (FY) 2010 (up from $8.3 million for FY 2009). The president's 2010 budget proposed smaller funding increases for international military education and training programs for African states, asking for $16 million as opposed to the previous year's $13 million. The president requested a doubling of the previous year's funding for counterterrorism programs and proposed modest increases to AFRICOM's budget.[45]

The president has also demonstrated willingness to address African security-stability matters with military intervention and the use of force. He authorized the use of force against Somali pirates in May 2009 and has responded to Somalia's Islamist insurgency problems with strikes on suspected al-Qaeda operatives. He stepped up plans to address Mali's insurgency problems by deploying 300 special forces troops to train government forces in counterinsurgency techniques.[46]

Conclusion: Addressing the Policy Predictions

The information presented above suggests that all three predictions on Obama's Africa policy are likely to be somewhat inaccurate. The relatively broad scope of the president's statements on Africa, as well as those of his immediate foreign policy advisers (a group largely composed of persons with experience in African affairs), suggests that he is not likely to ignore Africa in the coming years. Further, his 2010 budget requests, on the whole, represent steps towards increased funding for existing and new development-humanitarian programs, as well as security-stability programs, for sub-Saharan Africa. As such, it seems implausible that the president's concerns for domestic economic troubles and higher-order international concerns (the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan) will prevent him from addressing US interests in Africa.

Claims that the president will pursue a "militarized" approach to sub-Saharan Africa seem similarly exaggerated. The president has indicated—through his public statements, funding for security programs, and military interventions—that he is willing to pursue and support military options in the region. However, assertions that his policy agenda is centered on military-security issues, to the extent that it is detrimental to other areas, seem somewhat overblown. The administration's stated priorities for Africa, as

well as its Africa-budget patterns, are just as comprehensive—if not more so—than those of the previous three administrations.

Finally, claims that the Obama administration will bring sweeping change to US policy on sub-Saharan Africa are largely overstated. The president seems to have indicated a willingness to afford the region slightly greater policy priority than some of his predecessors. This, however, cannot be interpreted as an indication that his approach will significantly deviate from that of previous administrations. In fact, much of the evidence presented above suggests that Obama's agenda for sub-Saharan Africa will look remarkably similar to that of George W. Bush.

Given the findings addressed above, it seems most plausible that Obama's approach to Africa will represent a modest "step forward" on the policies pursued by Bill Clinton and George W. Bush. In all likelihood, Obama's Africa agenda will be an active and comprehensive one. It will not, however, include radical changes to the overarching trend of US-Africa relations during the post–Cold War era.

Notes

1. Gerald LeMelle, "Africa Policy Outlook 2008," *Foreign Policy in Focus*, 7 February 2008, http://www.fpif.org/articles/africa_policy_outlook_2008; J. Peter Pham, "Africa in an Obama Administration," *World Defense Review*, 6 November 2008, http://worlddefensereview.com/pham110608.shtml; Donovan C. Chau, "Obama's Africa Policy—Hope or Change?," *Security Debrief*, 26 January 2009, http://securitydebrief.adfero.com/2009/01/26/obamas-africa-policy-hope-or-change/; and Thomas Omestad, "Africa, a Troubled Continent, Eyes Obama with Impossibly High Hopes," *U.S. News and World Report*, 16 January 2009, http://politics.usnews.com/news/obama/articles/2009/01/16/africa-a-troubled-continent-eyes-obama-with-impossibly-high-hopes.html.

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