# THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA'S FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS AFRICA: THE CASE STUDIES OF KENYA AND NIGERIA, 1990-2008

by

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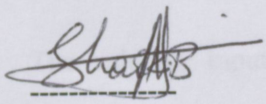
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## Declaration

**Student No: 11532527**

I, Kgothatso Shai, hereby declare that the dissertation for the Master of Arts in Political Science at the University of Venda, hereby submitted by me, has not been submitted for a degree at this or any other university, and that it is my own work in design and execution and that all reference material contained has been duly acknowledged.



Signature

24/08/2010

Date

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**Abstract**

The researcher acknowledges that Africa occupies a special position in the National Security Strategy (NSS) of the United States of America (US). Since Africa has been plagued by poverty, HIV/AIDS, authoritarianism, civil wars and other related ills, it seems to constitute a national security threat to the US. This is evidently seen by the interest that the US shows on the continent especially when it comes to issues of the potential threat of terrorism that the Western powers perceive Africa to pose. It is for this reason that this study looks at the foreign policy of the US towards Africa from the end of the Cold War, 1990 to 2008. It uses the engagement of Washington with Kenya and Nigeria to situate and interpret the US Africa policy within a wider scope. This study is underpinned by both realism and idealism as the major contending theories in the discipline of International Relations.

The US's foreign policy towards Africa is underscored by three main themes: The promotion of democracy and human rights, global peace, economic prosperity and economic security. In this regard, the key actors in the foreign policy making and execution processes in the US are the President, Secretary of State, Congress and other government departments. However, the head of state heralds more power on foreign policy issues. This argument is based on the tenures of office of three recent predecessors of President Barack Obama and their foreign policies on Africa, namely, George Bush Sr., Bill Clinton and George W. Bush.

George Bush Sr. presided for two years over the post-Cold War US foreign policy towards Africa and struggled so much to shed the legacy of the policy of containment that was characteristic of the Reagan government that administered immediately before him. The history of the Gulf War mirrors George Bush's obsession with terrorism and it helps to establish continuity of father's policy by the son. In contrast, Bill Clinton's administration was more concerned about the respect of human rights as the cornerstone of the establishment and consolidation of democracy in Africa. On the other hand, the goal of the foreign policy on Africa of George W. Bush's administration was the quest for the control and manipulation of oil production and

distribution, which is tied to the war on terror following the September 11, 2001 attacks.

Drawing from the experience of Abuja and Nairobi, this study asserts that the US has identified hegemonic states in Africa that could serve as launching pads for its foreign policy on the continent. The scourge of terrorism has served as a catalyst for America's interest in Kenya while oil has served as a centre of attraction in the case of Nigeria. In spite of all the criticisms levelled against the governments of both Kenya and Nigeria, the US sought to use them to spread democracy in East Africa and West Africa, respectively, with the purpose of sub-contracting the task of preserving its economic and security interests to them. This study argues that in the context of the US foreign policy liberal goals are usually stated than implemented. Support for democracy and human rights in African states is provided when such is consistent with the US national interests and national power.

## Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| AFRICOM | Africa Command |
| AGOA | Africa Growth and Opportunity Act |
| AIDS | Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome |
| AISA | Africa Institute of South Africa |
| ALBA | Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas |
| AOPIG | African Oil Policy Initiative Group |
| AU | African Union |
| CCGA | Chicago Council on Global Affairs |
| COG | Commonwealth Observer Group |
| CSOs | Civil Society Organisations |
| CSR | Corporate Social Responsibility |
| ECK | Electoral Commission of Kenya |
| EISA | Electoral Institute of Southern Africa |
| EU | European Union |
| IMD | Institute for Multiparty Democracy |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| IOC | Indian Ocean Commission |
| NAM | Non-Alignment Movement |
| NEPAD | New Partnership for Africa's Development |
| ECOWAS | Economic Community of West African States |
| FBI | Federal Bureau of Intelligence |
| FDI | Foreign Direct Investment |
| HDI | Human Development Index |

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| | |
|---|---|
| HIV | Human Immune Virus |
| HPI | Human Poverty Index |
| ICC | International Court of Justice |
| IGAD | Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Development |
| IGD | Institute of Global Dialogue |
| IMET | International Military Education and Training |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| IOR | Indian Ocean Rim |
| ISS | Institute for Security Studies |
| KANU | Kenya African National Union |
| KP | Kimberley Process |
| MCA | Millennium Challenge Account |
| NAFTA | North American Free Trade Agreement |
| NARC | National Rainbow Coalition |
| NGOs | Non-Governmental Organisations |
| NSS | National Security Strategy |
| ODM | Orange Democratic Party |
| OPEC | Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries |
| PEPFAR | President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief |
| SAIIA | South African Institute of International Affairs |
| SAIRR | South African Institute of Race Relations |
| UN | United Nations |
| US | United States |
| USA | United States of America |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |

| | |
|---|---|
| UHRA | Uganda Human Rights Activists |
| UNDF | United Nations Democracy Fund |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| WB | World Bank |
| WTO | World Trade Organisation |
| ZANU-PF | Zimbabwean African National Union-Patriotic Front |

## SECTION A

## Chapter One

## Background of the Study

### 1.1. Introduction

The subject of the involvement, both directly and indirectly, of the United States of America (USA), hereafter the US, in Africa is a contested terrain between academics and practitioners of international relations and diplomacy. However, there is agreement that the US engagement in Africa is not a recent development, rather a historical one.[1] The existing literature in history delineates that Africa and the US have a shared past, though not common. Overall, America's relations with Africa date back to the year 1619 when a Dutch ship sold twenty Africans in the British North American colonies, who were captured in Angola, as slaves.[2] Britain was at the centre of historical and cultural ties between Africa and the US. In both Africa and America, Britain maintained colonies and primarily linked to this research, London is the former colonial power of Kenya and Nigeria. This partly explains why both the US and Africa were at the centre of the history of slavery. It is therefore not surprising that the US currently prides itself with a small, but significant segment of the population of African-Americans. This historical and demographic reality is articulated by Susan Rice when she argues that approximately twelve percent of the

[1] In this research the word "engagement" is used interchangeably with "foreign policy" and it simply denotes the nature of one country's foreign affairs especially in the political, security and economic arena.

[2] B.A. Ogot (ed.), *General History of Africa Vol. V: Africa from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century*, Berkeley: University of California, 1999, pp. 1-11.

Americans trace their cultural and genealogical roots from the African continent.[3] Kenya and Nigeria are the ancestral homes of the majority of the Africans who reside in the US and in the recent past, Washington has been more involved with both Nairobi and Abuja, among other African states than in any other period.

Despite the well recorded and documented US-Africa shared history, there is no general agreement in Washington's foreign policy towards Africa. This can be attributed to the complex set of various antagonistic actors involved in the making of foreign policy in the US. It also has to do with competing perceptions about Africa among politicians, analysts and academics. In order to develop a good, clear and coherent foreign policy, the US needs mutual understanding and closer cooperation between the Congress and President.[4] This position is not empirically unrealistic because the President is the chief foreign policy maker in the US but his power is conditioned by the Congress which was given more power by the Constitution on matters of foreign affairs. To make matters worse, the two chambers of the Congress, the House and Senate are often dominated by different political parties and this development often stifles cooperation with the presidency on issues of national importance, including foreign policy.[5]

However, in the contemporary period, a pattern of using pivotal states such as Kenya and Nigeria as regional enforcers of the US foreign policy in Africa can be observed.[6]

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[3] S. E. Rice, "United States Interests in Africa: Post-Cold War, Post-Apartheid", Bram Fischer Memorial Lecture, Oxford University, 13 May 1999, p. 4.
[4] L. H. Hamilton, *How Congress Works and Why You Should Care*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004, pp. 18-19.
[5] A. Shank, *American Politics, Policies and Priorities* (6th ed), Dubuque: Brown & Benchmark Publishers, 1993, pp. 300-305.
[6] Pivotal states are "countries whose fate determines the survival and success of the surrounding region and ultimately the stability of the international system" (Robert Chase, Emily Hill and Paul Kennedy, "Pivotal States and US Strategy", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol 1 (89), January/ February 1996).

This has been especially the case since the days of Bill Clinton's term of office and it was later concretised under the leadership of his successor, George W. Bush. While much of the literature on foreign affairs indicates that there is no radical break of the past in the foreign policy of the US in Africa, Washington's engagement in this continent was mainly characterised by the subcontracting of its foreign policy to local clients including Nigeria, Kenya, Ethiopia and South Africa.[7] Kenya was responsible for East Africa and Nigeria was assigned West Africa. While South Africa is on top of all these countries mentioned above, it is a fact that recent political developments in Kenya and Nigeria have received limited attention from scholars and other professionals working in the area of US's international relations and foreign policy analysis. The situation remained the same despite the magnitude of their increasing importance to the national security of the US.

According to Peter Schraeder, throughout the time US policies towards Africa could best be described as that of "...indifference at worst and neglect at best...".[8] Given the dynamics of US politics, the important point to take away here, is the acknowledgement that regime change in the US has often brought about changes at rhetorical level without action. On the other hand, successive American governments under various political parties tended to compromise their interests in Africa in favour of other regions and their engagement on the continent was tailored on *ad hoc* measures often triggered by a crisis situation.[9] This view is shared and well captured

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[7] United States, "A National Security Strategy of the United States of America", The White House, September 2002, p. 11.
[8] P. J. Schraeder, *United States Foreign Policy Toward Africa: Incrementalism, Crisis and Change*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 2.
[9] B. R. Posen and A. L. Ross, "Competing Visions for US Grand Strategy", *International Security*, Vol 21 (3), Winter 1996/1997, pp. 50-53.



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in an editorial headlined: [T]he neglected continent.[10] To begin with, during the colonial era, US-Africa relations were conducted mainly under the tutelage of Britain as highlighted above. This fact brought about confusing and conflicting policy positions of Washington towards Africa due to the struggle among American politicians to either develop an independent foreign policy on Africa or relate to it through the strategic framework of Britain. The joint US-British involvement in Africa was also responsible for the shattering of the hopes of Africans especially in relation to America's contribution to their (Africans) liberation.

It is noted that during Africa's struggle for independence, America did not identify itself with the cause of Africa, despite the claim that it is a "saviour nation".[11] This happened to the disappointment of many Africans due to the fact that America did not have a hand in the legacy of the Berlin Conference of 1884.[12] As such, the US would tacitly or naturally qualify as the probable ally of the African independence nationalist movements. Contrary to this, America sympathised with the colonial powers, Britain in particular. In relation to the above-stated fact, W.T.R. Fox and A.B. Fox as cited by George Obiozor states that what brought the US and Britain together in the twentieth century is largely, the crisis in global politics.[13] The position taken here relates to the steady withdrawal of the former colonial powers such as Britain from their dominions in both Asia and Africa, especially in the period between the 1940s and 1960s.

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[10] M. Baron, "The neglected continent", *The Boston Globe*, 16 October 2007.
[11] T.J. Moss, "US Policy and Democratisation in Africa", *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol 33 (2), 1995, p. 190.
[12] A.A. Boahen, *General History of Africa Vol II: Africa Under Colonial Domination*, Barkley: University of California, 1985.
[13] W.T.R. Fox and A.B. Fox as cited by G. Obiozor, *Uneasy Friendship: Nigerian-American Relations*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishing, 1992, p. 6.

Likewise, in the post-1948 era, the US failed to develop an unambiguous, coherent and independent policy on Africa. Its policy was essentially based on security considerations of the communist East and capitalist West rivalry. The main goal of the US Africa policy during the Cold War was the containment of the spread of communism.[14] To this end, Washington's foreign policy think-tank was preoccupied with security concerns and also aimed at the protection and preservation of Africa's mineral riches for their own benefit. It is in this context that:

> ... Europeans (and Americans) have regarded Africa's place in global affairs as 'magnificent cake' of natural resources from flowers and ostrich feathers to oil, diamonds and uranium- and a dauntingly complex human and geophysical chess and try on a wide variety of hare-brained ideas.[15]

As such, since the founding of the Republic in 1789, US policy on Africa was practically characterised by "benign neglect".[16] Notably, the US policy was viewed to be mainly driven by events and/or political developments on the continent and as such it was just but a reactionary policy based on *ad hoc* measures.[17] History has it that there were no major shifts of US policy on Africa overtime. Even during Jimmy Carter's presidency that was seen as pro-African, Picard and Groelsma pointed out that, change was only on rhetorical positions and such were not advanced to have an effect on the substance of Washington's foreign policy approach towards Africa.[18] Based on the foregoing, the literature on 'neglect' as the centre piece of the US foreign policy towards Africa gained prominence in 1994 when Washington adopted a position of inaction while genocide was happening in Rwanda. Since then the

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[14] J. S. Nye, *Understanding International Conflicts: An Introduction to Theory and History* (2nd ed). Havard: Longman. 1997, pp.98-129.
[15] L.A. Swatuk, "The United States and Africa: Cybernetic Foreign Policy, Continental Decline", *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies*, vol. 6 (4), Summer 2004, p. 3.
[16] Schraeder, 1994, p. 2.
[17] D. Rothchild and E. Keller (eds), *Africa-US Relations*, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006, p. 251.
[18] L.A. Picard and R. Groelsma, "Beyond Constructive Engagement: US Foreign Policy Toward Southern Africa into the 1990s", in E. J. Keller and L.A. Picard. *South Africa in Southern Africa: Domestic Change and International Conflict*. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1989, pp. 227-228.

literature has attracted a lot of competing explanations and this research subscribes to the literature on 'indifference'.

According to Nkadimeng Mahosi the literature on the policy of 'neglect' ignores the fact that the foreign policies of various administrations in the US are often inclined by various factors.[19] For instance, in terms of Africa's foreign policy George Bush Sr. was on the finishing line of the work laid by his predecessor, President Ronald Reagan who was more concerned with Cold War security calculations. He had a very limited period to introduce radical foreign policy reforms as he only presided for no more than two years in the post-Cold War era. The administration of George W. Bush Jr.'s major foreign policy goal in Africa was the war against terrorism following the September 11, 2001 attacks and it was also oil inclined. On the other hand, a literature study of Bill Clinton's speeches and government documents on foreign affairs produced during his term of office reveals an emphasis on democracy, good governance and human rights issues in Africa.

### 1.2. The Purpose of the study

It is against this background that this study aims to critically analyse the foreign policy of the US towards Africa in the post-Cold War era up to the year 2008. Emphasis is placed on the general trends of US policy on Africa, while using its relations with Nigeria and Kenya in particular, to determine if its engagement at country level is indifferent or not. Owing to the fact that US's interests vary with countries, Nigeria and Kenya are used as test cases in this study. This is also partly

[19] Interview with N. Mahosi, Lecturer, Department of Development Studies, University of Venda, Thohoyandou, 13 November 2009.

informed by the researcher's desire to correct the general notion among many academics to treat Africa as an equivalent of a single country, with complete disregard of its vastness and the fact that it is composed of fifty three independent nation states. Given the complexities and the dynamics of the US-Africa relations, this study further seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- To give an account of the constancy and/ or shift in the US Africa policy by identifying the dominant patterns of Washington's involvement in Africa since the end of the Cold War,
- To explain how the change of leadership in the US affects its foreign policy towards Africa,
- To give a posture of US relations with certain African countries, and
- To present the point of convergence and divergence between the US and African states.

### 1.3. Research Problem

Historically, the study of African issues in International Politics was not an academic priority. Most American and Eurocentric scholars of History and Politics shaped their studies with the intent to justify foreign intervention in Africa. Those Africanist-American scholars who tried to advance radical and progressive perspectives of the US engagement in Africa were often undermined and not taken seriously because of their alignment with certain African political leaders such as Jonas Savimbi[20]

[20] Jonas Savimbi was the leader of the Angolan rebel movement, Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) and he was an ally of the US during the Cold War.

(Angola) and policies such as *ujamaa*[21] (Tanzania) that was later considered as a total *fiasco*. This has resulted in the predominance of negative views and/or ideas about Africa and its relations with Western powers, the US in particular. It has also shaped public opinion on the very same issue, in favour of Western interests, in this case the US.

To this end, the recent academic discourse of the US engagement in Africa is tainted with misinterpretations, misunderstandings as well as conflicting and confusing views. This has also contributed to a lack of appreciation of African realities by American policy makers in their links with African states. To address the lack of comprehensive understanding and adequate attention, both African and American scholars and practitioners of diplomacy must fairly articulate what motivates Africa's importance to the US. Furthermore, comprehensive awareness of African affairs must be prioritised if the US is to play a positive role in Africa.

It is in the context of the above that this study seeks to delve into the complex dynamics of the US engagement in Africa. This is done by answering the following three central questions:

- What are the key drivers of the US foreign policy in Africa?
- Under what circumstances has the US become involved with certain African states?
- What do the end of the Cold War and a new wave of the US-led "war on terror" mean for the US policy towards Africa?

[21] *Ujamaa* was one of the economic policies implemented in independent Tanzania under Julius Nyerere. This policy was crafted along the lines of African traditional modes of living.

In answering the above questions, the study will reflect on some of the salient facts regarding US engagement in Africa and how such impacted on the localities of both the US and Africa.

**1.4. Literature Review**

The thesis of America's foreign affairs has drawn the attention of scholars of Development Studies, Economics, Global Studies, History and Political Science, among others, since the end of the First World War. The contribution of these scholars on this subject accrued to a relatively wide body of literature, some of which have laid a solid foundation for this research. For the purpose of this research, books and journal articles from the disciplines of History and Political Science were consulted as part of the literature review. This included, *inter alia*, the works of Louis Picard and Robert Groelsma (1989), George Obiozor (1992), Thomas J. Moss (1995) and Gardner Hall (2005).

The current research has drawn largely from Picard and Groelsma's contribution to a book titled *South Africa in Southern Africa: Domestic Change and International Conflict*. In the chapter titled "Beyond Constructive Engagement: US Foreign Policy Towards Southern Africa", Picard and Groelsma put the US foreign policy towards Southern Africa into historical perspective. More importantly, the two authors probe the US foreign policy under different American presidencies since 1948 to 1990. They argue that since 1948 the US foreign policy in Southern Africa was mainly determined by East-West rivalry

which was influenced by the Cold War.[22] As a result, the US regional policy in Africa, the Southern region in particular, was indicative of Washington's global strategy of containment. As a point of departure, Picard and Groelsma contend that it would be short-sightedness to ignore the influence of the regional political developments of the Southern African states on the foreign policy direction of the US.

Picard and Groelsma contend that during the Cold War, the US foreign policy was consistent irrespective of who was at the helm of the presidency. They reject the claim that Jimmy Carter's term of office brought about fundamental change of the US foreign policy approach towards Africa. Instead, they argue that the substance of the US foreign policy did not change and changes under Carter's administration were on rhetorical positions.[23] Unlike other US Presidents, Carter openly condemned the white minority regimes in Southern Africa and called them to embrace democratic majority rule that should involve the full participation by Black nationalists. Though their chapter's primary focus was on Southern Africa especially during the Cold War, it is argued that this work is more relevant to this study. Its scope, Southern Africa is an integral part of the continent under the current study. Although the chapter is devoted to the Southern Africa region, it also mentions, in passing the US' involvement in countries such as Senegal in West Africa. It is argued that the synergies between Picard and Groelsma's work and the current study would not compromise the originality and quality of the latter. Hence, the two studies completely look at different epochs (Cold War era and the post-Cold War era). It is further argued that the shift of the balance of

[22] Picard and Groelsma, 1989, pp. 226-227.
[23] *Ibid*, p. 228.

power in the international system in the late 1980s and early 1990s qualifies this study to investigate the US engagement in Africa in the light of the post-Cold War developments.

Obiozor conducted a research for his doctoral thesis that was later converted into a book under the title, *Uneasy Friendship: Nigerian-American Relations*. This book is in fact, a study of the dynamics of the links between Nigeria and the US from 1960 to 1983. It is not an oversimplification to argue that this study projects the nature of the relationship between a developing and/or African state and the major power, Nigeria and the US respectively, in this regard. The book is more relevant to this study as it seeks to probe the complexities of the engagement of the US in Africa using Nigeria to depict the reasons for America's interest in certain African regimes or the lack of interest, thereof in others. The book, therefore, serves as an authority to the current research. Of outmost importance in this book is chapter six as it locates the relationship between Nigeria and the US in a broader US policy on Africa.[24] Although, Obiozor's work and the current research are analogous there is no temptation to reproduce his work. Hence, Obiozor's work transcended a twenty four years period that fall within the ambit of the Cold War era. The bipolar world system of between 1945 and 1990 gave way to a uni-polar world, dominated by the US as a result of the end of the Cold War. Furthermore, the Cold War period challenges were replaced by post-Cold War ones.[25] This does not imply that the 1990 shift of global power relations rendered Obiozor's work useless. The key issue is that such a change of the

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[24] Obiozor, 1992, pp. 170-199.

[25] A.Z. Rubinstein, *America's National Interest in a Post-Cold War World: Issues and Dilemmas*, New York: McGraw Hill, 1994, p. xiii.

posture of the international system necessitated a new approach, thinking and analysis informed by evolving post-Cold War global developments.

Contextually, Obiozor stated that the main lesson for the study of the relations between Nigeria and the US is that Washington is not ready for active or progressive partnership with Nigeria or any other African state.[26] Given the unequal power relations between Nigeria and the US, it seems difficult for Abuja to engage Washington in a competitive political interaction except in areas where its national interests are clearly involved and/or such could happen in a mutually beneficial economic relationship. Obiozor also observed that America's foreign policy approach to Nigeria and Africa as a whole was indifferent throughout the time and what often changed are rhetorical positions without concrete action. For him, American foreign policy can be succinctly summarized through this caption:

> [the US had] an interest in the evolution of Africa in a manner not inimical to our democratic type of government, the exclusion of influences unfriendly to our way of life, the hope of having access to the raw materials of that continent, especially to safeguard our minimum need; to increase our trade with all African countries, and to exercise a moral leadership as benefits our honourable traditions.[27]

Thomas Moss's article, "US Policy and Democratisation in Africa: The Limits of Liberal Universalism" is relatively, a fair contribution to the study of the influence and involvement of the US in Africa. It fits well with the current study as it looks at one of the pillars of America's foreign policy to Africa: Promotion of democracy and human rights. The author interrogates the role of the US in the process of democratisation in Africa as part of its global strategy to spread its

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[26] Obiozor, 1992, p. 211.
[27] *Ibid*, p. 10.

values and influence across the globe. Essentially, the author argues that the US model of democracy is not practical and achievable in the African context because the two regions have completely different historical, social and structural conditions. This research argues that Moss's assertion is not only a personal view, but a scientific finding. In other words, democracy imposed from outside cannot hold and as such, it can only be sustained if it is domestically brewed. Generally speaking, Moss observes that democracy is a good form of government. However, the notion of 'one size fits all" does not apply. To this end, it is irrational for the US to force through their form of democracy on the African political elites.

The salient weakness in this article is that some of the facts are obsolete. For example, the claim that since the implosion of the Soviet Union security considerations is no longer a priority for America's foreign policy towards Africa.[28] This study argues that this claim was relatively true in the pre-September 11, 2001 attacks and since this event, Washington has reconsidered its foreign policy goals and priorities in Africa and elsewhere to include the containment of terrorism which is viewed as a major threat to the national security of the US. In addition to the September 11 attacks, the rise of China and India as well, certainly qualifies this research to appraise the US involvement in Africa.[29] As such, the current study would give an account of the incoherence of the US policy in Africa from 1990-2008.

Hall's book, *American Global Strategy and the "War on Terrorism"* is a fair orientation to the debate on the US engagement on the world stage. The book

[28] Moss, 1995, p. 193.
[29] See John Redwood, "The Rise of China", *Superpower Struggles: Mighty America, Faltering Europe, Rising China*, New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005, pp. 31-46.

provides a critical analysis to the evolving US approach to terrorism and other national security threats from the perspective of the September 11, 2001 attacks. According to Hall, America did not have global strategy overtime and its foreign policy took the form of *ad hoc* measures.[30] This research, however, contends that it is in fact an understatement to argue that the US did not have a foreign policy. In its relations with central Asia, the Persian Gulf, the Far East, Africa and the world as a whole, what Washington decided to do or not to do is a policy, using P.A. Reynolds' definition. According to him foreign policy refers to "the range of actions taken by varying sections of the government of a state in its relations with other bodies similarly acting on the international stage, supposedly in order to advance national interests".[31] In the context of this perspective, the US did not have a coherent foreign policy in its engagement with other countries especially in Africa. F.J. William as cited by Hall proclaimed that "[t]he inconsistency of American foreign policy is not an accident but an expression of two distinct sides of American character". This includes the morality of descent instincts and the morality of self assurance.[32]

Although, the book focuses on the Middle East, as it is viewed as the epitome of terrorism, the author gives the international dimension of terrorism. The book is relevant for this study because it gives an exposition of the framework of America's foreign policy and this is also useful to the understanding of the US engagement in Africa. Furthermore, this book has an impact because it provides useful insights on how the US approaches major security issues as they arise,

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[30] G. Hall, *American Global Strategy and the "War on Terrorism*, Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing, 2005.
[31] P.A. Reynolds, *An Introduction to International Relations* (3rd ed), New York: Longman Publishing, 1994, p. 39.
[32] Hall, 2005, pp. 3-5, 147.

especially in the 21st century. It should be noted that Gardner gives snapshots of America's treatment of some African states and Africa as a whole. For example, it is observed in this text that the former US Secretary of State (2005-2009), Condoleezza Rice pronounced that Washington intends to stand with the 'oppressed people' of Zimbabwe. This is an indication of Washington's readiness to confront the so called "outposts of tyranny" in Africa.[33] In the case of Zimbabwe, Rice's label of "oppressed people" can befit the people who voted for a change of regime in previous elections[34] and whose wishes were thwarted by either election rigging or any other unacceptable conduct related to the polls.

It should be noted that the nature of oppression in a liberated country like Zimbabwe is often complex. The researcher argues that the nature of oppression in Zimbabwe can best be described as elitist tyranny.[35] However, Rice's thesis of "oppressed people" serves to criminalize and marginalize the political leadership in Zimbabwe and draw disgruntled Zimbabweans, Africans and the international community to support Washington's hostile policy towards Harare. Hence, there are other African countries like Swaziland whose political space is not liberalised, but it is no main concern for Washington. The inconsistent and selective approach of the US when dealing with other countries bears testimony to its hypocritical foreign policy.[36]

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[33] *Ibid.*
[34] This includes the Zimbabwe parliamentary elections of 2000 and the 2008 harmonised general elections.
[35] For the purpose of this research, elitist tyranny refers to the dictatorship of the majority or a fair component of the population of a particular country by its political elite.
[36] A. Mutambara, "Zimbabweans are a heroic people and our history must inspire us", *City Press*, 10 August 2008, p. 21.

Hall also looks briefly at the relations between the US and Zimbabwe. This is complemented by an analysis of the alleged linkage by the US between the Al-qaeda network and Kenya, Tanzania, Sudan and perhaps, Somalia.[37] This kind of information is critical to the understanding of the noble principles and motives of the US's involvement in African affairs especially in the post-September 11 era. Unlike other countries mentioned here, Zimbabwe does not feature well in the connections of Al-qaeda. However, Zimbabwe is a failing state and according to the American policy makers, it is prone to become a fertile breeding and training ground for future terrorists which is of course a speculation.[38]

The two books by Obiozor and Hall treat two divergent themes regarding the US foreign relations in two completely different regions and circumstances. Despite this, there are synergies between the two books. Interestingly, in comparative terms, Obiozor claims that the US relies on the advice of its traditional ally, Britain, before it engages in any exercise in Africa as was the case in Zimbabwe since the year 2000 controversial land reform programme in that country. As a point of departure, Hall noted significant differences and divisions between the US and Europe (which includes Britain) on which strategy and tactics to apply to different states in Africa and elsewhere.[39] In this regard, it is safe to say that the two conflicting views on America deepen the thrust of this research and serve as a stimulus for future research on the subject.

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[37] Gardner, 2005, p.12.
[38] W. Christopher, "A New Relationship", *Africa Report*, No 38, July/August 1993, pp. 36-37.
[39] Hall, 2005, p. 15.

### 1.5. Research Methodology

This research is about a critical appraisal of the factors that inform US foreign policy in Africa since the end of the Cold War. It is informed by two major contending theories in International Relations, namely: Realism and Idealism. These theories have been very useful in the analysis of the behaviour of individuals, states and other actors in the international system. While the usefulness of the two theories in the study of foreign policy is documented, it is quite impossible to indicate which one is more important than the other. To this end, post-1990 George Bush Sr., Bill Clinton and George W. Bush Jr. may have either used the aspects of either realism or idealism or the combination of both, in conceiving and executing their various foreign policies towards Africa. Realism subscribes to the following key principles:

- The international system is anarchic,
- Sovereign states are the principal actors in the international system,
- States are rational actors acting in their national interests,
- The overriding goal of each state is its own security and survival, and
- State survival is guaranteed best by power, principally military in character.

Unlike realism which regards the 'international' as an anarchic realm, idealism seeks to project values of order, liberty, justice, and tolerance in international relations. Idealists further claim that:

- Absolute gains can be made through cooperation and interdependence-thus peace can be achieved,
- State preferences, rather than state capabilities are the primary determinants of state behaviour, and
- Interaction between states is not limited to political (high politics), but also economic (low politics).

Methodologically, the researcher demonstrates and elaborates the *problematique* of the study analytically, qualitatively and empirically. The study's approach is to select three issues from the theoretical material, namely: oil, democracy and security (Section A) and to apply these to the two cases in Section B. Therefore, this study is not concerned about the quantification of fieldwork results, but it makes a contribution in terms of recording of case information and qualitative analysis.

It is on the basis of the above that the study employs literature review as a key tool of secondary data collection and analysis. The success of this project is mainly dependent on this tool given the impracticality of obtaining sufficient primary information from the field by interview, especially with the American government officials.

This research is based on both primary and secondary sources. Primary information was collected through the review of newspapers, magazines, official government communiqués, speeches, pamphlets, documents and maps. Secondary sources consulted include, conference papers, journal articles (mainly from

International History and Politics), books, periodicals, monographs and policy reports. This information was mainly sourced from the documentation centres of the Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA), Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA), Institute of Global Dialogue (IGD), Institute of Security Studies (ISS) and the University of Venda. However, this was complemented by consultations and unstructured interviews/dialogue with people who are familiar with the subject of foreign policy. Unstructured interviews were chosen because of their ability to draw more data from the respondents without unnecessary limitations. Additionally, interviews were selected because they provide a broader context of the study.[40] Respondents were asked open-ended questions on "US engagement in Africa" with a view to solicit their perceptions on this matter. Besides being used as a data collection technique, the researcher surveyed existing literature in this field to avoid the replication of existing arguments and to also, sharpen the theoretical framework of this study.

### 1.7. Rationale of this Study

This study also uses case study method. The value of the case study method in this research emanates from its ability to obtain rich data with high validity whilst situating and interpreting data within their wider context. Numerous criticisms have been levelled against this approach by some Social Scientists. But such appears to be baseless because it does not acknowledge the fact that case study relies upon the clarity of theoretical reasoning instead of the representation of the case. Despite the disadvantage of any method mentioned above, the cross-usage of numerous techniques is very important as it enhances the reliability and validity of the findings and chances of generalisation.

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[40] L.R. Gay, *Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Application*, New York: Macmillan International (4th ed), 1992, p. 231.

### 1.6. Time Frame

Even though this study highlights some of the significant events in the history of US-Africa relations before the end of the Cold War in 1990, this year is used as a starting point in this research. This year marked the official demise of the Soviet empire and the rise of the US as the sole superpower. It also served as a watershed in the democratisation of Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa which was later to have an impact on US-Africa relations. This research ends in the year 2008. This year marks the end of US President George W. Bush's second and last term of office. Albeit, the period between 1990 and 2008 was carefully selected to encompass the three US presidents in order to enhance the differing approaches to US-Africa relations.

### 1.7. Rationale of this Study

It is a matter of fact that this study is not the first one on this subject. It is a contribution to an existing pool of knowledge on African-American affairs. This is why it is often claimed that in Social Sciences the so-called "absolute" truth is non-existent. This implies that it still makes sense to argue that the current study would put to test some of the findings of the previous studies on this subject. More so, most of the literature on African-American relations wrongfully treats Africa as if it is homogenous. This research is important as it acknowledges the diversity of the African continent and it also attempts to correct the above misnomer using specific countries, Kenya and Nigeria, as test cases to show

general trends of the US foreign policy in Africa. Thus, even the current study would stimulate and deepen the evolving academic discourse on US foreign policy in Africa. As highlighted in the literature review section, some of the existing literature is outdated and some of those available gave little attention to Africa. Similarly, it is pertinent to point to the issue of the three presidents that were at the helm in the US during the period under study, namely: George Bush Sr, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush Jr. In assessing the foreign policy of the US, the trajectories of the three presidencies would enhance the differing approaches to US-Africa relations during this period of study.

### 1.8. Limitations

There were minor constraints encountered when this research was conducted. For instance, there was no sponsor for this research and all expenses pertaining to it were personally covered by the slender resource base of the researcher. However, these have not had a far-reaching impact on the admissibility or reliability of the findings of this study. Secondly, this study mainly employed qualitative research methodology that enables in-depth and detailed analyses within the context of a limited number of persons, but reduces the potential generalisation of the findings.[41] Lastly, the inaccessibility of some official government documents of the US due to official embargo also posed a challenge for this study. It is against this background that the findings in this study cannot be generalised, but can be used as a stepping-stone for future research on the subject.

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[41] L. Mafisa and N. Mtati, "Preservation of African traditions and encapsulation of Moral Values as part of African Indigenous Knowledge", Paper presented at a conference on "Revitalising African Value Systems for Sustainable Continental Integration: Perspectives from Emerging Scholars", Johannesburg, 25-26 June 2009, p. 7.

### 1.9. Organisation of the Study

This study is divided into two sections:

**Section A**

The four chapters of this section focus on general trends that shape the US foreign policy in Africa in general. It also examines theoretical debates put forward by contemporary scholars of International Relations regarding economic, political and security dimensions of the US policy:

**Chapter One: Background of the Study**

This chapter introduces the study thereby giving an outline of its aim and objectives, problem statement and the methodology that was used to address the former. It also encompasses preliminary literature review, justification of the study, the limitations encountered during the actualisation of this research and the chapter outline.

**Chapter Two: African Oil: Policy Contradictions**

This chapter looks critically at the claim that the recent discovery of oil in Africa is a magnet for the renewed US engagement in the continent. It also adds voice to the debate by detailing areas of convergence and divergence between the interests of the US and Africa in the energy sector.

**Chapter Three: Africa's Transition to Democracy and the role of the US**

This chapter provides a systematic analysis of the relevance and influence of the US model of democracy in Africa. It also explores the US commitment to democracy promotion in Africa, as one of the cornerstones of its foreign policy.

**Chapter Four: Africa and the US National Security**

This chapter provides an overview of the national security challenges facing the US within the context of its engagement in Africa. It also demonstrates the reactions of the US to African security threats (real or imagined) to its national well-being.

**Section B**

With the exception of the concluding chapter, this section consists of two chapters in the main, based on the relationship between the US and two pivotal African states: Kenya and Nigeria as extracted in the 2002 National Security Strategy of the US. A close appraisal of the bilateral relationship between the US and these countries serve to concretise the arguments regarding the US policy in Africa as detailed in the previous section. Whereas South Africa and Ethiopia were also considered as pivotal states by the US, Kenya and Nigeria were chosen for control purposes.

**Chapter Five: The US and Kenya: A Big Brother Relationship**

This chapter evaluates the special relationship between the Washington and Nairobi within a historical context.

**Chapter Six: Revisiting Nigerian-American Relations**

This chapter is an analysis of the relationship between the US and Nigeria.

**Chapter Seven: General Conclusion**

This chapter provides a summary of the findings, conclusion and recommendations.

## Chapter Two

## African Oil: Policy Contradictions

### 2.1. Introduction

Oil is generally viewed as a significant and scarce resource in the international market system due to rapid industrialisation in the world. To concretise the preceding statement, Tebogo Makube notes that oil is strategically important to any economy both as a "fuel and a feedstock in the production process of chemical products".[42] Its significance gained centrality in the partnership between oil exporting countries and oil importing countries. It has also redefined the geopolitical, geo-economic and geo-strategic calculations of the stronger economies in their dealings with the developing world. For instance, oil supply is one of the flashpoints of the relationship between Africa and the US.[43] However, the politics of oil in Africa and the world at large has become the hotbed for academics, businessmen, the media, political and energy analysts. This is owed to the fact that most of the citizens of all African oil producing countries live under extreme poverty levels and their economies are underdeveloped.[44] For instance, it is recorded in *Africapedia* that in the year 2007 the oil rich Angola and Nigeria were ranked fourteenth ($14^{th}$) and nineteenth ($19^{th}$), respectively in terms of Human Poverty Index (HPI).[45] Broadly, in 2006 the Human

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[42] T. Makube, "The Importance of Oil in the Energy Security Policy Framework: Geo-political, Geo-economic and Geo-strategic Considerations for African Diplomacy", paper presented at the South African Department of Foreign Affairs conference on "Challenges Facing African Diplomats: Now and the Future, Pretoria, 2008, p. 1.
[43] D. L. Goldwyn and R.E. Ebel, "Crafting a US Energy Policy for Africa", *Rising US Stakes in Africa: Seven Proposals to Strengthen US-Africa Policy*, A Report of the Africa Policy Advisory Panel, May 2004, pp. 6-22.
[44] M. Keay, "Oil and Governance: Focus on West Africa", Briefing Paper, The Royal Institute of International Affairs, July 2002, p. 1.
[45] *Africapedia*, "Africa: Human Poverty Index-2007", http://www.africapedia.com/wiki/index.php?content_id=260, 06 January 2009.

Development Index (HDI) of Nigeria was 0.448 and this figure had placed this country at one hundred and fifty eighth (158th) position out of one hundred and seventy seven (177) countries ranked. Much like Nigeria, in 2006 Angola's HDI was 0.439 and this has positioned it on number one hundred and sixty one (161) out of one hundred and seventy seven (177) countries with data.[46] On the other hand, the standard of living of most of the oil importing countries such as the US is high.[47] It is important to note that most of the oil companies operating in Africa are mainly from the US, Canada, Britain, France and China.[48]

This chapter provides an assessment of the involvement of the US in the new scramble for Africa, *in lieu* of whether Africa's oil is a curse or blessing. It goes without saying that the challenges facing oil exporting countries and oil importing countries are different. As such, policy contradictions are imminent between the US and African and other oil producing countries in the international economic system. This relates especially to questions of whether the US's security or African development is a priority for Africa's oil.

### 2.2. America, Africa's Oil Endowments and the World Market

The fact that Africa is one of the continents that are rich in oil resources was corroborated by Desire when he postulated that Africa has significant oil [and gas]

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[46] United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Human Development Report*. New York: UNDP, 2006.

[47] It is on record that both the US and Canada ranks very high in terms of HDI and in 2006 available data appropriated them at number fifteen (15) and three (3), respectively; Wikepedia, "List of Countries by Human Development Index", http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_Human_Development_Index, 06 January 2009.

[48] American oil companies operating in Africa include Chevron Mobil and McMoran.

reserves in the world.[49] The presence of both gas and oil wealth in Africa makes the continent pivotal in international economic relations. Proven oil reserves in Africa are located in Libya, Nigeria, Algeria, Angola, Sudan and new discoveries have been made in Cameroon, Ghana and Mauritania. With the exception of the three countries mentioned here, other countries mentioned above have attracted forty eight percent (48%) of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Libya and Nigeria account for approximately sixty six percent (66%) of Africa's oil export.[50]

As such, Africa is fast becoming a strategic continent of the future due to its oil supplies. Its energy resources have attracted the involvement of big powers such as the US and China. Makube further argues that the US is interested in the continent as a "cheap and reliable alternative to the increasingly volatile Persian Gulf".[51] Simiso Velempini and Hussein Solomon wrote that the US receives twelve percent (12%) of its oil imports from Africa and this is set to increase to twenty five percent (25%) in the year 2015.[52] Globally, it is estimated that West Africa alone will be responsible for one fifth of the world's oil supply.[53]

### 2.3. African Oil Trade: The Reversal of Fortunes

Wallenstein's World Systems Theory gives a detailed analysis of the trade relations between the industrialised countries and the developing countries. For him,

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[49] O. Luc Desire, "Oil Rents and the Tenure of the Leaders in Africa", *Economics Bulletin*, Vol 3 (42), 2007, p. 1.
[50] United Nations (UN), *World Investment Report: Transnational Corporations, Extractive Industries and Development*, New York: UN, 2007.
[51] Makube, 2008, p. 7.
[52] S. Velempini and H. Solomon, "Black Gold and the New Scramble for Africa: The Case of Sao Tome", *Africa Insight*, Vol 37 (1), April 2008, p. 3.
[53] *Ibid.*

international relations are conducted within the broader capitalist framework that facilitates (naturally) the movement of goods and services from the periphery (developing countries) to the core (industrialised countries).[54] As a Marxist theory, World Systems Theory would argue that the involvement of the US in Africa's oil fields represents a second wave of the scramble for Africa by a country that did not benefit from colonialism or did not have or gain any colonies during the partition of Africa (1884-1885). Given this, Adam Habib equates the nineteenth (19th) century scramble for Africa with the current wave of the scramble for Africa.[55] In his book, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Walter Rodney bears testimony that the original scramble for Africa fuelled European development and retarded Africa's development prospects.[56] The above relates to the fact that at the time Africa was stripped off of its mineral, energy and agricultural resources without compensation. Meanwhile, what at first appeared to be a legitimate commerce between the African states and Western powers assumed more worrying implications due to the unfair trade rules that has further pushed the former to the periphery of the international economic system in favour of the developed countries.

According to the African Oil Policy Initiative Group (AOPIG), "African oil is not an end but a means: a means to both greater US energy security and more rapid African development".[57] Contrary to AOPIG's position, this research advances the Marxist theory that argues that the involvement of the US in Africa's oil fields is similar to the

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[54] S. Hobden and R.W. Jones, "Marxist Theories of International Relations", in J. Baylis and S. Smith (eds), *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations* (3rd ed), New York: Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 231-234.
[55] A. Habib, Remarks made at the African Association of Political Science (AAPS) Exploratory Workshop on "African Geo-politics in the 21st Century", Pretoria, 31 August 2007.
[56] W. Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, London: Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications, 1973, p. 149.
[57] AOPIG, "African Oil: A Priority for US National Security and African Development", http://www.iasps.org/strategic/africawhitepaper.pdf, 12 September 2008.

original scramble and what is different is only, the political and economic climate in which it is taking place. The national interests of the US would be prioritised in their dealings with African oil exporting countries and the continent as a whole. What emerges here is that in every relationship, either bilateral or multilateral, each state seeks to prioritise its national interests regardless of its political or economic position in the world. Therefore, the US uses its political leverage to maximise its interests in its engagement with the African states on issues of trade and other economic sectors.[58] It is also not wise for Africa to have any high and unrealistic expectations from any US administration at any point in time. After all, the performance of any US administration is not judged in terms of its more often self-imposed humanitarian responsibilities in Africa and elsewhere, but on how it best serve the interests of the domestic populace.[59]

The truth of the matter is that the development of Africa is secondary for the US and if it happens, it would be accidental. Lending credence to this view, the existing literature on resources and development in Africa shows that foreign investment patterns in transport infrastructure of the African oil exporting countries such as Nigeria was not organised to link the communities of the host countries and promoting other local interests.[60] However, it was developed to facilitate the transportation of oil exports to the US and other major players in the oil sector such as China. Therefore, it is hypocritical to think that both Africa and the US can benefit from African oil especially under the tutelage of the current trade rules in the

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[58] Interview with L. Mutheiwana, Research Intern (AISA), University of Venda, Thohoyandou, 27 November 2009.
[59] K. Mamaila, "Obama's The Man: But Africa Must Be Realistic About What He Can Deliver", *City Press*, 16 November 2008, p. 22.
[60] G. Onuoha, "Resources and Development: The Role of the State in Sub-Saharan Africa", IGD Occasional Paper No 58, August 2008, p. 29.

international system.[61] The advocates of the World Systems Theory would argue that any suggestion of how African oil could be used to mutually benefit both Africa and the US is like advising America on how best to use Africa to solve its domestic problems. An important point to note is that colonialism did more harm than good to Africa, and Africans should be careful about the current wave of the scramble of the continent's energy resources.[62]

A historical conundrum faced with economists, political scientists, historians, and development practitioners is whether oil extraction, particularly in Africa, leads to a shared economic growth and development due to a "resource blessing" or it would result into a "resource curse". In the case of Africa, the key challenge is that the oil wealth did not benefit the people who are legally entitled to the resource.[63] This can be attributed partly to corruption, illegal trading, uneven development policies and unfair international trade rules. In response to this misnomer, the Africa Policy Advisory Panel warranted that as Africa begins to contribute more oil to world markets, "the US must use its limited leverage to press governments to become transparent, spend their revenues for the betterment of their people, and respect human rights and the rule of law".[64] Admittedly, this is a logical option that is in line with the spirit of the new economic partnership for Africa's development. However, it does not nurse specific strategic interests of the US and it is quite a sour pill to swallow to the policy making and implementation machinery of Washington. It is

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[61] For a comprehensive analysis of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), see Dot Keet, "The WTO-led System of Global Governance: Tactical Options and Strategy Debates Amongst Civil Society Organisations Worldwide", IGD Occasional Paper, No 32, February 2002.
[62] A. A. Boahen (ed), *General History of Africa-VII: Africa Under Colonial Domination 1880-1935* (Abridged Ed). Glosderry: New Africa Education, 2003, pp. 327-333.
[63] D. Mbachu, "Nigerian Blood Oil", *ISN Security Watch*, http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/natres/oil/2008/0808blood.htm, 08 August 2008.
[64] Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), "Africa: A New Strategic place in US Foreign Policy", News Release, 08 July 2004.

hardly surprising when the US often puts a blind eye on despotic regimes especially in areas where American democratic demands are likely to jeopardise its oil entrenched economic interests. This explains the reason why American government officials seldom tackle the longest reigning presidents in Africa such as Muammar Ghadaffi (led Libya for more than twenty six years), Obiang Nguema Mbasongo (leader of Equatorial Guinea since 1979), Omar Bongo (has been in power in Gabon since December 1967) and Paul Biya (ruled Cameroon for more than thirty three years).[65]

It must be noted that no written history of the politics of oil in Africa would be complete without mentioning Libya, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and Cameroon because they are counted among the major oil exporting countries in the world. As such, if the US is serious about the need to diversify its energy resources, it is bound to court this "dictators club" because it is relatively receptive to the US foreign policy. This is symbolic of the replay of the Cold War era when the US propped up autocratic regimes to be used as geo-strategic and geo-political bulwarks in a fight against the encroachment of communism in Africa. Additionally, others were used as springboards or rather geo-economic bulwarks, to safeguard and preserve African mineral and oil wealth for exploitation by the West.[66] This practice stunted the development of Africa as petrodollars were used to prolong a civil war in Angola, fuelled a cycle of conflict in Nigeria and maintained and sustained authoritarian regimes in Gabon and Cameroon.[67]

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[65] B. Ankomah, "Reporting Africa", *New African*, No 474, June 2008, p. 8.
[66] K. Shai, "The United States-South Africa Relations, 1980-2004", BA Honours International Relations (BAHIR), University of Venda, May 2008.
[67] C.I. Obi, "Globalization and Environmental Conflict in Africa", *African Journal of Political Science*, Vol 4 (1), June 1999, pp. 40-58.

The association of the US with the "dictators club" or some of the authoritarian African oil exporting countries leaves many questions unanswered especially with regard to its commitment to the promotion of democracy around the world. The answer to this question is that, it is not the responsibility of the US to establish and strengthen democratic institutions in Africa. This is the primary task of the Africans themselves and it goes well with the expression that "African solutions for African problems".[68] If the democratisation of Africa counters American economic interests, Africans might as well forget about the positive contribution of the US to their political and economic emancipation. Kofi Kofman echoed this sentiment when he said "there is no person [nation] that can eat out of morality".[69] This means that in the face of competing economic interests in the international system, the US would put more focus on realist foreign policy priorities and provide limited support to the less important liberal foreign policy priorities in Africa. Some observers view American capitalism as the circus of the US foreign policy.[70] In their view, only through the understanding of the growing economic role of the US in the world can the political aspects of its external relations be grasped. In terms of opinion surveys conducted by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs (CCGA) as cited by Drezner, the promotion of democracy as the principle of the US foreign policy has gained less than forty percent (40%) public support from the year 1990 to 2006.[71] One can deduce from this survey that liberal policy goals can be easily stated, but very difficult to implement.

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[68] For global insights on the adage of "African solutions for African problems", see Tšoeu Petlane. "Africa: Leaders Must Rethink 'African solutions for African problems", http://www.saiia.org.za/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=886:africa-leaders-must-rethink-african-solutions-for-african-problems&catid=62:governance-a-aprm-opinion&Itemid=159, 14 January 2009.

[69] Interview with K. Kofi (not real name), Lecturer, Department of Development Studies, University of Venda, Thohoyandou, 19 October 2008. The personal identity of the oral informant is withheld for ethical reasons.

[70] O. A. Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 27-28.

[71] D. W. Drezner, "The Future of US Foreign Policy", (Name of publication unknown), 2008, p. 16.

Closely associated with the failure of the US to encourage democracy to thrive in some of the African oil exporting countries, Washington has failed to ensure that Africans benefit from the oil revenues generated by their governments.[72] The application of double standards with regard to the US commitment to the promotion of democracy in Africa has denied Africans access to better living conditions. For instance, President Paul Biya misappropriated the oil proceeds of Cameroon to fund his unnecessary and expensive travels and prolonged stays in luxurious hotels in Switzerland while his people were languishing in extreme poverty and experiencing the impact of underdevelopment.[73] In the midst of this dire situation, the US has continuously turned a blind eye to poor political and economic governance in Cameroon and it has always been "business as usual" with regard to oil trading and other commercial exchanges between the two countries. This must be understood as an end-result of the failure of the US to reconcile its goal of promoting democracy and the rule of law in Africa with its economic diplomacy. All of the above is well captured in CCGA's study of Public Opinion and Foreign Policy wherein it is reported that the domestic support for the promotion of human rights abroad declined drastically from fifty eight percent (58%) in 1990 to forty seven percent (47%) and twenty eight percent (28%) in 2002 and 2006, respectively.[74]

The scrutiny of the growth and development performance of democratic states shows that democracy does not necessarily bring about economic development; instead it

[72] Interview with N. Mohlaloga, Partner-Business Development, Pecaso Consulting, Centurion, 08 January 2010.
[73] Interview with C. Achu, Researcher (AISA), Pretoria, 28 April 2009.
[74] Drezner, 2008, p.16.

provides an enabling environment for development.[75] In spite of this, this research argues that it is not the primary task of the US administration to create enabling conditions where Africans can live a better life. As it is not surprising that for the period under study, the improvement of the living standards of the poor nations nodded not more than forty one percent (41%) of public support as one of the American foreign policy goals.[76] In view of this, Africans themselves must primarily lead the struggle to put in place accountable and transparent regimes. This is essential if oil revenues are to be used for the development of the African people instead of entrenching dictatorships for the benefit of the few ruling political elites and their cronies. For its part, the US should help the African states to review current natural resource legislations to adequately reflect and accommodate the interests and aspirations of the masses. This can be complemented by whittling down of loan guarantees and the subsequent imposition of diplomatic pressures including sanctions to states that do not adhere to good business practices in oil trading.

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### 2.4. American Oil Companies and Corporate Social Responsibility

There is an extensive literature on the political and economic impact of oil on inter-African relations and international relations at large. Despite the centrality of oil on the economies of the countries that export it, it is essential to conceive that globally the impact of its receipts has been controversial. In Africa for instance, new oil discoveries have increased the economic growth of the respective countries including Mauritania and Ghana.[77] Unfortunately, the pace of economic growth in African oil

[75] Interview with N. Mohlaloga, *Ibid.*
[76] *Ibid.*
[77] Interview with Professor J.N.R. Vukor-Quarshie, Department of Criminal, Adjectival and Legal Studies, University of Venda, Thohoyandou, 07 April 2010.

exporting countries is not parallel to their level of economic development which is essential for social development. In part this is related to the lack of progressive public policies with respect to overcoming the colonial structure and orientation of their economies.[78]

For as long as the systematic structural defects that characterised the colonial economy and structure in much of the former colonies persist, overcoming the legacies of the past get stubbornly passed on to the post-colonial state which reproduces the similar, if not worse social and other relations of production. These ultimately numb growth and development, if not skewing it in a certain direction that is not suitable for the political economy of the African states. It is therefore not surprising that there is an area that has also caught the attention of environmentalists, geologists and nature conservationists. This relates to the environmental impact of oil refineries on Africa. According to Ricardo Soares de Oliveira, the extraction of oil in Africa was having damaging consequences. This is especially the case in the most productive oil provinces like Niger Delta in Nigeria where oil exploration brought about long term negative results including environmental degradation, disturbance of the ecosystem and health hazards to the local population.[79]

The above situation has been worsened by the need of foreign oil companies to increase production and profit, without being considerate of how such a process would affect the population of the areas surrounding the oil refineries or drilling

[78] Interview with C. Matlhako, South African Communist Party's (SACP) Secretary of International Affairs, 11 January 2010.
[79] R. S. de Oliveira, *Oil and Politics in the Gulf of Guinea*. London: Hurst and Company, 2007, p. 17.

installations.[80] Culprit companies that are active in oil explorations in Africa include American oil giants such as Exxon and Chevron, among others. However, American oil companies do not have the monopoly over the African oil sector. They compete with domestic oil companies and others from countries such as China, Malaysia, Britain and Netherland (Dutch).[81] It is generally acknowledged that foreign oil companies are generating massive profits from Africa's petroleum sector. But on the other hand, it is clear that their activities are primarily profit driven. They are aggressively expansive, exploitative and imperialist. Their capitalist nature is evidenced by their lower level of contribution to the development of the communities where they do business, which is equivalent to just a drop in the ocean.[82]

Daniel Litvin pointed out that even though there is scant commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the international system, CSR is more of the province of big corporations as opposed to small or infant companies.[83] Of course, with the presence of American and British oil giants, the fact that the Niger Delta and Sudan (Darfur) is still characterised by unending conflict and heightened violence is a reflection of major issues underlying the limits of CSR. In both Sudan and Nigeria for instance, the oil industry appears to be an element which perpetuates violent conflict and less incentive to the negotiated settlement.[84] The continued engagement of foreign oil companies in areas that are entangled in violent conflict is tantamount to the approval of the situation because certain stakeholders are using petrodollars to fund

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[80] F. Nwonwo, "The Good, the Bad and the Ugly in Oil Exploration and their Challenges for Sustainable Development in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria", Paper presented at the AISA seminar, Pretoria, 14 September 2007.
[81] S. Field, "The Civil War in Sudan: The role of the oil industry", IGD Occasional Paper No. 23, February 2000, pp. 21-33.
[82] Interview with S. Mantula, Advocate of the High Court of South Africa, Houghton, 08 January 2010.
[83] D. Litvin, "Africa and corporate social responsibility", *New African*, No. 484, May 2009, pp. 68-69.
[84] Field, 2000, p. 9.

their warfare as it was the case in Angola during the civil war. To be precise, the continued investment in this areas is contravening the principles of CSR due to the fact that oil proceeds are often misdirected from social programs to military programs by those who are in control of trading in that resource.

Given the perceived threats to environmental sustainability (a key to development) African oil producing countries have not enjoyed the space to meaningfully engage with their partners in the petroleum industry, including the American oil giants. This situation can be explained and understood in two fronts. The first is that African oil exporting countries have not been able to engage evocatively with their international partners in the industry because of the usual hurdles ranging from unfair trade practices, monopolist and oligopolist tendencies, underdevelopment and neo-colonialism. The alternative is to argue that African oil exporting countries have not significantly engaged with their partners in the oil industry simply because of several and mostly home-grown challenges they have faced such as fraud, corruption (kleptocracy), nepotism and unethical practices in the production marketing, sale and generation of profits emanating from this industry.

In addition, political interference and the issues of Africa's internecine wars, social strife and low absorptive capacity arising from lack of skills and very little expenditure on research and development of these countries in the scarce skills and education relevant for this industry. More often than not, the cauldron of this challenges results in the lack of human and institutional capacity among African diplomats on issues pertaining to international trade and economic diplomacy. To this end, African oil producing countries hardly conclude deals with their Northern

counterparts on terms that are favourable to their national interests.[85] The key challenge is that Africans are often disadvantaged during the negotiations due to their inadequate understanding of the complexities, dynamics and intricacies of the issues to be debated.

Studies show that the success of African oil exporting countries is delayed and withheld by their overdependence on foreign technology and finance.[86] They depend on foreign technology and finance in order to support capital-intensive modes of industrial development. It is argued that foreign capital brings the technical skills that are lacking in Africa. This argument is extended by Matias Vernengo who identified the problem that foreign capital tends to dictate terms on domestic markets in favour of economic liberalism and African states then jumps into the monopolistic phase of capitalist development.[87] This research concludes that whereas foreign technology and finance was deemed necessary to address the challenges of Africa's technical incapacity on oil exploration, transportation and refinery, this premise has also subjected this continent's oil states to a disadvantaged position in the area of contractual negotiations. Due to their dire economic situation, coupled with serious human and institutional capacities, African oil exporting states are not left with a room to engage with the donor countries and international lending institutions from a position of strength. As a result, the economic conditions of most of the oil exporting African states that have attracted a lot foreign capital have worsened, partly because the monopolistic capital is not reinvested in the production activities in the host

[85] D.P. Chimanikire, "Emerging Trends in Diplomatic and International Relations Practice", paper presented at the South African Department of Foreign Affairs conference on "Challenges Facing African Diplomats: Now and the Future, Pretoria, 2008, pp. 2-7.
[86] De Oliveira, 2007, p. 55-57.
[87] M. Vernengo, "Technology, Finance and Dependency: Latin American Radical Political Economy", http://www.econ.utah.edu/activities/papers/2004_06.pdf, 19 April 2010, pp. 6-7.

country. This unfortunate development is the product of "peonage and annual transfer of massive amounts of capital from the Global South to Global North under the pretext of debt repayment", among other reasons.[88]

### 2.5. The Strategic Importance of Africa's Oil to the US

Politically, the US oil companies are at an advantage because a fair number of Africa's oil exporting countries are not members of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). This implies that the US oil companies can manipulate them (non-member states like Gabon and Cameroon) individually without having to face the insurmountable challenge of bloc-based OPEC economic diplomacy. There are various reasons given by a sound number of African oil exporting countries for not taking OPEC membership and key among them is the unwillingness to limit their oil production and profits in line with organisational quotas.[89] African OPEC member states include Algeria, Angola, Libya and Nigeria. The US has unsuccessfully tried to persuade Nigeria and Angola to terminate their membership of OPEC. The concealed goal of this American proposition was to break or weaken the solidarity of OPEC to its Arab member states that are in a political struggle with both Jerusalem and Washington. Clearly, the Arab wing of OPEC often uses this organisation as a political force for the purpose of centering policy and exerting pressure on the US and West at large over their support of Israel in the Arab-Israeli conflict.[90] Consensus among all members of OPEC is important if this multilateral organisation is to

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[88] O. Edigheji and A. Amuwo, "No Credit Due: The World Bank and IMF in Africa", IGD Occasional Paper No. 60, November 2008, pp. 5.6.
[89] Interview with Professor A. Adeniran, Department of Biokenetics, Recreation and Sports Science, University of Venda, Thohoyandou, 07 April 2010.
[90] Interview with T. Netshituni, Diplomatic Trainee, South Africa's Department of International Relations and Cooperation, Pretoria, 01 April 2010.

influence and shape developments in the international economic and political system. It is not unclear that the power of OPEC resides with its Arab member states, but they still need the political support of other non-Arab member states (including African states) if they are to fully achieve their policy goals and objectives.

Although Nigeria and Angola did not surrender their OPEC membership, the US suggestion represents a desperate diplomatic move by the world's only remaining superpower to gain total control of Africa's oil reserves. To substantiate the above, Rachidi Molapo aptly reminds us that "business interests can best be secured through a complicated diplomatic strategy".[91] It is perhaps a rather unconventional strategy for African exporting countries to withdraw from OPEC as Washington would have wished, but there are good reasons for it. For instance, African oil exporting countries would be able to increase their oil profits and production than they were allowed under the OPEC quota.[92] In essence, this is a "sugar-coated poison" because it has got short term benefits for the oil exporting African states that would in the long run, allow the US to dictate their oil prices in the international market system. The researcher takes this line of argument that any possible withdrawal of African oil exporting countries from OPEC is much more about feeding the national interests of the US, but less important to their long term interests.

Equally true, most of Africa's oil reserves are in the proximity of the East coast of the US and this makes the transportation of this high valued commodity cheap for the American oil companies. This fact does not imply that oil transportation costs from Latin America to the US are higher than those from Africa to the US. In fact, Africa is

[91] Interview with R. Molapo, Department of Development Studies, University of Venda, Thohoyandou, 19 October 2008.
[92] Interview with Adeniran, *Ibid.*

treated as an alternative oil trading partner of the US because of Washington's hostile relations with its backyard oil exporting countries such as Venezuela and Bolivia. Velempini and Solomon note that the problem of Washington lies over the leftist tide sweeping around Latin America.[93] The case in point is the harsh rhetoric used by the President of Venezuela (Hugo Chavez) in his description or rejection of the economic system of the US. Indeed, Chavez proclaimed that the 2008 world financial and food crisis is a resemblance of the failure of capitalism and discouraged other countries not to take a cue from the US in governing their economies.[94] To this end, the phrase "wasted opportunities" sums up Washington's views of Latin America.[95] Francis Fukuyama argues that the heated conflicting views between the leadership of both the US and Venezuela are inevitable and should be understood within the context of the clash of civilisations in the 21st century.[96]

The position of this research is that placating the conflict between Washington and Caracas as a clash of civilisation is seeking to legitimise the US insistence that it is about much more than economic interests. The reality is that this conflict coincides with huge anti-American imperialism in South America as one country after the other seeks to disentangle itself from the clutches of US economic stranglehold and seeking new regional integration methods through Bolivarian Alliance for the America (ALBA) to the neglect of North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). It is also an undeniable fact that the axis between Venezuela and Cuba in the context of the reorientation of geo-politics in Latin America and the end of Venezuela's reliance on

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[93] Velempini and Solomon, 2007, p. 7.
[94] B. Ellsworth, "Chavez Says Food Prices 'Massacre' of the World's Poor", http://www.fourwinds10.com/siterun_data/health/fraud/news.php?q=1209095308, 26 November 2008.
[95] Westad, 2007, p. 23.
[96] F. Fukuyama, "The Clash of Cultures and American Hegemony", http://www.the-american-interest.com/article.cfm?piece=178, 17 April 2010.

the US threatens continued oil trading between the two countries (US and Venezuela).[97] Altogether more contentious is that the orientation of radical changes to the political and socio-economic relations in Latin America is in the main threatening the US's long-held imperialism in the region.

Undoubtedly, African oil is of high quality as compared to oil from Latin America and the Middle East region. It has no or less sulphur content.[98] The lack of sulphur content makes its extraction cost-effective. In addition to the high quality of oil in West Africa, its reserves are abundant as compared to Latin America and other regions in Africa. The mention of West Africa does not denote that it is the only region with sulphur-free oil or the sole oil reserves region that is strategically important for the US.[99] Other regions such as Central, North and Southern Africa have their fair share of the oil exports to the US. In addition to Nigeria (West Africa) for instance, Algeria (North Africa) and Angola (Southern Africa) are considered as strategic countries to quench America's increasing energy needs.[100] Notably, West Africa supplies fifteen percent (15%) of American oil imports.[101] This brings us fairly directly to a quite fundamental issue which lies at the heart of Americans; Africa stands to become the largest supplier of oil in the international market system. This is an issue that makes Africa an area of vital US interest. It is important to note that oil extraction is one sector wherein American companies have invested a lot in Africa.

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[97] Interview (electronic) with A. Icon (pseudo-name), Official of the Venezuela Embassy in South Africa, 21 April 2010. True identity of the respondent withheld for ethical reasons.
[98] Carson, 2004, p. 5.
[99] Most of Africa's oil reserves are located in West Africa in what is called the "Gulf of Guinea".
[100] Makube, 2008, p. 8.
[101] W. Vieth, "US Quest for Oil in Africa Worries Analysts, Activists", *Los Angeles Times*, 13 January 2003.

Meanwhile, political stability is crucial for investments to thrive. Unfortunately, most of Africa's oil exporting countries are not politically stable and this situation has negatively affected the production and supply of oil to the US and other trading partners. Political unrests in oil producing African states are associated with Sudan, Libya, Angola and Nigeria. However, for America, Africa is relatively stable as compared to the politically radical and religiously turbulent Middle East region. A crucial point to note about each of these regions is that, the intensity and scope of conflicts in Africa is less as compared to the Middle East. While the American oil companies are completely shunned from doing business in most countries in the Middle East, their operations are dominating the space in Africa. This analytical dualism was affirmed by Carson when he stated that many oil analysts forecast that with the increasing turbulence in the Middle East, African crude oil will become an even more prized commodity to the US and the entire world.[102]

This means that the US would have to negotiate favourable trading terms with African oil exporting countries including better rates that are a bit less as compared to those that are currently set by OPEC. This is an issue that has significant economic, military and geo-political political implications for both the US and Africa because increased African oil prices might threaten US's oil supplies from the continent. In sum, the geo-strategic and geo-economic dynamics in the Middle East provides a fertile ground for the African oil exporting countries to possibly increase their prices to correspond with the increasing value of their commodity. However, this must all be viewed in the context of an all-powerful OPEC which calls the shorts and usually applies counter measures to such initiatives from individual oil producing countries.

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[102] Carson, 2004, p. 5.

As part of the US desire to diversify its oil resources, Washington unsuccessfully tried to impose its currency as the only legitimate medium of trade for oil in the international market system in the 21st century.[103] The failure was due to the resistance by OPEC member states. This move was aimed at diluting the power and monopoly of the OPEC countries. While, OPEC is dominated by the Arab countries who prefer using the oil price as a weapon against the US thereby showing solidarity with the victims of George W. Bush's war on terror. Saddam Hussein of Iraq, for example, was one of the ardent opponents of the introduction of the US dollar in oil trading and it is alleged this was one of the concealed reasons for his ousting by British-American coalition forces in the year 2003.[104]

Given the above, Africa's oil exporting countries need to be cautious about the involvement of the US in the new scramble for Africa's oil resources to avoid becoming another "Iraq" or a hot bed for American oil interest.[105] Very close to the need of the US to increase and diversify its oil resources, Washington sought to use Africa as a means of price stabilisation in the global oil market through the conclusion of African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) with countries such as Angola, Gabon and Nigeria.[106] It is important to note that AGOA is a trade Act passed in the year 2000 by the US congress.[107] In this legislation Washington committed itself to offer tariff and quota free preferential access for certain African exports to the US for

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[103] *Wikepedia*, "OPEC", http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/OPEC, 18 April 2010.
[104] F. Kornegay, "Global Resource War Presents African Institutions with Important New Challenge", *Global Dialogue*, Vol 8 (1), April 2003, pp. 3-7.
[105] Saddam Hussein was deposed in the year 2003 by the joint British and American coalition forces as part of the invasion of Iraq under the pretext of eradicating weapons of mass destruction and liberating the Iraqis from the bondages of dictatorship.
[106] Trade Law Centre for Southern Africa (TRALAC), "Trade Profiles", http://www.agoa.info/, 09 December 2009.
[107] R. Lallah, "AGOA-an instrument of the US ruling class", http://www.labournet.de/internationales/mu/lallah.pdf, 21 April 2010.

almost a decade and oil has occupied a larger component of this exports particularly in the period between 2000 and 2008. The strategy by Washington of using AGOA as a ride of passage to gain access to oil in Africa would also have the effect of weakening OPEC, which has previously controlled oil production and prices among its member states in a manner that is not favourable to the US. For instance, it increased their oil prices in the face of the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 as an expression of the disapproval of that military exercise.

This research argues that the dismemberment of OPEC by the African states in favour of AGOA would also boost the American companies in the oil industry. This can be realised by putting pressure on their government to negotiate and acquire land title-deeds or property rights with the African states on their behalf.[108] Drawing a false and unjustified link between AGOA and global oil prices is dangerous and the position of this study on this issue is that this initiative came about as part of the US's increasing realisation that it can not ignore the plight of Africa when it comes to its aid packages and the fact that US economic imperialism has on the whole been disadvantageous to African foreign investments. Therefore, the focus on oil just happened to be an opportune commodity which could be used by the US to try and appease Africans on this matter, but it actually looks like the usual story of using it as a weapon to fight international battles still continues.[109]

There is an unfounded perception within certain quarters that since the end of the Cold War, Africa has lost its strategic significance to the foreign policy of the US due to the disappearance of a communist threat in the continent following the collapse of

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[108] *Ibid.*
[109] Interview with S. Ndou, Student, University of Venda, Thohoyandou, 28 April 2010.

the Soviet empire in the late 1980s and early 1990s.[110] The reality is that African oil is significant for the energy policy of the US and it serves as a centre for attraction for renewed American interest on Africa. It is central for the maintenance of the US dominance of the international political economy especially in an era that ushered in the alarming rise of the economy of China and featured Beijing in the new scramble for Africa.[111] The US-led war on terror has reinforced the centrality of African oil in America's foreign policy on Africa.[112] As it is by now clear, most of the OPEC countries have opposed the US-led war against terror and it would be risky for the US to rely on them for future oil supplies especially during the time of war with either one of them.[113]

Hence, the US has placed strategic military programmes alongside the Gulf of Guinea in Africa where oil reserves are bountiful. In essence, this is meant to boost the domestic security forces of African oil exporting countries in their quest to protect oil drilling installations and the workers of American oil companies. This implies that accelerated security, stability and tranquillity are needed in the Gulf of Guinea and Africa at large especially if the US is serious about using this region as oil reservoir to diversity its oil suppliers. This position dovetails with the perspective that American strategic military programs on the African soil are a good safety and security measure because this shows that small or less powerful states can depend on 'Big Brother' to come to their rescue in the event of an attack. This usually bolsters national and political confidence and tends to support the country's security and military apparatus.

[110] C. Menasveta, Notes on Peter Uvin's presentation on "The end of the Cold War and Africa", http://fletcher.tufts.edu/gis/archive/pdf/2002-2003/uvin.pdf, 04 May 2003.
[111] Z. Hong, "China-US Oil Rivalry in Africa", EAI Background Brief, No. 349, 03 September 2007.
[112] M. Plaut, "The Africa Clearing House", *African Security Review*, Vol 13 (3), 2004, pp. 2-3.
[113] Interview with K. Maphunye, Manager: Research and Knowledge Management, Electoral Commission of South Africa, Pretoria, 13 April 2010.

However, at the bottom of the real dynamics involved in these matter the researcher advances an alternative view that Africa has had enough of the US (and other forms of) imperialism and those African countries facing such experiences must condemn and not allow American strategic military programs on the African soil. It is often argued by Claude Ake and Frans Fanon that such US military presence and manoeuvres are provocative; undermine African security and African unification. Many (but not all) proponents of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) program tend to lean towards this view.

## 2.6. Conclusion

It is safe to conclude that since 1990 and with the historic September 11 attacks on the US, Africa has assumed a new strategic position in the foreign policy of the US. Africa is fast becoming an alternative supplier of oil to the US in the light of the volatile Middle East conflict and the souring relations between Washington and the oil exporting Arab League. This research has attempted to show that in the past, African oil was not used effectively to develop the population of the oil exporting countries due to corruption, illegal trading and poor macro-economic management among the key reasons. Instead, it was used to sustain and maintain authoritarian regimes and fuel conflicts and civil wars. The US has done very little to improve the situation due to the limits imposed by its (self) national interests. At times, some of the abnormalities in the affairs of African oil exporting countries were blessed or graced by the US in order to guarantee their availability as key components of its energy security. This shows that the US leadership did not have the interest of Africans at heart and can not be entrusted with the responsibility to engineer Africa's

economic development and growth. It is inferred that currently, there are no visible points of convergence between policy goals of African states and the US especially in the context of oil politics. As such, African states should develop a coherent strategy or common approach to protect their national interests and priorities from being eroded by US oil interests. Lastly, part of the engagement of Africa with the US is a need for African citizens to see where the money generated from oil exports is going. This is to say that Africa's oil can be of high benefit to its people if its resources are properly and effectively managed and directed.

As a result of the discussion that flowed from the previous chapter the next chapter explores the US strategy of promoting democracy in Africa. It also raises key questions regarding the US commitment to good governance in general, using observable experiences and lessons of a variety of African states.

## Chapter Three

## Africa's Transition to Democracy and the Role of the US

### 3.1. Introduction

In 1990 the Cold War ended with the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the US emerged as a sole superpower in the world. As the "winner" of the Cold War, the post-Cold War period saw the US intensifying its strategy to gain more influence in Africa, a former battleground for superpower proxy wars. The US embarked on a drive to spread its ideology of liberal democracy in Africa. This became clear in 1993 when Bill Clinton announced a shift from a policy of containment to a policy of enlargement.[114] The policy of enlargement was meant to help free undemocratic states and strengthen those that were in transition as a way of enlarging the free world. To this end, Washington prescribed models of democracy and governance for Africa. It is at this time that the wave of democratisation swept the shores of Africa.[115] Before 1990, African dictators were able to survive or prevail by taking advantage of the psychosis of the Cold War.

However, the post-Cold War uni-polar system presented the US with a "blank cheque" to dominate Africa's political institutions and systems. This fact was captured by Caroline Thomas who argued that the common feature of the democratic transition of the 1980s and 1990s was the establishment of formal democratic

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[114] D. Brinkley, "Democratic Enlargement: The Clinton Doctrine", http://www.foreignpolicy.com/Ning/archive/archive/106/democraticenlargement.pdf, 11 December 2009.

[115] A.E. Ostheimer, *Challenges to Democracy by One-Party Dominance: A Comparative Assessment*, Johannesburg: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2006.

institutions based on Western style of democracy.[116] Despite its imperfections, the idea of liberal democracy has effectively gained ascendancy in the post Cold War era. Research shows that since 1990, many African states have moved away from authoritarian regimes to embrace multi-party system of government.[117] What is certainly clear is that while approximately ninety percent (90%) of African states have switched from mono-party to multiparty system of governance in the post-Cold War era, this does not necessarily mean that they are democratic in a true sense of the word.[118]

However, there are few relatively stable African states that are at the helm of dictatorship like Libya, that still claim to be democratic. In the same logic, there are African states like Zimbabwe which claim to be practicing democracy, but their regimes are classified into "dictators club" by most political analysts in Africa and other parts of the world including the US.[119] This has resulted in conflicting views on the exact definition of democracy.[120] The extent of the positive role, if there is any, of the US in the maturing of African democracies like Kenya, Malawi, South Africa and Zambia is also questionable. What is clear, however, is that the US has constantly shown a proclivity for funding both its allies and their enemies across the board and this contradiction has often produced political instabilities instead of stable democratic environments.[121]

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[116] C. Thomas, "Poverty, Development and Hunger", in J. Baylis and S. Smith (eds), *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations* (3rd ed), New York: Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 658.
[117] J. Carson, "Shaping US Policy on Africa: Pillars of a New Strategy", *Strategic Forum*, No 10, National Defense University, p. 2.
[118] Interview with K. Chingombe, Student at the University of Venda, Thohoyandou, 18 April 2010.
[119] Interview with the J. Pepe (not real name), official of the US Diplomatic to South Africa, 08 June 2010. The name of the respondent has been withheld for ethical reasons.
[120] R. Pinkney, *Democracy in the Third World.* Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1994, pp. 5-17.
[121] A. Holmes, "US Foreign Policy and Kenya", *Z-Magazine*, 02 April 2008, p. 4.

It is in the context of the above that this chapter provides a systematic analysis of the relevance and influence of the US model of democracy in Africa. It also explores the US commitment to the promotion of democracy in Africa, as one of the cornerstones of its foreign policy.

### 3.2. America: Partner in Africa's Democratisation

There is a perception among the American politicians that the US model of democracy is the best functioning model, but it is not the only viable form. Contemporary political scientists such as Fukuyama have strongly argued that there was no alternative ideology that could really pose a challenge to liberal democracy in the struggle for eco-political development.[122] This Western imbecilic thinking prompted a suggestion by Moss that the US should be pushing for and supporting political reforms in Africa to establish democracy.[123] It is not surprising that some scholars of Political Science expect the US to lead the process of the externalisation of democracy because it has been widely claimed within the American government circles that the protection of individual rights and freedom are America's founding ideals.[124] The editors of *ejournal USA: Foreign Policy Agenda*, for example, generally assume that the US "seeks to help others find their own toward democracy".[125]

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[122] F. Fukuyama as cited by Hall, 2005, p. 162.
[123] Moss, 1995, p. 189.
[124] G. McKenna, *The Drama of Democracy: American Government and Politics* (2nd Ed). Connecticut: The Dushkin Publishing Group, 1994, pp. 18-22.
[125] M. D. Kellerhals, Jr. et al, *ejournal USA: Foreign Policy Agenda*, Washington DC: US Department of State, April 2006, p. 1.

In relation to the above stated views, this research argues that there are alternatives to the US version of democracy and it also rejects the notion that fundamental freedoms, the essential element of any working democracy, are American values. It is suggested that fundamental freedoms are inherent to all human beings and should be treated as human values. With regard to the legitimacy of the US version of democracy, the researcher contends that the export of American democratic model to Africa is a dilemma. Any form of democracy is valid as long as it fits well with the historical, structural and socio-economic conditions of the society in which it is practiced.[126] This argument is not new and it was justified historically and philosophically by Wamba-dia-Wamba when he contended that "the content of democratisation is determined by modes of politics. Its content is shaped by the dominant mode of politics. The transition must, therefore, be redefined in terms of the change from the mode of politics in crisis towards a new mode of politics".[127] As it is often the case with most countries that ties democracy with free market economic policies, the poverty alleviation programs of young African democracies have failed to achieve their stated goals.[128] As a result their democracies were subsumed by the economic crisis that followed the introduction of liberal-orientated economic policies that are often promoted by the US government.

As this line of interrogation perhaps implies, the implications of the free market economic system in Africa is in sharp contrast with their government's political vision to reverse the historical imbalances of the past. This point means that what is projected as the perfect system of governance, the American model of democracy is

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[126] For more information on other forms of democracy see, Andrew Heywood, *Politics*. New York: Macmillan, 1997, pp. 71-76.
[127] Wamba-dia-Wamba, as cited by M. B. Ramose. *African Philosophy through Ubuntu*. (city not stated), Mond Books, 2002, p. 103.
[128] Edigheji and Amuwo, *Ibid*, p. 1.

suffering from an economic deficit or is ignorant of the obligation of any state to satisfy the economic needs of its citizens.

It must be noted that the US involvement in the democratisation of Africa has been without any respect for the political culture of the continent as discussed above. Literally, the US's commitment to democracy in Africa is high on rhetoric and hard on reality. This is a position that is often disputed by the US diplomats who argue that the democratisation of Africa has been the policy of the US since the 1950s. They concede that there were certainly bad situations during the Cold War where both the US and USSR propped up dictators ... "but not since 1990".[129] However, American Research findings on the US foreign policy have indicated that democracy promotion is not the vital interest of the US, but it is secondary to it.[130] This view has gained strength in the post-Cold War era because there is no visible powerful expansionist state, with a feasible political system that is capable of substituting democracy as a way of organising human society. Across the US, the support for this noble foreign policy goal was at a range of twenty eight percent (28%) in the year 1990, but it was to decline to twenty five percent (25%) in 1994 when Bill Clinton was the main man in the White House.[131] This support became even worse when similar studies were conducted between 2004 and 2006, respectively.

It is argued that the support for the promotion of democracy in overseas countries declined because of the failure of communism in USSR, deaths of many Americans during the battle of Mogadishu (Somalia) in 1993 and during the US led war against

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[129] Interview with M. Bevlyn (not real name), official of the US Diplomatic to South Africa, 09 June 2010. The name of the respondent has been withheld for ethical reasons.
[130] Drezner, 2008, p. 16.
[131] *Ibid.*

Iraq in 2003.[132] These three factors summarily explain the declining commitment of the US to democracy under the leadership of George Bush Sr., Bill Clinton and George Bush Jr. The above is also emphatic of the value attached to American lives by the realist persistence in its foreign policy formulation and implementation processes.[133] Despite this, the US has supported bilateral and multilateral efforts to promote democracy and human rights in Africa and elsewhere.[134] This commitment varies from one country to the other depending on the national interests of the US at stake.

However, at the bilateral level, the US support for democratic governance entails the provision of aid to support election procedures, good governance practices and enhancement of legal and security systems.[135] For instance, President George W. Bush's Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) was designed to support countries that were making remarkable progress towards democratic and economic reform.[136] For years, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has also been party to the US mission to spread democracy in Africa and the developing world at large. At the multilateral level, the US has contributed immensely to global efforts to establish and consolidate democracy through the international cooperation frameworks such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN Democracy Fund, World Bank and the African Union (AU).[137] This research argues that while political aid is necessary for nurturing and consolidation of emerging

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[132] R.J. Pauly and T. Lansford, *Strategic Preemption: US Foreign Policy and the Second Iraq War*, Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, p. 124.
[133] M. G. Roskin, *National Interest: From Abstraction to Strategy*, Pennysylvania: Institute of Strategic Studies, 1994, p. 5.
[134] S. B. Epstein, "Democracy Promotion: Cornerstone of US Foreign Policy?", CRS Report for Congress, 26 December 2007, p. 18.
[135] K. Shai, *Rethinking United States-South Africa Relations*, Hoedspruit: Royal Batubatse Foundation, 2009, pp. 54-55.
[136] Interview with M. Maphunye, Researcher, Ekurhuleni Municipality, 6 November 2008.
[137] Epstein, 2007, p. 22.

democracies, the so called "good governance" is non-existent. It is something that has been coined by the West in relation to Africa and other developing countries as part of their prerequisites to financial assistance.[138]

In her discussion paper No. 368, J. Hearn observed that South Africa forms part of the new generation of African countries that are against any form of tyranny or authoritarian rule and instead have embraced "open government and open economies in productive partnerships with the West".[139] This brings this study to the conclusion that the US channelled through its strategic African partners some foreign aid that played an important role in establishing, reinforcing and maintaining democratic principles and institutions in various African states.

Contrary to Hearn's argument, it is argued that at times the partnership that South Africa together with other African states had with the West was counterproductive. For example, the US's decision to maintain closer relations with despotic regimes in both Libya[140] and Egypt is a betrayal of the oppressed masses in both countries as it weakens its ability to press for a freedom agenda in Africa. In the eyes of the US authoritarian rule refers symbolically, to the type of government that does not allow the influence of the US-sponsored organisations in domestic policy making. It also refers to regimes that are not subordinates of the US in the conduct of international relations. Nevertheless, at times, the US-supported democratic initiatives in Africa became a success. This idea was seconded by May Travis as she/he asserted that:

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[138] Interview with Mahosi, 13 November 2009.
[139] J. Hearn, "Foreign Aid, Democratisation and Civil Society: A Study of South Africa, Ghana and Uganda", Discussion Paper No 368. United Kingdom: Institute of Development Studies, 1999, p. 2.
[140] In the year 2006 the US restored full diplomatic relations and other forms of cooperation with Libya.

> In South Africa, foreign aid has largely succeeded in promoting a stable society, most apparent during the five year transition period following the end of apartheid in 1994.[141]

Other success stories of the US-supported democratic initiatives in Africa include few countries such as Ghana, Namibia and Tanzania among others.[142] In each of these cases, the US worked with African countries (and partners in the world) to ensure peaceful transitions of power, the promotion of women throughout national governments and free and fair elections.[143] Nonetheless, democracy in Africa is still in its infant stage and not to mention South Africa and other African states touted for being committed to democracy and the rule of law, US support-initiatives in the area of governance would take some time to root themselves. From Cape to Cairo, there are limited cases if any in which the US can claim a success story.[144]

### 3.3. Washington and the Challenges of Democracy in Africa

The truth of the matter is that the US commitment to the promotion of democracy in Africa leaves much to be desired. The role of the US in this regard has been rather controversial. In most cases and at some point Washington was the epitome of all the evil dictatorships in Africa as long it safeguarded the national interests of the US.[145] Taking this general point further, Keith Jennings stipulates that "there is scant US commitment to global democracy when its economic and military interests are

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[141] M. Travis, "Vague Targets: the Case of Aid in South Africa", *Havard International Review*, Vol 28, 2006.
[142] J. Carson, "US Policy in Sub-Saharan Africa", Address to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health, Washington D.C, 25 March 2010.
[143] Interview with Bevlyn, 09 June 2010.
[144] Interview with Chingombe, 18 April 2010.
[145] These are the views of the researcher.

relevant".[146] This can best be understood by retrospectively looking forward at the US-Africa relations from the 1980s. It should be remembered that the US did not support any nationalist independence movements in Africa nor train any member of the military wing of the liberation movements who fought against colonial powers.[147] However, the end of the Cold War laid a precedent for America's renewed interest in Africa's political institutions and processes.[148] It is hardly surprising, therefore, that in pursuing its foreign policy towards Africa, Washington found itself responsible for the birth and/or sustainability of some authoritarian regimes. For example, Swaziland is a non-party state but there are no regular American democratic demands in that country as compared to Zimbabwe.[149] This can be attributed to the fact that the US has limited interests in Swaziland and the prevailing status quo in Swaziland does not pose any serious threat to its national interests in Southern Africa and Africa at large. In the first place, Swaziland is a small country with limited political influence in Southern Africa and Africa at large and it is economically deprived. Economically, there is very little if there is any that the US can benefit from Swaziland. Moreover, the rights and interests of the White minority in Swaziland are respected and observed and the Americans are happy because the Swazi Englishmen are the descendents of their "distant cousins" in Britain.[150]

In the same vein, the US also found itself giving a cold shoulder to the popularly elected democratic regimes such as Zimbabwe (under President Robert Mugabe) and

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[146] K. Jennings, "The US and Kenya: Tragic setback for democracy in Africa", *Pampazuka News*, Issue 335, 10 January 2008, p. 2.
[147] Mutambara, 2008, p. 21.
[148] McKenna, 1994, p. 1.
[149] P. Rankhumise, "Democratisation Challenges in Swaziland", *Inside AISA*, Vol No. 1, April/ May 2007, pp. 11-12.
[150] Interview (electronic) with F. Chavez (pseudo-name), Member of banned People's United Democratic Movement (PUDEMO) in Swaziland, 13 April 2010. True identity of the respondent withheld for ethical reasons.

post-1993 Kenya (under Arap Moi) which were not friendly or accommodative to its foreign policies.[151] In Zimbabwe for example, along with Britain, the US has openly denounced the Mugabe Administration. To add to this, the Bush Administration explicitly advocated and discreetly supported regime change in that country in favour of MDC-led opposition. According to Chingombe there is no doubt that the US supported regime change openly as their kin (white farmers) were the main losers when land reform programme kick started in Zimbabwe and most of them opted for MDC as their political home.[152] However, the US has unsuccessfully taken advantage of the resultant economic crisis in Zimbabwe to bring about regime.

In relation to the foregoing analysis, the US foreign policy towards Africa reflects a combination of the blend of liberalism and realism, which mixes generosity with self interest.[153] It is in this context that in pursuing its foreign policy goal, the promotion of democracy and human rights, the US often applies double standards. These are some of the dictates of the anarchical international system that forces states to behave as selfish actors and always put their national interest first, with little or no regard of how such a policy would affect its external environment.[154] This variation is best reflected by Lord Palmer who is often paraphrased as having said that in international relations, "there are no permanent friends or permanent enemies, only permanent

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[151] Notwithstanding the controversies regarding Mugabe's reelection as the President of Zimbabwe in 2008, the situation on the ground shows that he commands majority political support among the Zimbabweans. He is therefore considered by the researcher as the popularly elected President of Zimbabwe from the year 1980 to 2008. Despite the suspected electoral fraud, Moi is also regarded as the popularly elected President of Kenya for having won the multiparty elections of the year 1992 and 1997.

[152] Interview with Chingombe, *Ibid.*

[153] R. Jackson, *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

[154] P.J. McGowan (ed), *Power, Wealth and Global Equity: Introduction to International Relations*, Cape Town: UCT Press, 2002.

interests".[155] This quotation also gives an account of the changing circumstances that make the US to switch the social identity (from adversaries to allies, vice versa) of certain states from time to time in its engagement in Africa.[156]

More significantly, it is on record that the US worked tirelessly for the downfall of Charles Taylor (former President of Liberia) and Al-Bashir (President of Sudan). Taylor succumbed to global pressure and stepped down as President of Liberia in 2006 and this was viewed as a victory for the US imperialism and neo-colonialism.[157] To the disappointment of the Americans, their efforts to push for regime change in Sudan have failed and Al-Bashir is still the head of the state of Sudan. Both Taylor and Al-Bashir are seasoned dictators peddled with serious war crimes in their respective countries. Even though regime change was necessary in those countries, it is myopic for such transition to be engineered from the US. Though the particularities of regime change agenda differs from one country to the other, in a real sense externally engineered regime change programs constitute a violation of the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of other states and it also undermines the right of the people of those states to self-determination as enshrined in both the Constitutive Act of the African Union (AU) and the UN Charter.[158]

However, it is not surprising that the primary motive for engineering the downfall of both leaders (Al-Bashir and Taylor) prioritised the oil-based national interests of the US at the expense of regional peace and security in Central and West Africa. This is a

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[155] Interview with K. Benyi, Student, University of Venda, Thohoyandou, 16 March 2009.
[156] Since 1979 the US treated Libya as an outcast state and later severed relations with the country, but their ties have improved as of the year 2006 following the decision by Tripoli to give up its missiles as part as part of its renounced support for terrorism.
[157] B. Ankomah, "Reaping the Whirlwind", *New African*, Vol no 484, May 2009, p. 8.
[158] M.S. Rannenyeni, *Regionalising Peacekeeping Operations in Africa*, Hoedspruit: Royal Batubatse Foundation, 2009, p. 48.

further indication of Washington's lack of political sensitivity on African governing institutions and processes. Arguably, peace never returned to Liberia under Taylor's entire reign and worse he allegedly provided military support to the rebel forces in Sierra Leone in exchange for diamonds.[159] This situation rendered the whole of West Africa unstable and by implication, threatened a region that official estimates suggest will supply twenty percent (20%) of the US oil imports in the near future.

Although Taylor and Al-Bashir were somewhat authoritarian, in accordance with traditional norms[160] of international relations, it is not fitting to topple them through the perpetuation of the *racialisation* of international criminal justice. The work of the International Criminal Court (ICC) gives an impressive picture of its abuse by the major powers, including US and its allies. This is incorrect because Africa does not have a monopoly on dictatorships and criminality[161] and there are existing African regional and continental cooperation frameworks that are competent and capable to address problems of this nature.

While it is true that indigenous regional organisations such as the AU and SADC are capacitated to react to military *coup d'etats*, long ruling dictators and political conflicts, it is not easy to project their level competency and capability when one looks at challenges lying ahead of them in the case of Zimbabwe, Libya, Madagascar, Guinea, Cameroon, Guinea and others.[162] However, the decision by the West, and the

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[159] *Wikepedia*, "Charles Taylor (Liberia)", http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Taylor_(Liberia), 23 April 2010.

[160] Traditional norms of international relations include the principles of non-interference in the domestic affairs of other states and the respect for the sovereignty of other states and territorial integrity.

[161] Figuratively, the hands of George W. Bush and Tony Blair are dripping with the blood of many nationalities including the Iraqis and the Afghans.

[162] Few success stories of African indigenous regional organisations include that the AU effectively resolved the Kenyan political impasse following the disputed reelection of Mwai Kibaki as the

US in particular, to overlook and undermine the AU and regional bodies such as Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGAD) to deal with African challenges to democracy and the rule of law is questionable. This research contends that the mandate of the AU and its regional partners is often superseded and hijacked by international organisations[163] that are often manipulated and used as instruments of the foreign policies of the West.[164] It is also true that at times the AU and other regional bodies ask for the assistance of international organisations as it was the case in Darfur (Sudan), when the AU peacekeeping force was not up to the task before the UN joined it in the year 2007.[165]

Contextually, the underlying motive for the penchant to remove both Taylor and Al-Bashir from office has little to do with democratisation and the rule of law. It seems like, in Khadija Shirife's opinion, "the primary motive underpinning the cries of genocide is to seek control of Sudan's oil or to ensure the breakaway of South Sudan and Darfur or alternatively, to instigate a regime change that will impose a US-friendly government at the helm".[166] This explains some of the characteristics of the US imperialist expansion in the post-Cold War era. Due to the sanctions against Al-Bashir regime, American oil companies are not present in Sudan's oil industry. The position of this study is that the US's policy priorities in Sudan reflects the desire for a

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President of Kenya. History has recorded the 1998 joint political and military intervention of South Africa and Botswana in Lesotho as one of its limited success stories in defending democracy in a captive state.

[163] This refers mainly to the ICC and the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

[164] The use of international organizations as instruments to attain foreign policy goals and objectives of their members was confirmed by the Gonnar Myrdal who observed that "It is fictitious to believe that international organizations are more than their components had i.e. their nation states. They are nothing more than the instruments for policies of individual governments to conduct their diplomacy".

[165] M.P. Maake, "The Darfur Conflict: Reflections on the state of Human Security since 2003", Unpublished BA Honours (IR) mini-dissertation, University of Venda, 2009, p. 38.

[166] K. Sharife, "Oil Politics", *New African*, vol. No 484, May 2009, p. 27.

political settlement that addresses questions of oil reserves sharing in favour of the Christian South in order to guarantee future accessibility by American oil companies.[167] Key to the understanding of this policy is the close affinity between the Christian South and the predominantly Christian US which for so long has tied an ideological knot between democracy and Christianity.

More importantly, American-backed removal and subsequent-trial of Taylor was not only about the accountability and the rule of law, but primarily about huge political considerations and stakes in West Africa. Under Taylor, the US economic interests in the Mano River region and the rest of West Africa were not safe.[168] At the helm of leaders backed by the West, the removal of Taylor from power served as a guarantee for the safety and protection of American national interests in Liberia and West Africa as a whole. This research argues that since Liberia was no better off under Taylor, his downfall was not only significant to the Americans, but the Liberians and Sierra Leones due to his inhumane and destabilising domestic and regional policies as outlined above. Ironically, the fact that the US created and supported ruthless dictators and rebels alike, including the apartheid regime (South Africa) and Jonas Savimbi (Angola), respectively shows Washington's downright dishonesty with regard to its commitment to the establishment and protection of democratic institutions and processes.[169]

Equally important, currently, there were no American democratic demands from Angola, Libya and Egypt when it is an open secret that these countries were far

[167] K. Hull, "What's in a Word? "Genocide" as a tool of US Foreign Policy", *Michigan Journal of Public Affairs*, Vol 2 (1), Summer 2005, pp. 14-15.
[168] The Mano river region includes Sierra Leone, Guinea, Liberia and Ivory Coast.
[169] R. Wafawaroa, "Should Africa be held to Western Standards", BBC Focus on Africa, 2008.

behind with regard to the process of democratisation. Instead, authoritarianism in Angola along with Gabon and Swaziland has been compensated by the US with the listing of these countries among those which are eligible for AGOA.[170] This reflects Washington's hypocritical posture and it suggests that the US's involvement in these countries was an obstacle to democratisation. It also suggests that the US's strategic interests serve as a yardstick to determine whether there should be democratic demands or not. This research argues that the exclusion of African authoritarian states in AGOA and other business opportunities would go a long way pushing them to introduce meaningful political reforms. Bringing them on board would do nothing except to boost their economic muscle that would in turn help them to entrench political power at the expense of the wider population.

### 3.4. Democracy and Economic Hypocrisy

This research argues that the democratisation of Africa is not America's priority and where it happens successfully, it is by accident. There is a general tendency on the part of the US to criminalise and demonise African governance institutions as undemocratic, non-transparent and unaccountable with the intention to optimise its national interests. According to Arthur Mutambara, "what is more criminal is trying to hide this motive behind lofty ideals of democracy, freedom and good governance".[171] The key issue is that the US mainly supports the establishment of democracy in areas where its national interests are at risk. As such the change of regime under the guise of democracy guarantees the safety of its national interests as outlined above. Paul

[170] AGOA, "African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA)", http://www.agoa.gov/eligibility/country_eligibility.html, 13 January 2010.
[171] A. Mutambara, "Zimbabweans are a heroic people and our history must inspire us", *City Press*, 10 August 2008, p. 21. At the time of writing, Mutambara was a Deputy Prime Minister of Zimbabwe and a President of MDC-Mutambara faction.

Dobrainsky reminds us that "a world of democracy engenders an international environment most conducive to US political, economic and cultural interests".[172] This should be understood within the context of the false ideological triage between democracy, capitalism and Christianity.

Despite historical realities that neither contradict nor correspond with Dobrainsky, the US has a tendency of injecting political aid to bring about regime change in some African states. This hidden mission is well reflected in Zimbabwean African National Union-Patriotic Front's slogan "Vote ZANU-PF to defeat regime change".[173] Both American and African democracy and human rights advocacy NGOs have been instrumental in executing the strategy of unseating certain regimes in Africa in the name of freedom and democracy. Such concerns have been raised recently in both Zimbabwe and Sudan. In other words, some of the democracy and human rights organisations were used by Washington to achieve the concealed goals of its foreign policy.[174] It is for this reason that certain African heads of states like Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe and Al-Bashir of Sudan have treated some of the international NGOs harshly and at times shut down their offices, because it is alleged that they produce and provide intelligence reports for their enemies.

While political and economic liberalism are intertwined, trends in the international system indicate that economic liberalism is dominating the mental strata of the American policy makers.[175] Hence, African oil producing countries with very limited

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[172] P. Dobrainsky, "Human Rights and US Foreign Policy", *The Washington Quarterly*, Spring 1989, p. 155.
[173] ZANU-PF memorabilia t-shirt for 2008 general elections campaign.
[174] ZANU-PF supporters view the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) as a tool of US and British imperialism and neo-colonialism.
[175] J. Ravenhill, *Global Political Economy*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 19-22.

people-centred democracies[176] were often condoned and supported by the US due to its economic interests in them.[177] This position indicates that economic interests are the primary issues in the US Africa policy and that issues associated with democratisation such as transparency, the rule of law, liberalised political space are secondary issues. As a result, Presidents such as Meles Zenawi (Ethiopia) and Yoweri Museveni (Uganda) were often praised as a new crop of progressive African leaders by Washington due to their commitment to their neo-liberal agenda.[178] The result was that their oppressive policies were to be ignored.

The usefulness of the US foreign aid in promoting democracy in Africa cannot be understated. However, this does not leave out the fact that the same foreign aid was also used to transgress democratic institutions and processes in favour of the goals crafted by the White House. In South Africa and Ghana, for instance, USAID was the significant actor in the promotion of democracy and transition. In the period between 1985 and 1993 it provided $338 million in aid to South Africa which was mainly dispensed to anti-apartheid groups such as the African National Congress (ANC) and Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP).[179] It was also used to boost voter education programmes in the run up to the 1994 general elections as well as strengthen civil society- the key component of a democratic state. This study contends that the overall influence of the US in Africa has shaped the nature and content of the continent's democratisation

[176] African oil producing countries with limited or no population based democracies include Algeria, Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Libya.
[177] G. Haley, C. Akukwe and S. Jammeh. "Re-Energising United States-Africa Relations", http://www.worldpress.org/print_article.cfm?article_id=2170&dont=yes, 13 February 2008; Frank Smith, "A New Game: The Clinton Administration on Africa", http://www.franksmyth.com, 15 July 2007.
[178] K. Richburg, "Should Africa be held to Western standards?", BBC Focus on Africa, 2008.
[179] Hearn, 1999, p. 8.

process negatively, with a few exceptions like South Africa and Benin.[180] This research did not find any sufficient information that suggests that the US efforts have impeded Africa's democratic development in any significant fashion, but funding both friends and enemies is tantamount to that.[181]

A key challenge of extrapolating an unshakable conclusion in regard to the above is that, there are no clear-cut causal links between the US support for democratisation in specific African countries and so called "success" for democratisation in those countries. But there are a number of countries throughout the continent where US support for democratisation and democratic transitions has been evident, especially in such cases as Nigeria's transition from military to civilian rule and post-civil war democratisation in Mozambique to name a few. But in most cases the democratisation is not clear cut and may be linked more to post-conflict settlements as much as to democracy per se.[182] Moreover, the US is also supporting countries like Rwanda that are hardly examples of liberal democracy but fall more on the '"tyranny-authoritarian" side of the spectrum.

While it may sound accusatory and simplistic to argue that the contribution of the US to the democratisation of Africa has being negative, in a nuanced view, it has brought about mixed results. For example, in the civil society domain, which is central to the expansion of democracy in Africa and the world at large, it is suggested that the US

[180] The US has partly contributed to the slow pace of dismantling the apartheid regime and replacing it with a democratically elected government through its pursuance of 'constructive engagement'.
[181] Before 1994 the US funded both ANC and IFP and to a certain extent the apartheid regime who were in bloody war with each other. In other countries like Uganda and Egypt the US provides strategic and monetary support to democracy and human rights advocacy groups while maintaining closer economic and political relations with their authoritarian regimes.
[182] Interview with Ernest Josephs (not real name), Research Associate, IGD, Midrand, 26 April 2010. True identity of the respondent withheld for ethical reasons.

foreign aid has helped to make the dream of public participation in state affairs a reality. Prominent national advocacy Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Africa such as Uganda Human Rights Activists (UHRA) and the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) among others, have been receiving funding from the US that were used to organise symposiums to open up debates about crucial political and economic policy issues pertaining to their respective countries.[183] These kinds of activities are reflective of the US efforts support the agenda for broadening the society's participation in public policy formulation. Fox argues that "it is about opening up public space in which governance takes place for previously excluded non-state actors".[184] However, the above perception is not true because even in countries that are classified as democratic there are still structural disparities between the rich and the poor. The gap between the rich and the poor is also widening daily in terms of political participation and decision making in higher decision making organs of the government. It is easily stated from a cursory review of the print media on a daily basis that there is a general consensus that there is a widening rich poor gap in Africa, particularly in countries such as South Africa, Kenya and Nigeria. To the extent that this is linked to political participation, this seems evident in the unrests occurring in these countries at various local levels. Often referred to as 'service delivery' protests, including expressions of xenophobia (South Africa) and election related violence (Kenya and Nigeria) reflect certain alienation at the grassroots level from decision making process.

According to Mark Robinson, despite the popular belief that the political system's role is to establish and enforce compromise between conflicting interests of various groups

[183] Hearn, 1999, pp. 6-9.
[184] L. Fox, *Civil Society: A Conceptual Framework*. Washington, DC: USAID, 1996.



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in society, public policy remains the product of the elite group. [185] The elite group makes policies for the people. As such, the elite shape mass opinion more than masses shape elite opinion. Little or no consultation is done with the most downtrodden people for whom some policies are directly affecting. So there is little or no public participation in the process of policy development.

To worsen the situation, the US donor agencies have a tendency of not funding the popular sectors of the society, but rather strengthen the new Black elite committed to the promotion of limited form of democracy characterised by regular elections and liberal economic policies in Africa. As a result, no substantive changes in government really took place in some of the African states moving away from authoritarian to democratic forms of government. Some countries like Nigeria and Kenya have changed from military/ authoritarian to civilian rule, but their governments have largely drawn their membership from the same elite and shares similar values with previous generations of oligarchy.[186]

From the above it is clear that there is a tendency within the American government circles to project a dichotomy between economic interests and democratic objectives. This is reflected in the public statements of some American leaders claiming that liberal democracy is a precondition for any meaningful economic development.[187] This is not true and it is misleading to expect Africa to adopt the US model of democracy with the hope of economic growth and development. In this context, the

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[185] M. Robinson, "Strengthening civil society through foreign political aid", ESCOR research report No. R6234, 1996, p. 356.
[186] Thomas, 2005, p. 658. Oligarchy is a form of government in which power effectively rests with a small elite segment of society distinguished by royalty, wealth, family ties, military might or religious hegemony.
[187] Jendayi Frazer, "The US-Africa Relationship", http://southafrica.usembassy.gov/frazer20050816.html, 09 August 2008.

notion of "one size fits all" is irrelevant because there are authoritarian regimes such as China that are doing very well economically than an orthodox democrat would imagine. Moss wrote that the Clinton administration accepted this argument with regard to the "Asian Tigers", not Africa.[188] The reason behind this inconsistency lies in the drivers of the US policy towards individual countries, region or continent.

Nevertheless, the 2008 global economic crisis bears testimony to the fact that capitalism is in a dilemma and previous moves to tie it to democracy were simply ideological. Khathu Mamaila strongly argued that the US is the champion of "unfettered capitalism" but it does not practice it. He continues to indicate that this was evident in October 2008 when the US embarked upon the socialist path thereby nationalising the major banks with a rescue package amounting to $700 billion.[189] It is therefore, appropriate for Africa to have a flexible approach to capitalism or liberalism and adopt a form of democracy or governance that fits well with its material conditions. Contextually, democracy cannot bring about economic development in Africa, but it can provide enabling conditions for economic progress. On the other hand, globally, stable democracies are found in areas where the standard of living of the citizens is relatively fair.[190] As such, it would make more sense for the US to support the home-brewed economic development strategies and political systems for Africa, instead of following the aphorism- "do as I say not as I do". This would help to preserve democratic gains that Africa has made in the past two decades.

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[188] Moss, 1995, p. 202., Asian Tigers refers to the newly industrialised economies of South Korea, Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan.
[189] K. Mamaila, "Economic Hypocrites", *City Press*, 05 October 2008, p. 22. At the time of writing, Mamaila was the Editor of *City Press*.
[190] René Spogárd and Meril James, "Governance and Democracy- the People's View", A global opinion poll, http://www.unu.edu/millennium/gallup.pdf, 27 April 2010.

In Lock J. Johnson's view, "America's economic assistance to Europe in the aftermath of the Second World War helped cement the Western democracies…".[191] This implies that the level of the impact of the US in the democratisation of Eastern Europe has been more of supportive than leading the process. In a similar vein, the establishment, nurturing and consolidation of democracy in Africa is a major priority of the US.[192] But realistically, democratisation in African countries can not be stage-managed from outside by the US or any other external power. Thus, where democratisation is 'successful', it is not really coincidental as much as an outcome reflecting the balance of democratic forces in the country in question. Here, the US would be supportive but would be unlikely to exert major intervention to bring such outcomes about.

### 3.5. Conclusion

It is myopic to argue that there is only one political way of organising human society. It is also illogical to tie a knot between democracy and economic development and export it to Africa as the previous US administrations have. However, the influence of the US in the democratisation of Africa has brought about mixed results. In some cases, it has groomed and trained dictators and rebels alike. On the other hand, it has backed processes and institutions that ushered in the introduction of democracy in certain African states. The US foreign aid remained among good components of political development in Africa. It should be noted however that its positive role was negated when it was provided in order to sustain a political course that undermined positive political and socio-economic relations in Africa.

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[191] Lock J. Johnson, *America as a World Power: Foreign Policy in Constitutional Framework*. New York: McGraw Hill, 1991, p. 14.
[192] Interview with Josephs, Research Associate, IGD, Midrand, 26 April 2010.

The inconsistency of the US pressure for democracy invalidates any assumptions or claims of universality. Equally true, Africa is not a single country, but a diverse continent with fifty three nation states with completely different political cultures to the US. Any analysis of democracy or governance in each country should be treated according to its merits and demerits. As such, it is short-sighted to conclude that democracy can be exported from the US to Africa. Liberal democracy cannot work effectively in areas where the moral roots and cultural norms are different. To be successful, genuine democracy should be domestically brewed in accordance with the material and historical conditions of the society concerned and not imposed from outside.

It is for this reason that the following chapter articulates the main issues about the US National Security Strategy in relation to Africa. The objective is to unravel the myth that Africa is a threat to the US national security and the reality about its dismissed importance to Washington within the context of the current international discourse on security.

## Chapter Four

## Africa and the US National Security

### 4.1. Introduction

The evolving academic and policy discourse on Strategic Studies is conflated with confusing and contrasting analysis by both politicians and scholars emanating from this field and others including Development Studies, International Relations and Peace Studies. This is especially the case in locating the context of the US Africa policy in the light of the shifts in the balance of power in the international system. Evolving from the literature on US-Africa relations it is clear that the "mother continent" has been marginalised in terms of historical writing and this has in turn contributed to its further marginalisation in international security debates and American decision making chambers in particular. This problem is exacerbated by the fact that Africa does not have sufficient power to shape world opinion and alter the knowledge structure of the global political economy.[193] Africa has limited power or influence on international publishing industry and it is therefore important for Africans to critically analyse what they hear and read. Hence, the media and the publishing industry across the world is mainly owned by the bourgeoisie who respond positively to the demands of their international partners- major contributors to advertising revenues (income).

In short, the African elite are prone to succumb to the pressures by their Western counterparts who have concealed political agendas. This trend has actually culminated

[193] K. Kouakou, Presentation to the South African Department of Foreign Affairs conference on "Challenges Facing the African Diplomat: Now and in the Future", 15-16 July 2008.

in varied interpretations of security, depending on the national interests of the countries involved and, unfortunately, the view of the big powers such as the US prevails at the expense of African states and developing world at large.

This chapter scrutinises the challenges to the theoretical analysis of human security. It seeks to bridge the gap between academics, political analysts and policy makers in contextualising the post-Cold War US Africa policy. Using the theory of realism, this chapter also seeks to unpack the reasons for the militarisation or securitisation of US-Africa relations within the context of the internationalised war on terror.

### 4.2. Conceptualising Human Security in the Post-Cold War Era

The dominant view of the current studies is that the end of the Cold War has inaugurated the new security paradigm. The chief tenet of their argument is that during the Cold War security was defined in military terms and the main referent in this case was the state. Security was then understood as the ability of the state to protect and defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity against the external threats or foreign aggression and this was summarily known as national security.[194] The size of the army or arsenal was central to the capacity and capability to justify its continued existence within the anarchic community of nation states. The premise that the post-Cold War era saw more of intra-state conflicts than inter-state conflicts necessitated a redefinition of security.[195] The need for this reconsideration was also compelled by the fact that despite their various sources, a common thing about conflicts (both inter-state and intra-state conflicts) is the extent to which they affect

[194] Maake, 2009, pp. 7-8.
[195] See, Department of Foreign Affairs, Conference on "Challenges Facing the African Diplomat: Now and in the Future", Programme, 15-16 July 2008, p. 2.

civilians and the mushrooming of non-military security threats such as chronic diseases and natural disasters, among others. The redefinition of the term established a nexus between peace, security and development and according to Rankhumise and Shai "a myriad of factors became responsible for ensuring the safe and secure survival of all biological, natural and material entities within states, between states and within communities of states".[196] The intersection of the diverse range of political and socio-economic issues produced what is known as human security. As cited by G.P. Mpangala and J.M.K.L. Lwehabura, Sabina Alkire views human security as "...to safeguard the vital core of all human lives from critical pervasive threats, in a way that is consistent with long term human fulfilment".[197] This definition resonates well with the aphorism that "development is a precondition for security" and that there cannot be development without security. In the same vein, Libya's president Muammar Ghaddafi articulated that "Without political stability, no strategic program of economic transformation can be implemented."[198]

While acknowledging that human security is a mixed bag which considers a calculable number of varied factors, this chapter and study as a whole is premised on the less acknowledged or known proposition that human security is not a new concept all together. Hence, according to M. Fell "households have always been concerned with human security and the evolution of Western states was closely tied with the

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[196] P. Rankhumise and K. Shai, "Reflections on the state of human security in the aftermath of the February 2007 elections in Lesotho", *Inside AISA*, Vol 1, April /May 2007, p. 4.
[197] G.P. Mpangala and J.M.K. Lwehabura, "Zanzibar: Conflict resolution and human security in the 2005 elections", in K. Muloongo, R. Kibasomba and J. N. Kariri (eds.), *The Many Faces of Human Security: Case Studies of Seven Countries in Southern Africa*, Pretoria: Institute of Security Studies, 2005, p. 42.
[198] L. Retriver, "Libya: Libya's Leader", http://www.lycos.com/info/libya--libyas-leader.html, 08 July 2009.

desire of the groups of people to ensure their own human security".[199] Based on these facts, it is not incorrect to state that human security entails some of the aspects of national security. Having observed this, this research concurs with Fell's thesis and it adds that, the content of both traditional and modern security is more or less the same and the only notable shift is from a state being a referent to an individual. This implies that the introduction of the concept of human security by both academics and policy makers is an indirect acceptance that the traditional security discourse has failed to offer solutions to security challenges in the post-Cold War era and human security is an alterative to it.

### 4.3. Africa's Security Environment: A Critical Analysis of the Pessimistic View from Washington

The US views the security landscape of Africa from two vintage points: a threat and an opportunity. However, the thesis of the threat has been openly and much advanced by the American officials, to the detriment of the positive view: opportunity. However, the qualification of Africa as an opportunity for the security of the US represents a point of convergence between the leaderships of both sides of the world. Given the dividends of positive public diplomacy, this notion is tacitly beneficial to each other (both the US and Africa).[200] This is in view of the fact that America stands to benefit from peace, stability and development of the continent. The lack of peace, stability and development in Africa equals to "lost opportunities" for the economic and energy security of the US as alluded to earlier. Equally important, the lack of

[199] M. Fell, 'Is Human Security Our Main Concern in the 21st Century?" *Journal of Security Management*, Vol 4 (3), September 2006, p. 2.
[200] For a comprehensive analysis of diplomacy see, H. J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations* (5th ed), New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987, pp. 146-150, pp. 529-60.

human security in Africa constitutes an eminent threat to the US national security. Former Assistant Secretary of African Affairs Susan E. Rice rightly asserts that analytically, "if Africa succeeds, we all, Africans and Americans, stand to benefit." But if "Africa fails, we will all pay the price."[201]

Despite its rich mineral-energy complex, Africa is known internationally as a continent ravaged by poverty, chronic illnesses, bad governance, unending violent conflicts and other social ills. This perception has been strengthened by biased international media reporting of Africa that has reduced the continent to a hell with no potential to better itself.[202] The many socials ills of the African continent, coupled with its marginalisation and vilification by the West has led to the deterioration in the moral fibre of the African society. While some of these problems have historical roots and can be linked to colonialism, it is clear that despite an increase in the number of independent African states, with South Africa as the last country to obtain independence from the White settler rule in 1994, in overall the continent has registered a slow progress in social and economic development.[203] Africans do not have a monopoly over this concern, but they share it with the continent's international partners including the US as indicated above. This view should be understood within the context of the interconnectedness of the world as a global village.[204] In fact, consecutive US administrations ranging from President George Bush Sr. to President George W. Bush Jr. have viewed Africa's dire situation as a serious security threat for

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[201] S.E. Rice, "US and Africa in the 21st Century", *The DISAM Journal*, Winter 1999/2000, p. 68.
[202] See, the two infamous covers of international magazines *The Economist,* 13-19 May 2000 and *Newsweek,* 17 January 2000 and the caption of the *New African* (Vol 474, June 2008).
[203] See, Africa Institute of South Africa (AISA), Call for papers of a conference on "Revitalising African Value Systems for Sustainable continental Integration: Perspectives from Emerging Scholars", 25-26 June 2009.
[204] C. Coker, "Globalisation and Terrorism", http://www.g8.utoronto.ca/conferences/2002/tokyo/cocker.pdf, 27 May 2009.

the US and powerfully stated that Washington should develop a careful security relationship with the mother continent.

Reacting to the projected image of Africa as posing a serious national security threat to the US, Bond wrote that "Bill Clinton broke new ground by forcefully applying free market policies to Africa and, often unnoticed, by placing Africa on the US foreign policy map by casting it as a transnational security threat".[205] Ironically, certain public commentators have praised Clinton for championing pro-Africa foreign policies and went on to state that his term of office has actually marked a shift in terms of the US policy toward Africa. The reality has however been sobering.[206] On the basis of this other writers like Drezner conclude that "...the distinction between rhetoric and action needs to be stressed.[207]

After leaving office, Clinton was often praised by African-American officials of the Bush Administration for having conceived the much lauded AGOA that was to be implemented as of 2004 by the government of the day. This can be devoted to the fact that the rhetoric behind AGOA prophesied the promising future of Africa's development under the newly established trade regime between the US and certain African states.[208] It is important to note that the envisaged level of economic and social progress in Africa is intricately intertwined with the US national security as outlined in detail hereunder. Unfortunately, AGOA's prescribed liberal policies signed in economic growth for its beneficiaries could not be used to fairly service

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[205] P. Bond, "South African Sub-imperialism", paper presented to the conference under the theme "Toward an Africa Without Borders", Durban University of Technology, 8 July 2007, p. 4.
[206] See, United States of America, "Clinton's Failed Africa Policy'", Congressional Record, http://www.house.gov/mica/fs032798.htm, 16 September 2008.
[207] D.W. Drezner, "Values, Interests, and American Grand Strategy", *Diplomatic History*, Vol 29 (3), June 2005, p. 429.
[208] AGOA, "About AGOA", http://www.agoa.gov/, 09 July 2009.

their populations because it prohibited them from acquiring lowest cost drugs for their people (for example) making health care service a luxury for the working people and the rich only. As the American pharmaceutical business community's legal battle with the South African government indicates, the US and its Western counterparts are engaged in Africa in a form of economic neo-colonialism and its unique features have reversed the little democratic gains achieved after independence.[209] Similarly, it further eroded any prospects of Africa's development and thus imposing serious limits to the economic security of African states. Key aspects of AGOA such as privatisation have partly contributed to increasing levels of unemployment and poverty in certain African states such as South Africa, among others.[210] Put simply, the deliberate neglect of the contribution of the external factors in the fermentation of security threats in Africa have created a superficial divide between fact and fiction in the understanding of the US-Africa policy and its national security strategy.

Back to the central focus of this section, Rice addressed World Affairs Council in Washington during Clinton's term of office and strongly stated that "Our first interest in Africa, as elsewhere, is defending our own national security and protecting Americans in the United States and abroad".[211] This statement should be understood in the context that America is the only remaining superpower in the world with a huge population density and its nationals are found at any corner of the African continent. Irrespective of their location at any point in time, their citizenship still entitles them to

[209] For more information on the US's legal battle against South Africa over Pretoria's decision to legislate the domestic production of generic HIV/ AIDS drugs see, R Hink, "Intellectual Property and AIDS Medication in South Africa", http://www1.american.edu/ted/aidstrips.htm, 01 July 2009.
[210] W. Minter and S. Booker, "Africa Policy Outlook 2002: Africa's Priorities Ignored Due to Washington's War on Terrorism", *Foreign Policy in Focus*, February 2002, p. 3.
[211] This quote was extracted from the website of Uganda Rural Community Support, "Rice Reviews US Africa Policy At Oxford University", http://www.ugandaruralcommunitysupport.org/1999/05/22/rice-reviews-us-africa-policy-at-oxford-university-22-may-1999/, 02 July 2009.

full protection by their government.[212] In many instances when the conflict erupts in Africa or elsewhere, the first step for the US has been to evacuate its nationals to a place of safety before anything else. Few academics and policy analysts would disagree that the protection of the Americans beyond its territorial borders requires the cooperation with friends, allies and alliances. Hence, the centrality and significance of African states to America's quest for security.

Linking Rice's statement to what less critical Africans may describe as unintended negative consequences of AGOA, this research questions if America can be entrusted with the responsibility to come up with solutions for African problems to its own disadvantage. *Real politik* shows that in international relations the first national interest of each state is its security and survival and the primary client in this regard is its population.[213] Flowing from this school of thought, it can be concluded that AGOA is a diplomatic strategy to lobby African states to open their markets for American products and companies, in return for preferential treatment on the New York Stock Exchange. Contrary to the normative assumption that AGOA promotes fair trading between the African states and the US with equitable benefits for both, it seems as if that is untruthful since key actors or participants in this regime are unequal partners in the first place. Similarly, the prescription of one-product economy or international specialisation for the African states makes them more vulnerable to international price fluctuations and further holding them down as compared to the diverse economies of developed countries, including the US. Behind the blind language of free trade, Stewart argues that, "there could be high social and political costs if smaller, weaker

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[212] US Department of State *Outline of the US Legal System*, Washington D.C: US Department of State, 2004, p. 193.
[213] J.N. Danziger, *Understanding the Political World: A Comparative Introduction to Political Science* (4th ed.), New York: Longman, 1997, p. 312.

economies are opened up fully to international competition".[214] It is within this continuum that the US indirectly contributed to Africa's insecurity, which had come to haunt its own national security.

One of the key arguments advanced by the Bushes (Father and Son President) and Clinton to justify the perception, real or perceived, of Africa as a security risk to the US has been linked to its level of poverty and HIV/ AIDS infection rates. Booker and Colgan explained that the "HIV/AIDS pandemic remains the greatest challenge facing Africa, and the greatest global threat to human security…".[215] While the whole of Africa is a victim of HIV/AIDS, few Islamic dominated countries such as Sudan are less affected. There is no gainsaying that HIV/ AIDS retards economic development in Africa and this in turn contributes to the impoverishment of the affected populations. This is also having a negative impact on the national security of the US because Africa serves as a source of cheap labour for the US. Unfortunately, HIV/ AIDS cuts short the lives of potential African immigrants. Recent studies show that in most African countries, including Kenya and Nigeria, the most productive sectors of the economy are the hardest hit by the scourge of HIV/ AIDS and this is a concern for America because some of the victims were likely to contribute to its "brain gain".[216] The combination of African cheap labour and brain gain is very important for the sustainability of America's economic security. Drawing upon the above postulation by Booker and Colgan, it is clear that the US is not immune from the global implications of the African emergencies.

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[214] T. Stewart, "Globalisation, Competition Policy and International Trade Negotiations", Cuts Monographs on Investment and Competition Policy, Vol 4, 2003, p. 15.
[215] S. Booker and A. Colgan, "Africa Policy Outlook 2004", Africa Action, 2004, p. 1.
[216] Economic Commission for Africa, "Africa: The Socioeconomic Impact of HIV/AIDS", http://www.uneca.org/CHGA/doc/SOCIO_ECO_IMPACT.pdf, 19 June 2009.

Notwithstanding the causal relationship between the spread of HIV/AIDS and poverty in Africa, there is widespread recognition that some of the conflicts in Africa are rooted in poverty. Fundamentally, there is also a link between the level of poverty and HIV infection rates in Africa. The January 2008 socio-political unrest in Kenya and May 2008 xenophobic pogroms in South Africa can be properly diagnosed using the first analysis, based on conflicts and poverty. It is well documented that in both man-made disasters (2008 social unrest in Kenya and xenophobic attacks in South Africa) the perpetrators had largely lost confidence in the capacity, capability or will of the governance institutions to address their problems and then acted as the saying goes "desperate people resort to desperate solutions".

According to Maitland, frustration-aggression explanation and arguments about deprivations are relevant in discussing the relationship between poverty and conflict in Africa.[217] This assertion has been adopted by the US overtime in conceiving its National Security Strategy and overall foreign policy on Africa. In a speech on the theme of "The National Security Implications of Global Poverty" Rice emphasises that "... global poverty is far more solely a humanitarian concern. ... over the long term, it can threaten US national security". She argues that poverty substantially contributes to the outbreak of infectious diseases such as tuberculosis and HIV/ AIDS. [218] There is logic in this analysis because the process of globalisation confirms that the US cannot be immune to the security challenges facing the continent and their manifestations. It is therefore argued that if a global and effective HIV/AIDS strategy

[217] G. Maitland, "Causes of Conflicts in Africa", Speaking Notes for the South African Department of Foreign Affairs on "Challenges Facing the African Diplomat: Now and in the Future", 15-16 July 2008.
[218] S,E. Rice, "The National Security Implications of Global Poverty", http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/Files/rc/speeches/2006/0130globaleconomics_rice/20060130.pdf, 07 July 2009.

is not forged and implemented, this would have far reaching consequences for the national security of all countries in the world, including the US and African states.

Gradually, the army (soldiers) in the American army might be hit by AIDS or the prevalence of HIV/AIDS on the continent negatively affects US recruitment drive for African mercenaries to be used in other wars like Iraq. Given the above considerations, the largely pessimistic view of Africa as an immeasurable threat to the national security of the US is morally, historically, economically and philosophically incorrect. Even though the argument has some elements of truth, the key issue is that those who attempted to project this view became more superficial and at the end created an impression that security (looking at either both internal threats and those exported from the US to Africa) is not a concern for Africa and the US has a monopoly over it.

Rice's assertions gives the sobering analysis that impoverished zones serve as the fertile breeding and training grounds for future terrorists. She also claims that Al-qaeda and other terrorist networks take advantage of the impoverished situation of the Africans to recruit them to fight against Western civilisation in exchange for huge sums of money and promises of better lives after the attacks.[219] This analysis has proven to be more effectual especially in Islamic impoverished societies where ideology is phenomenal of their existing tensions with the Christian dominated West. Equally significant, when poor Africans look at the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon in comparison to their situation, they naturally develop hatred that makes

[219] The US strongly believes that there are terrorist cells in African countries such as Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, South Africa, Kenya and Tanzania, among others.

them would-be terrorists or their accomplices.[220] It is also important to note that the large component of African populations is meant by the youth, mainly unemployed, who can be easily recruited by the terrorists.[221]

Extending this analysis, Rice links poverty in Africa and elsewhere to environmental hazards such as desertification and deforestation. The poverty of Africans is characterised by shortage of electricity and over-reliance on timber as the main source of national income which in some countries poses a long term security threat to the US and the world at large. Environmental scientists and the advocates of Nature Conservation note that the cutting down of trees in one part of the world (Africa) affects the undesired climate changes and its long term effects will affect the entire globe.[222] It is therefore important for the US and the industrialised world to help make poverty a history in Africa. More development assistance and the revision of the current trade rules should be at the centre of any possible global poverty eradication initiative or intervention. In other words, not only the perpetrator (Africa) would suffer in the long run, but human kind as whole and this can be explained through what is popularly known as the "tragedy of the commons".

Moreover, the causes of environmental degradation in Africa are caused by veld-fires and land clearing for Agriculture. This calls for the need by the US and the international community to partner with Africa to prevent the unintended consequences of land clearing and regulate veld-fires. These are the key environmental issues in world politics that need to be taken into consideration if the

[220] See, G. le Pere, "The Two Faces of Globalisation", *Global Dialogue*, Vol 13 (3), March 2008, pp. 2-3.
[221] M. Gavin "Africa's Restless Youth", *Global Dialogue*, Vol 13 (3), March 2008, pp. 24-29.
[222] A.R Turton, "Climate Change in Africa: What Policy-makers Need to Know", *Global Dialogue*, Vol 11 (2), September 2006, pp. 29-31.

challenges of global warming are to be addressed fairly, amicably and irrevocably. While the industrialised countries are engaged in a blame game over the climate changes in Africa, the irony is that the current pattern of the trade partnership between the industrialised countries (including the US) and the African states is prone to serious environmental hazards. This pattern inhibits African economies to diversify and foreign companies are also actively involved in unhealthy oil exploration and mining activities in Africa.[223] In the light of the foregoing, it is argued that an analysis of the security discourse between the US and Africa cannot be limited to concerns over environmental sustainability. Hypothetically, the nature of the economic involvement (both direct and indirect) of the US contributes to the undermining of Africa's economic sovereignty and to a certain extent it negatively affects the capacity of African states to deliver human security to their populations.

This research emphasises that the crux of environmental degradation is not limited to environmental sustainability. The AU Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture, Rhoda Peace Tumusiime argues that "commodities produced in Africa are meant for companies in the west."[224] The above discussion passively highlights the fact that the current trends in US-Africa Agri-Business relations are characterised by an imbalance between cash crops and food crops (the basis of African food security which has resulted in food insecurity in the African continent. In addition, traditional analysis on the subject reduces the causes of food insecurity in Africa to the effects of global warming and other related environmental problems such deforestation, neglecting the influence of external forces and the dictates of the

[223] S. Omotola, "The Next Gulf?" Oil Politics, Environmental Apocalypse and Rising Tensions in the Niger Delta", ACCORD Occasional Paper Series, Vol 1 (3), 2006, pp. 10-11.
[224] Africa News, "Africa seeks to tap US $33 billion from agricultural trade", http://www.afriquejet.com/news/africa-news/africa-seeks-to-tap-us$-33-billion-from-agricultural-trade-2009062930694.html, 06 July 2009.

painful trade relations between Africa and the developed countries, the US in particular. Given the interrelationship between various forms of security or insecurity in Africa, it becomes clear that the prevalence of famine and hunger in the continent can possibly lead the affected groups to join organise criminal syndicates.[225] In addition, Rice claims that "Americans lose over $2 billion annually to African white-collar crime syndicates, mostly from financial schemes, including insurance, credit card, and advance fee fraud scams."[226] To support this, Nigeria, Africa's Western regional power also defined as a pivotal state in terms of the US foreign policy, is classified as number five internationally as a source of counterfeit US currency.[227] This should be understood within the continuum of the long established truism that crime and poverty in Africa have a causal relationship.

As a central feature of poverty, food insecurity in Africa has an international dimension. For instance, under the AGOA trading framework and the US supported International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank's adjustment programmes, African states are discouraged from subsidising the agricultural sector (generally the backbone of their economies) and this indirectly contributes to a shortage of food on the continent.[228] This situation also denies the African states an opportunity to compete with their American and European counterparts on equal terms, trading on products that they have excelled in their production. The irony is that the US and in Europe, the agricultural sector is heavily subsidised and more controversial is the fact that their countries still receive agricultural imports from the African continent. Extremely worrisome has been the fact that, the US has turned the problem of food

[225] Human security embraces Economic Security, Environmental Security, Food Security, Personal Security and National Security.
[226] Rice, 1999/ 2000, p. 65.
[227] *Ibid.*
[228] Interview with Neil Zitha, Student, University of Venda, Thohoyandou, 27 April 2010.

insecurity in Africa into a trade opportunity as it currently exports expensive food products to African states such as Uganda, Niger and Angola, among others.[229] While other African states have shown improvement in terms of food production, part of that is often imported by the US at fairly less prices, given the unfair advantage of Washington over international trade rules.[230] It is argued that the US is able to manipulate the African economies given the slow progress of economic integration in Africa and lower levels of intra-trade from within the continent. These are some of the common features of the global apartheid in the international trading system that directly affect the way in which the US positions itself within the complexities and dynamics of the lapsed security environment in Africa in relation to the war on terror.

### 4.4. September 11 Attacks and its Effects on the US policy in Africa

On the 11 September 2001 the US was struck by massive terrorist attacks resulting in the collapse of the Pentagon and the World Trade Centre. To date, there is no definitive account of the causes and the results of this surprise attack on the US. According to the US intelligence authorities, Osama Bin Laden was behind the attacks. However, the main question is whether a single individual can be a real threat to the national security of the superpower such as the US. This simply means that Osama is the suspected mastermind, not the sole or real attacker. The evolving policy discourse within American government circles shows the reminiscent failure of the US security machinery to uncover the root causes of the attacks. It is argued, however, that the US was fully aware of the underlying causes of the September 11

[229] TRALAC, "Country Information – Uganda", http://www.agoa.info/?view=country_info&country=ug, 14 January 2010.
[230] Interview with Mashudu Rannenyeni, Teacher, Thohoyandou, University of Venda, 11 January 2010.

attacks, but sought to ignore them in favour of concealed political agenda that serves the interests of its ruling and business elite. An important thing to note about the September 11 attacks is that the "potential" or US fabricated terrorist threat in Africa has served as an impetus for Washington's renewed interest on Africa.[231] As it will be seen later, terrorism did not become a new phenomenon or threat to Africa after the September 11 attacks as it was acknowledged as such by the Clinton administration.[232] Alexander Moens buttresses this idea by referring to the testimony of the Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage to the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks in 2004 (Washington D.C) when he inferred that there was a 'stunning continuity' on the part of Clinton and Bush regarding their approach to counterterrorism.[233]

Moens continues to reinforce his argument by historically referring to the pre-11/9 incident when he wrote that "Secretary of State Colin Powell explained before the Congress in early 2001 that embassy protection against terrorist attacks, such as had occurred in East Africa in 1998 was one of his top priorities. In the pre-9/11, he still referred to terrorists as "criminals" because their activities apparently did not happen on the American soil.[234] However, research shows that the threat of terrorist attacks was not a thorny issue for American pundits and politicians until the year 1998. The admissibility of the seriousness of the terrorist threat on the US by the American politicians especially during the second term of Bill Clinton and under the reign of George Bush Jr., can be explained in two fronts. Firstly, protection against terrorist

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[231] P. Carmody, "Transforming Globalization and Security: Africa and America Post-9/11", *Africa Today*, Vol 25 (1), September 2005, pp. 96-120.
[232] Interview with Tendani Masindi, Student, University of Venda, Thohoyandou, 28 April 2010.
[233] A. Moens, *The Foreign Policy of George W. Bush: Values, Strategy, and Loyalty*, Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing, 2004, p. 124.
[234] *Ibid.*

attacks consistently registered more than seventy percent (70%) public support as a foreign policy priority in the period between 1998 and 2006. Secondly and equally important, the desire to stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction also recorded more than seventy percent (70%) support from public opinion surveys as a foreign policy priority during the same period.[235]

Although language experts identify and distinguish between terrorism and crime, it would appear that the two are at times treated interchangeably by the US in the current policy discourse on international security. Central to the national security discourse of the US, drug trafficking is among the prevalent threats emanating from Africa or going through it.[236] Even though drug trafficking is criminal in nature and can be prosecuted, a related and important consideration is that terrorism has a criminal dimension as well, although there are difficulties in prosecuting its suspects due to lack of a generally agreed definition of what constitutes "terrorism".[237] Beside the simplicity of the dichotomy that exists in the application of the two terms (crime and terrorism) on human security, the US has also identified 'rogue states' as well as failed states in Africa as threats to its security within the context of the war against terrorism.[238] Rice has clearly articulated that "[A]ll transnational threats from arms flows to drug flows are most difficult to combat where national institutions are weakest and where people are poorest and conflicts most enduring. We need strong, democratic, economically viable partners in Africa. Only such partners can be relied upon to invest in healthcare to stem disease, to foster environmentally sustainable

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[235] Drezner, 2008, p. 16.
[236] James Fisher-Thompson, "Africa: A Top Policy Priority in the New Bush Strategy Plan", *US Foreign Policy Agenda*, Vol 7 (4), December 2002, p. 29.
[237] Richard Iroanya, "The Role of the African Union in Combating Terrorism", *Africa Insight*, Vol 37 (1), April 2007, pp. 64-65.
[238] Fisher-Thompson, 2002, pp. 28-29.

development, to apprehend terrorists and drug traffickers …".[239] It is important to point out that failing states do not necessarily constitute a cauldron of security threats, but their weak institutions make them susceptible to terrorist networks and drug syndicates within their borders.[240]

A particularly important aspect about failing or "failed" statehood is the inability of the state to safeguard the inhabitants of its territorial jurisdiction. The monopoly on the use of force and the exclusive control over resources is either severely restricted or entirely absent.[241] Meanwhile, the state is nevertheless able to function in at least one of the two areas. Failing states do not have total control of their territory and they are mainly characterised by armed regional conflicts where armed groups occupy and control certain regions. However, these states still deliver basic services to the majority of the population and still enjoy some degree of legitimacy.[242]

In this context, the definition of African "rogue states" and "failed states" includes countries such as Somalia, (Northern) Uganda, Sudan, and Libya.[243] In all these countries government institutions are either weak or flawed. As outlined above, this situation renders their territories safe havens or hiding nests for terrorists. Previously, consecutive US administrations alleged that both Sudan and Libya were sponsors of terrorism. However, recent official statements by the officials from Washington show that this perception is waning on the side of Tripoli. This view was confirmed by Patrick Bond with regard to Libya when he asserted that the symptoms from the US

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[239] Rice, 1999/2000, p. 65.
[240] Fisher-Thompson, 2002, p. 29.
[241] Maitland, 2008, pp. 6-7.
[242] *Ibid.*
[243] For details about "rogue states" see, Elizabeth N. Saunders, 'Setting Boundaries: Can International Society Exclude "Rogue States"?", *International Studies Review*, Vol 8 (1), 2006, pp. 23-49.



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policy making establishment to bring Tripoli to the fold of weapons certification and control.[244] Tied to the foregoing statement is the fact that in 2003 the social identity of Libya as a "failed state" was taken out of the American lexicon in return for Tripoli's relinquishment of weapons of mass destruction.[245]

It should also be stressed that failed states pose danger not only to the US, but to international peace and security. Nonetheless, the label of failed states especially in relation to African states that cannot make ends meet smells of racism and pessimism. This study challenges this pessimistic view and rejects the continued application of the label "failed states" to weak African states like Zimbabwe and Somalia. The impression that this pinned label creates is that there are no prospects for such countries to become well-established states in the near future. In other words, there should be a definitive turn in the perspective in which these countries are viewed internationally and the most reasonable label in this regard would be "failing states".[246] This denotes that while weak African states lack capacity to retain monopoly over the use of force within their borders or are unable to create an environment conducive for human security, they are actually making efforts to improve the situation.

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[244] P. Bond, *Looting Africa*, London: Zed Books, 2006.
[245] S.A. Squassoni and A. Feickert, "Disarming Libya: Weapons of Mass Destruction', CRS Report for Congress, April 2004, pp. 1-6.
[246] R. Gueli and S. Liebenberg, "Strategies for Rebuilding Africa's Broken Strategies", in R. Southall (ed), *Conflict and Governance in South Africa: Moving Towards A More Just and Peaceful Society*, Littelton: Conflict and Governance Facility, 2007, pp. 302-303.

## 4.5. An Empirical Examination of the Prospects of Security Cooperation between the US and Africa

In spite of all the negative arguments and counterproductive events in relation to the US-Africa Policy, many of the respondents to this study agree that Africa has been marginalised and vilified by the US foreign and defence policy-making establishments over time, from the Cold War era to date. As a result of the thin line between information and propaganda, this suggests that the foreign policy of the US on Africa was often shaped by beliefs based on propaganda or twisted information about a certain extent. Most of the American and Eurocentric scholarship associated the African continent to wars, famine, hunger, poverty, diseases, corruption and backwardness.[247] In all fairness some of these associations are relatively appropriate to certain African states and a broad generalisation about Africa is problematic. However, the combination of all these factors amount to the old African label of a "dark continent".

This research submits that ignorance lie at the root of this continued marginalisation or misinformation in terms of historical writing and unfortunately, this trend can also be observed in public and policy discourses in America and Europe in particular. The key issue is that events never stop, but ever-changing circumstances prevail and, therefore, new information becomes more significant for updating public policy or national security strategy in this case.[248] This goes on to explain that the "dark

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[247] P. J. Schraeder, *African Politics and Society: A Mosaic in Transformation*, Boston: Bedford/ St. Martin's, 2000, p. 12.
[248] W. P. Shively, *Power and Choice: An Introduction to Political Science* (4th ed.), New York: McGraw Hill, 1995, pp. 94-96.

continent" can not be comparable to the Africa of today regardless of its political and socio-economic ills.

Based on the above, and review of the extensive literature on history, it is clear that there have been a concerted and consistent efforts by the European and American writers and neo-liberal scholars to perpetuate the negative image of the African continent. This trend has featured through the widespread reporting and recording of the negatives about the African continent, with little attention and credit to its positive stories. This marginalisation and *demonisation* does not go unnoticed. This appraisal is an attempt to correct this situation in the context of the evolving security discourse, while acknowledging Africa's threats to the national security of other countries, the US in particular.

From an optimistic point of view, Africa presents a pool of opportunities that are strategically important for the national security of the US in the post-Cold War era. Chapter two and three of this study briefly hinted on the centrality of oil politics in the relationship between Africa and the US. More importantly, chapter two placed more emphasis on the importance of the Africa's oil to the energy and economic security of the US. To most political analysts, oil occupies a central position in the US-led war on terror and its economic security. The military vehicles and other automotive machines in the battle zones where the US soldiers and those of its allies are involved, need petroleum or oil to operate. The transportation of foodstuffs for the warriors from the production centres to the war zones also requires fuel to move. This situation has been complicated by the perceived relationship between oil prices that date back to the global economic disaster of the 1980s. This view has strongly been contested by the

Deputy Director General of South Africa's Department of Minerals and Energy, Nhlanhla Gumede who charged that "this is controversy as there is no relationship between oil and food prices, although it has become fashionable to do so" [or establish such].[249]

This research proposes the addition of other elements to reinforce the view that Africa is a security anchor of the US. Africa prides itself of some countries that have formulated, adopted and implemented neo-liberal economic and political reforms.[250] Although, still weak or immature, countries like Nigeria and Kenya coupled with their continental status are important for peace and stability in Africa. It has already been stated that prior to the September 11 attacks Nigeria and Kenya represented the regional enforcers of the national security strategy of the US in West Africa, East Africa and Horn of Africa, respectively. Recognising the threats of conflicts in Africa to its security, the US channelled huge sums of foreign or military aid through the aforementioned regional powers to enable them to embark on peacekeeping missions in their respective regions and Africa as a whole.[251] It has been widely acknowledged that the scale and severity of violent conflicts in Africa has been a burden for the White House, especially because the American tax payers are indirectly liable for the bigger portion of the US peacekeeping assistance to Africa. Besides threatening the economic security of the US, according to Mashudu Rannenyeni the apportionment of more military aid into Africa in the congressional budget has a potential to brew

[249] N. Gumede, Comment based on the theme "Human Security Challenges", in South Africa's Department of Foreign Affairs Conference on "Challenges Facing the African Diplomat: Now and in the Future", 15-16 July 2008.
[250] Interview with Josephs, 26 April 2010.
[251] F. Kornegay, C. Landberg and S. McDonald, "Participate in the African Renaissance", *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol 24 (3), Summer 2001, pp. 106-108.

dissatisfaction and protests among the American public and the government can not afford to always leave this as an afterthought.[252]

Although the US deployed its own troops to the continent after the September 11 attacks and intends to establish a permanent military base in Africa as soon as the opportunity arise, recent developments give a picture of the regard and continued wish of the US to secure South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya and other powers in other regions as geo-strategic bulwarks in the fight against terrorism. However, it would appear that this policy was mainly influenced by the bad experience from the US occupation of Iraq which taught them that it is dangerous or risky to venture on a mission to stem out terrorist groups or bring about forcible regime change without the support of the neighbours of the country targeted or concerned.[253]

The fact that the US have shared values on freedom and liberty with the above mentioned African countries and others not mentioned here, puts it at an advantageous position in case a meaningful military action to hunt down terrorists is to be undertaken.[254] Even though they may not identify themselves with the US on its wars on terror, logic dictates that they are potential friends or allies and what is important is to make them understand that the war on terror is part of the overall global strategy of the US to make the world safe for freedom and democracy.[255] Contrary to this, the situation on the ground suggests that it is very difficult or rather

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[252] Personal Interview with M. Rannenyeni, Teacher and Head of Department of Tourism, Hluvuka High School, Thohoyandou, 24 June 2009.
[253] See, R.J. Pauly, Jr. and T. Lansford, *Strategic Preemption: US Foreign Policy and the Second Iraq War*, Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing, 2005.
[254] H. William, "South Africa: Strategic Significance and US Engagement", *African Journal of International Affairs*, Vol 10 (1 & 2), 2005, pp. 25-28.
[255] M. Ngugi, "African Democracies for Sale", http://allafricanbazaar.blogspot.com/2007_02_01_archive.html, 30 July 2008.

impossible for the US to combat terrorism without limiting civil liberties of individuals in Africa and elsewhere. This relates to issues of torture and interrogation in search of enemies or terrorists.

Marnia Lazreg buttressed the foregoing when she argued that "torture demands that intelligence officers have free reign, unencumbered by considerations of civil rights and due process. More importantly, its defense requires civil authorities to define political issues on military terms, and thus lose sight of the political and social consequences of their decisions."[256] It is partly because of some of this reasons that most of the African states are not supportive of the proposed move by the US to establish permanent military bases on the African soil. On the other hand, the aftermath of the US led war on terror in countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan shows that the American population is at risk than the state itself. This implies that the invasion of suspected terrorist states by the US mainly endangers the well-being of the majority of its citizens in different parts of the world, than just a mere survival of its polity.

The ultimate strength of the theory of International Political Economy and Securitisation Theory is the ability to create sound links of political and economic issues in international relations.[257] Based on this premise, the American leadership is mainly interested in the impact of Africa on the economic dimension of the national security of the US or what some scholars of Strategic Studies term economic security. The key issue is that Africa has a high population density that represents a less

[256] M. Lazreg, "History Repeats Itself: France in Algeria, the US in Iraq", *Times*, 9-15 December 2007.
[257] R. Maddock, "The Global Political Economy", in J. Baylis and N.J. Rengger, *Dilemmas of World Politics: International Issues in a Changing World*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1992, pp. 107-128., R. Taureck, "Securitization Theory and Security Studies", *Journal of International Relations and Development*, Vol 9 (1), March 2006, pp. 53-61.

competitive market for the US. It is argued that the complexities of globalisation and the position of America in the whole process puts it at an added advantage to tap into the African market, where young Africans can easily develop loyalty to corporate brands such as Nike, Levi's, Chuck Taylor (All Star) and Coca Cola, among others.[258] Equally important, the existing international trade regime gives the US the leverage of an unfair advantage over its African trade partners. Cheap labour market, affordable agricultural products, and cost effective mineral-energy industry in Africa is a boon to the American economy.

Moeletsi Mbeki observed that the mineral-energy complex in South Africa is very weak.[259] This research agrees with this observation and it affirms that this is a common problem of all African states. The reality is that the African mineral-energy industry relies heavily on wasting non-renewable assets, imported technology as well as capital and is vulnerable to global market shocks. Washington tapped on the backwardness of the developing world and in Africa most of the technological equipment imports used is made in the US. The political economy of the African countries also features the predominance of the American multinational corporations, along those of China and Japan. For instance, the American company, Wackenhut Corrections Corporation was very instrumental in the construction and operationalisation of Kutama-Sinthumule Maximum Security Prison[260] in South

[258] P.J. McGowan, S. Cornelissen and P. Nel (eds), *Power, Wealth and Global Equity: An International Relations Textbook for Africa* (3rd ed.), Cape Town: Juta, 2006, pp. 1-2.
[259] M. Mbeki, *Architects of Poverty: Why Africa's Capitalism Needs Changing*, Johannesburg: Pan Macmillan, 2009. Mbeki is a Political Economist and Deputy Chairman of the South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA).
[260] Kutama-Sinthumule Maximum Security Prison is the second largest private prison in the world and it is situated in Limpopo province, Makhado (previously known as Louis Trichart).

Africa.[261] According to World Trade Organisation (WTO) as cited by the former ambassador of the US to South Africa, Cameron Hume, "Africa accounted for only 1.4 percent of US exports in the year 2000 and for 2.3 percent of all US imports".[262] There might be a variation in terms of the quantity of imports and exports between Africa and the US, but the reality is that most of the African products are sold to the US at a lower price while those from America to Africa are sold at a price far much higher than their production value. The strategic economic interest and importance of Africa to the US economic security was well articulated by Rice when she said that about "100 000 US jobs are tied to our exports in Africa".[263]

Reinforcing Africa's growing relevance to the US national security is the fact that the Cape controls shipping between the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. Equally or more important, "the Horn of Africa is a potential choke point for traffic between the Suez Canal and the Indian Ocean", and America's base access agreement with Kenya is key to its ability to project force, when necessary, in the Persian Gulf.[264] Clearly, however, the overall context of the US policy in East and North Africa is intrinsically linked anti-American sentiments and trends in the Arab Africa and pro-Israel Washington's role in the Middle East. In sum the security of Americans was intrinsically linked to the security and well-being of the Africans and this is still the case.[265]

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[261] B. Skosana, "Address delivered at the site visit of Kutama-Sinthumule Maximum Security Prison", Makhado, 23 August 2001. Skosana was the Minister of South Africa's Department of Correctional Services from the year 1998 until April 2004.
[262] C. Hume, "US Policy Toward Africa After September 11", Remarks made at the University of Pretoria, http://southafrica.usembassy.gov/hume020226.html, 26 February 2002.
[263] Rice, 1999/2000, p. 66.
[264] *Ibid.*
[265] R. Abrahamsen, "A Breeding Ground for Terrorists? Africa & Britain's 'War on Terror", *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol 31 (102), December 2004, p. 677.

### 4.6. Africa as a threat or opportunity to the US National Security: Claims and Realities

It has been widely reported that the September 11 incident has revitalised the US interest in Africa due to the imminent terrorist threat on the continent and this event has become an academic magnet that drew the attention of the scholars of Strategic Studies to look at other non-military security issues. This study wholly rejects the thrust of the so called "war against terror" as articulated by George W. Bush and his sympathizers. This research argues that the recent global offensive by the US and its allies is a war on terror, instead of the war "against" terror. It is appropriate to emphasise that terrorism did not start with the September 11 attacks and this event was not a surprise to the US intelligence community as it is claimed by the Bush Administration.[266] The only surprising thing was the skyrocketing death toll and its systematic and organized nature because the US was fully aware of the increasing dissatisfaction and discontent of the Arab world with regard to its policies in the Middle East. Equally, the US was fully conscious of the simmering tensions of the populations in human insecurity situations and how they see themselves through the mirror of the Pentagon and the World Trade Centre.

It has been contended by many political analysts that the September 11 incident provided the US with a durable foreign policy issue to advance its national interests in the Middle East, Africa and the world at large.[267] Although terrorism is a concern for America, the manner in which the Bush Administration responded to September 11 attacks was not close to addressing the root causes of this catastrophic event. It seems

[266] R. Javis, "An Interim Assessment of September 11: What Has Changed and What Has Not", *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol 117 (1), 2002, pp. 37-38.
[267] Interview with Masindi, 27 April 2010.



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as if the foreign policy of George W. Bush was more influenced by the realists or the advisors who view the world through an orthodox analysis. The key issue is that terrorism became a dominant and useful vocabulary to advance a particular political and economic agenda for the US. Arising from the antecedents of America's centralisation of the victim-hood of terrorist attacks and its unilateral approach to terrorism, it is clear that there are other concealed goals to the war on terror.[268] This eco-political agenda has been further hidden through the extreme exaggeration of America's vulnerability to future terrorist attacks. Indeed, the Bush's election campaign in the year 2000 was mainly sponsored by American oil companies and arms manufacturing companies. Taking the concerns and reservations of many ordinary Americans about Bush's persistent wars on terror, radical Marxist scholars guess that the "war on terror" was a disguised strategy of the Bush Kraal to create business opportunities for his election sponsors, which are mainly oil and arms manufacturing companies.[269] This dualistic understanding of the war on terror implies Bush's attempt to "kill two birds with one stone" thereby targeting the oil producing countries. In Iraq for instance, the ultimate beneficiaries of the invasion were American arms manufacturing companies and oil giants, among others.[270]

Though he emerged victorious as President of the US, it was clear at the time that Bush was not that much popular at the international stage and domestically as there were simmering tensions over some of the taxation and healthcare policies that he

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[268] D.M. Malone and Y.F. Khong, *Unilateralism and US Foreign Policy: International Perspectives*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003, pp. 1-16.
[269] J.A. Paul, "Oil Companies in Iraq", http://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/185/40586.html, 16 January 2010.
[270] T. Williams, "US/Iraq: US Companies Join Race on Iraq Oil Bonanza", http://www.corpwatch.org/article.php?id=15498, 13 January 2010., American companies that secured lucrative oil, engineering and reconstruction contracts includes Halliburton, KBR, Baker Hughes, Weatherford International and Foster Wheeler, among others.

introduced. Without any will to risk his political career being short-lived, the Bush's Advisory Council seized the September 11 incident to score cheap political points to restore the confidence of the Americans in him. This helped to redirect the attention of the domestic American population over unwelcome domestic issues and to appreciate the perceived efforts of the President to eliminate any future terrorist threat in the Middle East, Africa and beyond global reach. This should be partly understood within the context of the privatization of the state by the ruling elite in the US and as it is the case in other parts of the world including Africa.[271] Regarding the sudden return of America to the old dominant school of thought in International Relations (Realism), Bourke characterises this process as "a person becoming a policy at the White House".[272]

Notwithstanding the need by the desperate President to appease his constituency, the macroscopic view of the world shows the desire of the US to retain its status as the only global hegemon. To this end, the US has explored all possible mechanisms to contain the rise of potential or competitive big powers like China and India.[273] It is on this premise that the Bush Administration saw it as real and achievable to maintain their hegemony through the use of their military power. In Africa and elsewhere, for example, this policy would entail the use of its power to bring regime change in what they call "rogue states" and impose US-friendly regimes, policing (or rather help) of those areas that are economically beneficial to the US economy. It has been reported in *Foreign Policy in Focus* that the total amount of the US military sales, financing and training expenditures for eight African countries considered strategically

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[271] Danziger, 1998, pp. 214-223.
[272] See, a blurb inscribed in the back cover of the book (Moens, 2004).
[273] D. Mitchell, *Making Foreign Policy*, Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing, 2005, p. 180.

important for the war on terror has increased from about $40 million over the five years from 1997 through to 2001 to over $130 million between 2002 and 2006.[274]

However, according to Petronella Chabikwa *et al*, the key motive for the increased militarisation of US-Africa policy is the need by the White House to protect the natural resource endowments in Africa and ensure its continued access and monopoly to energy-mineral complex on the continent.[275] This is an issue that lies at the heart of the nerve centre of the government of the US. In other words, the peacekeeping efforts and contribution of the US in Africa have been driven mainly by its thirst for African raw materials. To be specific, Chabikwa *et al* agree with Lemelle that "military commands are not meant for humanitarian cause and they reinforce the above argument using the case of the desire of the US to station the Africa Command (AFRICOM) along the Gulf of Guinea".[276] In other words, oil addiction and the preservation of its economic security interests on the continent, as opposed to humanitarian and moral obligations are central to the National Security Strategy and the foreign policy of the US in Africa.

### 4.7. Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to provide an overview of the national security challenges facing the US within the context of its engagement in Africa. It also tried to demonstrate the reactions of the US to perceived African security threats to its national well-being. Based on the discussions above, it can be inferred that both

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[274] G. Lemelle, "Africa Policy Outlook 2008", *Foreign Policy in Focus*, 7 February 2008, p. 1.
[275] P. Chabikwa *et al*, "Discuss the concept of the Africa Command using a Realist Perspective", Written Assignment for a module named 'Theories of International Relations', University of Venda, Second Semester 2008.
[276] *Ibid.*

realism and idealism remain relevant to the analysis of the nature and content of the US foreign policy in Africa and elsewhere. This does not imply that other theories are not important in the study of this nature. Although this study subscribes to the notion of addressing the root causes of human insecurity from a multi-disciplinary vintage point, it challenges the bulk of literature on Strategic Studies that claims that the September 11 incident marked a change of US policy in Africa. The reality is, this study argues, that the US has always accepted the African continent as both a threat and an opportunity for its national security. Therefore, it contends that the content of Clinton's foreign policy was no different from his predecessor and successor, George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush, respectively. Although, what had changed was the style(s) of leadership.

While recognising the impact of African conflicts to the national security of the US, this research argues that Africa has something that the US wants and at times Washington uses either hard power or soft power to destabilise the continent for its own benefit. This rings that conflict analysis is not unison and any attempt to subject it to a single framework renders policy implications and interventions irrelevant, especially when dealing with complex situations. It is concluded that Africa would remain a threat to the US if Washington does not inject more foreign aid to end non-military threats and curb societal ills such as poverty and HIV/AIDS. Previous strategies and aid programmes of the US to address these challenges have failed because they did not look at the root causes of the problem, but instead prioritised short term interests thereby advancing a particular political cause at the expense of humanitarian concerns. Lastly, the September 11 event did not change the academic discourse in favour of human security, but has just given rise to renewed interest on

Strategic Studies, with an emphasis on state security. Recent developments in the international system show that the US reactions to the terrorist threat have reduced the liberal concept of human security to a lower degree thereby stressing the centrality of the military in the conduct of international relations. Whereas the stated goals of the US "war on terror" evolved around the restoration of human security, its end-results have the fundamentals of state security.

The following chapter uses Kenya as a test case to reinforce the central arguments about the theoretical aspects of democracy and security as the key drivers of the US foreign policy in Africa.

## SECTION B

## Chapter Five

## The US and Kenya: A Big Brother Relationship

### 5.1. Introduction

There is no study about the US foreign policy towards Africa that would be complete without making any reference to Kenya. The US and Kenya have a special relationship as compared to other African states. The nature of their relationship has interested academics, political analysts, politicians and diplomats especially after the September 11, 2001 attacks. This event has bolstered the international community's attention on US- Kenya relations. However, any attempt to analyse and understand the US's engagement in Kenya in the post-Cold War era need to be looked at retrospectively. What is more fascinating about the US's interests in Kenya is that Nairobi is not rich in strategic natural resources like oil and uranium, but the two countries are very close friends. The indispensability of their relationship is further complicated by the fact that Kenya is not large either in terms of territorial extent or population density.[277] Despite the fact that the two countries are close allies, Kenya is faced with major challenges such as HIV/AIDS, corruption, poverty, unemployment and above all, a terrorist threat.[278] This brings us to the question of whether the friendship between the US and Kenya is mutually beneficial or not, and what can the role of the US be to help Kenya meet some of its major challenges.

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[277] AISA, *Africa Fast Facts*, map. Pretoria: AISA, 2006.
[278] J.D. Barkan, "Kenya After Moi", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol 83 (1), January/ February 2004, pp. 87-100.

In the light of the above, this chapter attempts to provide answers to some of the key questions regarding the US-Kenya links. This would entail an evaluation of the special aspects of the relationship between Washington and Nairobi. In order to provide a meaningful explanation of the reasons behind the cordial and close association between the two countries, the researcher situates such an argument within a historical context.

### 5.2. Kenya's Political History Before 1990

Kenya obtained independence from Britain in 1963 and since then, Nairobi has become an active actor in international relations. In addition, since independence, the relationship between Kenya and the US has at least been cool.[279] In fact, it was an extension of the relationship between Kenya and its former colonial power, Britain. As a traditional ally of Britain, the US found itself having a triangular relationship with Kenya which included Britain. Regardless of this, the memories of the *Mau-Mau* rebellion has remained in the collective psyche of the people of Kenya, Britain and the US and at times roughed the relations between Nairobi and Washington or London.[280] Despite this, it is safe to argue that the relationship between the US and Kenya was healthy during the Cold War era because of Nairobi's strategic significance to the US's strategy of global containment. Even though it failed, it is important to note that Kenya was one of the few African states which opted for a capitalist development path after independence. Unlike her neighbours such as Uganda and Tanzania, Kenya has consistently pursued a pro-Western political

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[279] G. Khadiagala, "Kenya: Haven or Helpless Victim of Terrorism", Special Report No 113, Washington: US Institute of Peace, January 2004, p. 4.
[280] Camerapix, *Spectrum Guide to Kenya*, Nairobi: Camerapix, 1989, pp. 55-56.

discourse.[281] The overt dependence of Nairobi's neighbours on her transportation facilities made Kenya a reliable partner of the US in its quest to stop the encroachment of communism in East Africa and the Indian Ocean islands during the Cold War. However, the relationship between the two countries was seldom stretched when Jomo Kenyatta declared Kenya as a one party state under the Kenya African National Union (KANU) in 1982.[282]

This research argues that the relationship between the two countries was relatively stable during the pre-1990 era because Kenya was under dictatorship. As such, the limited political space in Kenya meant that it would be very difficult for the Kenyans to pressure for meaningful and independent policy (foreign) reforms towards the US. The fact that Kenya was a one party state did not go down well with the US in the first place. It must be noted that even before the constitution was amended in June 1982 to officially make Kenya a one party state, its political space was not liberalised. The political playing field between KANU and the opposition was not levelled. These political conditions became a sour pill for Washington to swallow in the process of engaging Nairobi. Hence, such a political situation or environment was inimical to Washington's global mission to spread democracy around the world.[283] It should be noted that the US condoned and supported the despotic Kenya partly due to the difficult situation of the Cold War. The US carefully calculated the gains and losses of progressive and radical political reforms in Kenya for Washington. At the end, it was clear that the US would benefit more from partnering with tyrannical Kenyan regime during the Cold War era and at the same time encourage KANU to adopt profound

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[281] Interview with S. Kiguwa, Senior Lecturer: Department of Development Studies, University of Venda, Thohoyandou, 21 April 2010.
[282] Camerapix, 1989, p. 57, 65.
[283] J. Carson, "From Moi to Kibaki: An Assessment of the Kenyan Transition", Africa Program Occasional Paper Series, No 1, 11 September 2003, pp. 1-7.

political reforms.[284] It is argued that Washington carefully developed a two pronged foreign policy towards Kenya for the following reasons. She wanted to secure Kenya as a strategic bulwark to contain the spread of communism in East Africa and Africa as a whole, as mentioned above. Equally important, the US also encouraged political reforms in Kenya with a view to bringing democracy to that country and East Africa at large.[285] As a result, the US foreign policy establishment carefully balanced the long term and short term benefits of pursuing any of the aforementioned policy directions and in the process, ensured that its moves in one area would not counter its commitment to the other. Very close to this, Joel D. Barkan and Jennifer G. Cooke remark that, "...supporting an improvement in governance, including a well-managed aid program, as well as an orderly transition to the next generation of leaders, will serve long-term US interests".[286] It is on the basis of this that the renewed emphasis of the US in the promotion of democracy in Kenya in the late 1980s and early 1990s was largely about the support of multiparty elections than human rights issues.

### 5.3. Redefining US-Kenya Relations After the Cold War

The US and Kenya have enjoyed a comfortable relationship in the post-Cold War era. While there are non-essential factors that have cemented the existing relations between them, there are three major currents that have shaped their relationship in a positive or a negative way. At the centre of the importance of the strategic importance of Nairobi to Washington, the consolidation of democracy in Kenya and test of its

[284] Interview with Kiguwa, 21 April 2010.
[285] J.D. Barkan, "US Human Rights Policy Toward Africa", United States Institute of Peace's Special Report, August 2001, pp. 5-6.
[286] J.D. Barkan and J.G. Cooke, "US Policy Toward Kenya in the Wake of September 11: Can New Antiterrorist Imperatives Be Reconciled with Enduring US Foreign Policy Goals", *Africa Notes*, No 4, December 2004, p. 4.

sustainability through the December 2007 elections are key as it will be illustrated hereunder:

### 5.3.1. The Consolidation of Democracy

The implosion of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s and early 1990s presented an opportunity for intellectuals to redefine the bilateral relationship between Kenya and the US in the context of the shift of the balance of power in the international system. This interregnum also served as a watershed for the democratization of Kenya. It must be noted, however, that the path to democratization in Kenya was not an easy one and it became a defining feature of Nairobi's international relations. To this end, Dagne states that in the early 1990s both the violation of human rights and the reluctance of Daniel Arab Moi's regime to embrace a multiparty system were the major constraints to the essential partnership between Washington and Nairobi.[287] Following the 1992 multiparty elections in Kenya, the relations between Nairobi and Washington improved and were normalized after a number of years. The mere introduction and existence of democratic practices and processes in this sense have served as a panacea for the full healing of US-Kenya relations after a difficult era of political monopoly under KANU and during the period of the Cold War.

The smooth transition from Arab Moi's KANU to Mwai Kibaki's National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) during the 2002 elections confirmed the necessity for the US and Kenya to strengthen and reinforce their relations. This was in part, the US's political incentive to Kenya's positive move to embrace political pluralism as the acceptable

[287] T. Dagne, "Kenya: The December 2007 Elections and the Challenges Ahead", CRS Report, 04 April 2008, p.11.

and constitutional political practice and norm or tradition. In fact, the 2002 peaceful, legitimate, credible and transparent elections in Kenya validated the claim that, both Washington and Nairobi have shared democratic values.[288] It is against this background that the US strengthened its cooperation with Kenya on incisive issues of good governance. This entailed US's support for the promotion of human rights and democracy in Kenya. In this regard USAID was instrumental in promoting "transparent and accountable governance by improving the balance of power among the various branches of government".[289] It is in this spirit that since 1992 the US supported domestic election observation, monitoring and evaluation teams in Kenya and also deployed its own election observers along other international observers.[290]

### 5.3.2. The December 2007 Kenyan Elections

One result of democratisation in Kenya is that the relationship between Nairobi and Washington has become increasingly reenergised. As such, the fourth December 2007 multiparty elections were expected to bring fundamental change in Kenya and present a historic opportunity for that country to consolidate its democracy.[291] According to early independent opinion surveys, Raila Odinga and his Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) were destined to win the elections overwhelmingly, but at the end that was not to be the case. Notwithstanding the fact that the results of these elections were questionable, they also resulted in a wave of poll-related violence.[292]

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[288] Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU), "Elections Held in 2002", http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/arc/2167_02.htm, 08 February 2009.
[289] Dagne, 2008, pp. 11-12.
[290] IFES, "IFES in Kenya (1992-2000)", http://www.ifes.org/kenya.html?page=project_46, 28 April 2010.
[291] Interview with J.K. Kirui, Head: Department of Physics, University of Venda, Thohoyandou, 09 March 2010.
[292] Interview with Justice Mkhabela, Researcher Intern, AISA, Pretoria, 29 November 2008.

Furthermore, the fact that the 2007 elections were not credible demonstrates that Kenya is weak as an emerging democracy. If chaotic and unpredictable situations of that nature are not properly handled that country may become another typical African state characterised by recurring civil wars and dictatorships, in the process failing to consolidate democracy. Meanwhile, the unprecedented developments surrounding the 2007 Kenyan elections have disproved the findings of *Afrobarometer* which claim that "although satisfaction with democratic practice in Kenya was waning democracy in that country was sustainable".[293] This research argues that the incidence of large scale election-related violence in that country is probably less about the perfection of the electoral processes, but much of a lack of an enabling economic security environment that is key to the nurturing of young democracies. While the sustainability of a democracy can not be judged by the credibility of the electoral processes alone, elections remain a significant to any working democracy.

The stance of the international observers on the 2007 elections put the US-Kenya relations under the spotlight. This was partly caused by the fact that, unlike other international observers, the US team and their political principals were quick to endorse the victory of Mwai Kibaki as announced by the Kenya Electoral Commission (ECK) despite the flawed counting and tallying process of the final votes.[294] However, such an endorsement was later withdrawn. Contrary to earlier US endorsement of Kibaki's re-election as president of Kenya, the Commonwealth Observer Group (COG) cautiously announced that "the election process following the

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[293] Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA), *Afrobarometer*, "Kenyans and Democracy: Sustained Support for the Principle, but Waning Satisfaction with the Practice", Briefing Paper No 25, January 2006, pp. 5-8.

[294] Kenyan for Peace with Truth and Justice (KPTJ), "Kenyan Elections Observers' Log: 29-30, 2007", http://www.marsgroupkenya.org/pdfs/2008/jan_08/election_fraud/KPTJ-narrative_verification__3_.pdf, 10 February 2009.

closing of the polls fell short of acceptable international standards".[295] This view was echoed by the European Union (EU) Election Observation Mission (EOM) when it reported that "serious inconsistencies and anomalies were identified in various constituency results" and concluded that "it is questionable whether final presidential results were announced in compliance with the law".[296] All this amounted to the consensus by the international community that the elections were least partially manipulated influenced the US's about turn against its earlier statement of endorsement.

Comparatively, in an exclusive interview with the *Washington Post* the US Ambassador to Kenya Michael Ranneberger, blatantly stated that "the US would accept that Kibaki had won and it will be business as usual".[297] Contrary to this pre-emptive stance, however, the US later concurred that "serious irregularities in the vote tallying made it impossible to determine with certainty the final result".[298] Through its Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, Jendayi Frazer, the US encouraged both Odinga and Kibaki to find a workable solution to the post-election crisis. This reflects a clear example of democratic concerns being subsumed to other objectives. Without being unduly mechanistic, the controversial stance of the Bush Administration regarding the 2007 Kenyan elections indicates that where the political life of their ally is at risk, it is better to compromise democratic principles than lose him as a leader. This means that better Kibaki than Odinga at helm.

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[295] Commonwealth Secretariat, "Kenyan General Election: 27 December 2007", The Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group, January 2008, p. 28.
[296] EU Election Observation Mission, "Kenya Final Report: General Elections- 27 December 2007", 03 April 2008, pp. 34-35.
[297] S. Starlin, "Was the US Behind Kenya's Election Debacle", http://www.blackpower.com/politics/was-the-us-behind-kenyas-election-debacle/, 24 December 2008.
[298] J. Frazer, Statement by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, http://nairobi.usembassy.gov/2008-press-releases/pr_20080112.html, 12 January 2008.

Meanwhile, the US indicated that it would no longer conduct business as usual in Kenya. With an exception, the US pledged a diplomatic and political support to reconciliation and national unity in Kenya. This research argues that the US support for the reconciliation and transformation in the post-election Kenya could be partly attributed to Washington's desire to maintain a certain degree of influence in unleashing political reforms in that country. Ironically, Washington started with its normal engagement with Kenya after both Odinga and Kibaki agreed on a power sharing deal and implemented it under the National Accord and Reconciliation Act of 2008.[299] It is argued that the quick continual engagement of the US in Kenya is partly due to the fact that Kibaki was retained as the President under the National Accord and Reconciliation Act. Insofar as the President is entrusted with executive powers, Kibaki is a strategic actor in the course of conducting the Kenyan relations with the US. This should be understood within the context that the US has a vendetta against Odinga's ethnic group, Luo because it was very instrumental in the execution of the infamous mau-mau rebellion even though the Kikuyu prevailed mainly in strategic leadership positions in the independent Kenya.[300]

Furthermore, just like his predecessor in terms of Luo politics, Odinga is a communist by orientation and philosophy and this goes against the US capitalist ideology that has been espoused by successive administrations in Kenya since independence to date.[301] Based on this, it is therefore not far fetched to assume that the US is taking advantage of the Kikuyu influence through its leader (Kibaki) to diffuse the rise of the Luo and a communist (Odinga) in the political ladder of Kenya. Odinga is on record for saying

[299] Mkhabela, 29 November 2008.
[300] Interview with Kiguwa, 21 April 2010.
[301] Raila Odinga succeeded his father, Oginda Odinga as a leader in terms of Luo politics., *Ibid.*

that should he become the President of Kenya he would re-nationalise all the firms and this is a situation that does not sit very well with the US capitalists and their disciples in Kenya.[302] Therefore, the general feeling within the American foreign policy making establishment is that the rise of Odinga and Luo tribe constitute a threat to the future of liberal market policies in Kenya and by implication, endangering its national interests in that country.

The above stated contradiction in policy or official statements of the US government indicates White House's preference or allegiance to the personalities of certain leaders, Kibaki in this case. It should be noted that in addition to the growing and strong relationship between the US and Kenya, George W. Bush and Kibaki enjoyed close personal ties. The duplicity of their relationship was shown when Kibaki made the first state visit to White House by an African statesman under the Bush administration.[303] The rate at which the US endorsed Kibaki's disputed victory was presumably equal to the speed in which the latter committed his country as the coalition partner of the US led war against terror. Logic contends that if Kibaki had moved swiftly to pledge his support for the US occupation of Iraq, it was most likely for Washington to do anything to help Kibaki retain power as a way of securing the uninterrupted availability of Kenya as a partner or tool in the war against terror.[304] The quick endorsement of the controversial Kibaki's re-election by the US resonates well with the expression that, "the devil that you know is better than the devil that you do not know". Except for the system of governance, Kibaki represented continuity in

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[302] Pedestals of Humanity, "Is Raila a Communist", http://kisii.com/forums/index.php?topic=2854.5;wap2, 28 April 2010., Kibaki began pushing for capitalism by selling parastatals.
[303] Interview with K. Adar, Director: Research, AISA: Pretoria, 04 December 2007.
[304] Tribunal President (Identity hidden). "Unclassified: Verbatim Transcript of Combatant Status Review Tribunal Hearing from ISN 10023", Guantanamo Bay, 28 April 2007.

Kenya's warm welcome of the US that dates back as far as the Cold War era. To reiterate a point, it is safe to say that the allegation that the US is behind some of the woes faced by Kenya has grounding due to the conflicting and confusing statements of American officials about the outcome of the December 2007 elections. Whatever one may think about the role and influence, either positive or negative of the US on Kenya, Washington did help to bring a solution to the 2007 election crisis, but more credit is due to the Kenyans themselves and Kofi Annan and his team. For its part, the US exerted pressure on the main political rivals to find a peaceful settlement to the crisis to bolster the pressure that was coming from within Kenya itself for the same purpose.[305]

### 5.3.3. The Strategic Importance of Kenya to the US

It should be stressed that the good interrelationship between Washington and Nairobi dates back to five decades ago. However, domestic and international pressure has often soured the relations between the two countries. Whatever the challenges faced by the two countries in their relations, at no point was there a suggestion or a move to completely cut the ties between them. Thus, there is an exclusive relationship between the two countries. However, the terms of this relationship have mainly been dictated by the US. In reality, Kenya is at the receiving end with regard to the benefits derived from its partnership with the US. This entails Kenya's dependence on the US for a "nice word" in international financial institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank. These institutions have been instrumental in creating enabling conditions for Kenya's economic growth especially under Kibaki's first term of office as the

[305] US Department of State, "Ambassador Ranneberger Discusses US-Kenya Relations and Somaliland" (transcript), 12 March 2008.

President of the country.[306] Similarly, the US business investments are estimated to be approximately $285 million mainly in sectors such as commerce, light manufacturing and the tourism industry.[307] It is argued by the researcher that this is not enough given the level of the benefits derived by the US from Kenya.

Besides, the obscure pattern of the relations between Kenya and the US puts the latter at an unfair advantage. For instance, approximately seven thousand (7000) US citizens live in Kenya and those who are working obviously repatriate a larger portion of the earnings to America.[308] The opening of the Kenyan market for American companies means that huge stakes derived from their operations in the country are also repatriated to the US. It appears that the US mostly puts investment in areas where its population is likely to benefit. The reason behind the support of the tourism industry is that about twenty five thousand (25 000) Americans visit Kenya annually.[309] The key features of tourism as a flashpoint in the relationship between the US and Kenya include: Nairobi's proximity to the sea, the African sun, Kilimanjaro Mountain and shooting as a game.[310] Whereas all these generate the most desired tourism revenue, it should be noted, however, that shooting may result in environmental insecurity. If not managed properly, shooting as game would cause serious disturbances to the ecosystem in that country to the detriment of the current and future generations of Kenyans. Contextually, the high level of corruption in

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[306] Free Library, "US rolls out red carpet for Kibaki", http://www.thefreelibrary.com/US+rolls+out+red+carpet+for+Kibaki:+Kenya's+President+Mwai+Kibaki+was...-a0111508623, 19 February 2009.
[307] Reference Centre, "Backgrounds: Kenya US Relations", http://www.ncbuy.com/reference/country/backgrounds.html?code=ke&sec=backusrelations, 28 May 2009.
[308] *Ibid.*
[309] *Ibid.*
[310] High Commission of the Republic of Kenya, "Overview of Kenya", http://www.kenya.org.za/overview.htm, 07 June 2010.

Kenya creates a perception among the Kenyans that the tourism industry and its revenues are of less impact or no benefit to them.

Furthermore, Kenya is Africa's fastest growing commercial market for US goods. US exports to Kenya include fertilizers, locomotives, industrial and agricultural chemicals, computers, and other products. It is estimated that Kenya is the third largest market in Sub-Saharan Africa for US goods after South Africa and Nigeria.[311] Unfortunately, the pattern of trade relations between Kenya and the US is a replay of the commercial exchanges between the metropoles and the colonies during the colonial era. Presently, the US sells finished goods to Kenya and other African states at prices high than their production cost. In contrast, the Kenyan economy (and others in Africa) are pressurised by the Washington-backed Bretton Woods institutions to operate in a manner that qualifies them as tools or a means to address the economic problems of America.[312]

It is worthwhile to take a moment to note the tactical and political importance of Kenya to the US as a cornerstone of Washington's vested interests in that country. Firstly, Kenya is a closest ally of the US in its war against terror as mentioned earlier. The two countries are both perceived as victims of terrorist attacks. Along with Tanzania, Kenya suffered from terrorist attacks in both 1998 and 2002. In 1998 the target of the terrorist bombings was the US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), but the casualties included people from America, Kenya and Tanzania. Again, in the year 2002 Kenya suffered the fate of terrorist attacks and in this case the

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[311] M. Johns, "Strengthening US Ties With Kenya", http://www.heritage.org/research/africa/bg766.cfm, 29 May 2009.
[312] M. Kadalie, *Internationalism, Pan-Africanism and the Struggle of Social Classes*, Georgia: One Quest Press, 2000, pp. 83-84.

target was an Israeli owned hotel in Mombasa.[313] Notwithstanding the US's maximum benefits from its military cooperation with Kenya, it is important for Nairobi to engage in the security of this area given the threat posed by terrorists to its tourism industry, the mainstay of its economy and its mainstream economy.[314] It is contended that it would be superficial to separate the targeting of properties owned by an Israeli and other incidents of terror in Kenya. This should be understood within the context of the questionable engagement of the US with Israel in the Middle East conflict. Looking at the perceptive thin line between Arabism and Islamism, it can be inferred that the routine attacks on American and Israeli owned entities in Kenya represents an extreme rejection of the US policies in the Middle East by Kenyan Islamic communities.

For its part, America witnessed the demolition of the Pentagon and the World Trade Centre through a surprise terrorist attack in the year 2001, September 11. An important thing to note about the 2002 Kenyan terrorist attack is that it targeted the property owned by a national of the historic US ally in the Middle East, Israel, as outlined above. The September 11 incident and all of the Kenyan terrorist attacks can be understood in the context of the view that 'US policy in Africa and the Middle East is the extension of the foreign policy of Israel'.[315] It is against this background that some Islamic Arabs in Kenya, Africa and elsewhere around the world have developed anti-American sentiments and perceptions and are collaborating with terrorist groups such as Al-qaeda and Alti-haadt.[316] Furthermore, others are just sympathetic to their

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[313] Princeton Lyman and Stephen Morrison, "The terrorist threat in Africa", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol 83 (1), January/ February 2004, pp. 75-85.
[314] For details on Kenya's tourism industry see, M. Amin, *Journey Through Kenya*, Nairobi: Camerapix, 1993.
[315] C. Ketcham, "The Israelis Next Door", *Hustler Magazine*, April 2009, pp. 72-74
[316] T. Beddow, *East Africa: An Evolving Landscape*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1988, pp. 24-25.

cause in defiance of the aggressive US policies toward those countries that do not tow the line of Washington.

The above stated security failures in both the US and Kenya have reinforced security and military ties between the two countries. This is an area in which the links between the two countries are more active. In practical terms, Kenya is strategically significant for the US because it provides Washington with access to its military facilities.[317] These facilities serve as the launching bases for US military operations in East Africa and the Horn of Africa. They also provide technical support to investigations sanctioned to identify and investigate terrorists, terrorists' cells and those who sympathise with the cause of terrorism. Backing up the view above, Johns indicates that "Kenya has permitted and even welcomed American military access to its naval and air bases. More important, American use of Mombasa enables the US to project air and naval power in the Gulf of Eden, the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf in the event of emergencies or threats to American security interests in these regions".[318]

In return, the US provides military training to the Kenyan army. On a related note, Barkan and Cooke alluded that "Kenya has received training under the US Department of Defense IMET program, and participated in US conducted joint military exercises in Kenya's North Eastern province".[319] It goes without saying that the existing bilateral relations between the US and Kenya makes a provision for intelligence sharing among them. This is critical if their joint anti-terror efforts are to bear fruits and its one area in which the US must increase its investment.

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[317] W. Pascoe, "How the US can help Kenya", Briefing Paper, Heritage Foundation, 25 March 1988, pp. 1-2.
[318] Johns, 29 May 2009.
[319] Barkan and Cooke, 2004, p. 1.

Secondly, Kenya is also an important trading partner of the US and she also attracted a larger portion of the US foreign aid[320] for obvious reasons. Kenya is one of the main beneficiaries of the US's AGOA. Another contention is that Kenya is geographically located in the Indian Ocean coastal area and that serves as a key route for trade between Southern Africa and other regions of the African continent, including East Africa,[321] the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC),[322] the Indian Ocean Rim (IOR)[323] and the Middle East. Mindful of this and the economic and political situation in East Africa and Africa as whole, Kenya is of paramount importance to safeguard the US's economic and geo-strategic interests in the sub-region. In addition, Kenya supports American political interests in Africa as well. Kenya is very pivotal for the maintenance of political stability in East Africa and the Horn of Africa. Alongside the US, Kenya has been the key supplier of humanitarian assistance to victims of the violent conflict in Somalia, Sudan and Chad. To America's gesture, Nairobi has also been at the centre of the peacekeeping and mediation process in East Africa, particularly in Sudan.

A closely related point in support of the view that Nairobi serves as a lubricant to broaden the horizons of the interests of the US in Africa was advanced by Barkan and Cooke as they argue that "Kenya is the principal gateway to East Africa and the Southern Horn, with a major seaport at Mombasa, extensive rail, road, and

[320] For the purpose of this research, foreign aid refers to Official Development Assistance (ODA).
[321] East Africa region includes Kenya, Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Uganda and Rwanda.
[322] Indian Ocean Commission is an intergovernmental organization that enjoins Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, France (on behalf of the Reunion Island and Mayotte) and Seychelles to encourage diplomatic and commercial cooperation. It also facilitates cooperation in areas such as science and agriculture among others.
[323] Indian Ocean Rim includes Mauritius, Madagascar, Tanzania, India, and Seychelles.

communication infrastructures, international airports in Nairobi and Mombasa".[324] These facilities serve as the pillars of the military and security cooperation between the two countries under study. They also reposition Kenya as the pivotal conduit point for US's economic and commercial relations in East Africa, Indian Ocean islands and the Middle East. Conversely, this research argues that Kenya's political support in the United Nations (UN) is much needed by the US. This suggests that with sufficient will and strong solidarity from allies such as Kenya especially during the voting process in the UN and other multilateral institutions where they both have membership, Washington can make solid gains on American-initiated resolutions in the international system.

### 5.3.4. Non-essential Stimulus of the Partnership Between the US and Kenya

In addition to some of the reasons discussed earlier for an exclusive relationship between the US and Kenya, there are others that are centred on non-essential issues such as race and ideology. For instance, Amadu Jacky Kaba cites President Barack Obama's Kenyan heritage as one factor that has fuelled the new positive relationship between the US and Africa, Kenya in particular since the November 2008 American elections.[325] According Trevor Major as cited by Kaba there is sufficient scientific evidence that Africa is the cradle of human race.[326] In other words, the people of America and Africa have a common ancestry and fortunately an area in East Africa, adjacent to Kenya has been identified as a home to Obama's paternal grandparents.

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[324] Barkan and Cooke, 2004, p. 1.
[325] A.J. Kaba, "Barack Obama's Dual Triple Heritage", *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, Vol 2 (4), June 2008, p. 12.
[326] *Ibid*, p. 13.

On his (Obama) mother side, their genealogy is traced from Europe.[327] The Euro-African inter-marriage within the Obama factor explains that white Americans, African-Americans and Africans see themselves in Barack Obama. The fact that these groups identify themselves easily with Obama and also that they can all relate to him due to his dual heritage, has actually provided a historic opportunity for an improvement in the relations between the US and Kenya or Africa as a whole.

It is very possible that the fact that both the US and Kenya pride themselves with the large segment of the Christian population might have contributed to the exceptional relationship between the two countries. This point resonates well with the theoretical framework that ties terrorism to Islam and if acceptable, it implies that it is important for America to partner with the Christians in search of enemies because terrorism is viewed as a war of the evil against Western civilisation, democracy and Christianity.[328] Kaba also attributes the extraordinary partnership between Washington and Kenya to "the unusual granting of relatively high rates of student visas by the US government to young Kenyans" to receive higher education in the US.[329] Moreover, Kenya was once a testing ground for the US championed-liberal market policies in the post-Second World War era.[330] This fact was echoed by Alan Woods in 2008 when he remarked that: [U]ntil recently Kenya was held up as a glowing example of the success of the free market economy. It was supposed to be a shining example of democracy, a beacon of hope for what Europeans used to call "the

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[327] *Ibid*, p. 16.
[328] A.A. Mazrui, *Cultural Forces in World Politics*, Nairobi: Heinemann, 1990, p. 19.
[329] A.J. Kaba, "Kenya-US Relations: The Urgent Need to Manage Kenya's Migrant and HIV-AIDS Brain Drain", *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, Vol 1 (6), December 2006, p. 80.
[330] C. Leys, *Underdevelopment in Kenya: The Political Economy of Neo-Colonialism*, London: Heinemann, 1975, pp. 148-169.

dark continent". It is argued that this is an area that made the two countries have a positive reciprocal view of each other.[331]

### 5.4. The US-Kenya Relations: Where Does the Problem Lie?

It has already been emphasised earlier in the study that Kenya is one of the few African states that have become the testament for the sound US foreign policy in Africa. But this does not mean that the relationship between the US and Kenya is immune from constraints, even though some might be minor. Internally, Kenya is faced with domestic challenges and its level of economic development is far below par as compared to its ally, the US. Some of the challenges include the HIV/AIDS pandemic, corruption, terrorism, weak governing institutions, highest unemployment rate, brain drain and a limping economy among others. A solution to these problems is critical to the stability of the diplomatic relations between Washington and Nairobi. Some people have concluded that Nairobi's open support for the US-led war against terror constitutes a national security threat for Kenya.[332] It is common sense that Kenya may become a soft target of the enemies of the US. It is not uncommon for the anti-American extremist and terrorist groups to attack those actors who identify themselves with their enemy.

As it was observed in the recent past, Kenya has not been able to develop an independent foreign policy from the US. As a result, its behavioural patterns in the international system as highlighted above are tantamount to an "overseas province" of the US. Given the subcontracting of the US foreign policy on East Africa to Kenya,

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[331] A. Woods, "Kenya: the barbaric consequences of capitalism", http://www.marxist.com/barbaric-consequences-capitalism.htm, 05 February 2008.
[332] L. Hall, "Aiding the War on Terror", *LSE Magazine*, Winter 2008, p. 9.

this concession has encouraged Washington to add more humanitarian and economic support to Nairobi. As it is explained by Motlamello A. Kapa in the case of Lesotho's foreign policy towards South Africa, the dependency syndrome suffered by Kenya in its relationship with the US makes it imprudent for Nairobi to formulate and execute a foreign policy that would be injurious to the national interests of Washington.[333] In keeping with this orientation, Kenya offered herself as a platform for a hub of the US operations and activities in East Africa and the Horn of Africa despite all risks involved in being associated with Washington especially in this age of the war on terror.

Economically, Pakistan and Afghanistan,[334] US foes, are globally reported to be the major buyers of tea from Kenya and disturbances in their commercial exchange may occur due to Nairobi's deep involvement with the US's foreign military involvement in these countries. Weak governing institutions and corruption have occasionally tempered Kenya's good relations with the West, including the US. Given the centrality of the two issues on eco-political stability, Washington has often pressurised Nairobi to put checks and control measures as a precondition for continued flow of the US foreign aid.[335] Meanwhile, the US is one country that has mainly brain-drained Kenya for the benefit of its self-serving interests. Prompted by the 1998 and 2002 terrorist attacks, the US has since tightened its visa application processes and this move has hampered the relations between Nairobi and Washington. This strategy is explicitly about controlling cross-border criminal and terrorist

[333] M.A. Kapa, "Lesotho's Foreign Policy Towards South Africa", *Africa Insight*, Vol 37 (1), April 2007, p. 117.
[334] Previously, the US alleged that Afghanistan and Pakistan are the state sponsors of terrorism and two countries have since being linked to the Al-qaeda network.
[335] B.D. Schaefer and S. Groves, "Kenyan Election Signals Need to Overhaul US Policy Toward Nascent Democracies", *Web Memo*, No 1769, 08 January 2008.

activities between the US and Kenya. However, the execution of this strategy was not trouble free because it also stifles the mobility of students, academics, workers and businessmen between the US and Kenya. There is little doubt that situation has imprisoned Kenya into localism to a certain extent due to the fact that the enhanced American security measures slowed the flow of goods and services between the US and Kenya. The restraint movement of Kenyans between the two countries has also slowed cooperation of higher education, research and training matters. Alongside these hardships, personal ties between the Kenyans and Americans were also compromised due to howled national security framework on the part of the US.

### 5.5. Conclusion

This chapter has examined the relationship between the US and Kenya. It demonstrated its uniqueness and the reasons that influence the cordiality of their relations. It was argued that since independence the relations between the US and Kenya were generally amiable, with slight interruptions in some instances. But the key issue is that the two countries have never experienced a complete breakdown in relations. However, there are domestic developmental challenges faced by Kenya which have a potential to trigger a conflict which might endanger their diplomatic relations. There also potential external political or security threats that might precipitate the souring of relations between Washington and Nairobi. Besides being an island of stability in East Africa and the Horn of Africa, Kenya is also militarily weak and it is important for the US to support her so that she can deter terrorist activities in East Africa and the surrounding areas. The US must, therefore, increase its level of economic assistance in Kenya. This would repair the lost revenues of the

tourism industry that has evaporated because that industry was negatively affected by the stories of terrorist activities and Kenya's alignment with the US-led war against terror. Worsening an already complicated economic situation was the December 2007 election-related violence. At the end, it is not unimportant for the US not to ignore the "price" of renewed collaboration with Nairobi. Of course these are the issues that need the collective attention of both countries if they are to fend off any threats to their most friendly and lucrative relations. While recognising the potential threat of terrorism in Kenya, it is important for the US to maintain increased cooperation in the non-military sector. Kenya's strategic proximity to the sea lanes that carry oil from the Persian Gulf to the US and its acceptance of extended military and security cooperation with the Washington account for a special relationship between the two countries in the main.

In the next chapter the researcher makes use of Nigeria to reflect and concretise arguments advanced in chapter two and three surrounding the general trends in US foreign policy in Africa. In contrast to the previous chapter, it focuses on oil and democracy as the magnets of Washington's engagement with Abuja.

## Chapter Six

## Revisiting Nigerian-American Relations

### 6.1. Introduction

The post-1990 contours of globalisation have precipitated the increasing significance of international relations and interdependence. As a result, just like countries from other continents, African states self-discovered the need to integrate into the capitalist international economic system. This discovery corroborated the fact that the principle of self dependence for Africa is impossible and if Africa is to develop, it should link with other countries from other continents such as Europe, America and Asia, among others.[336] It is, therefore, not surprising that African states have different forms of cooperation and collaboration with countries outside Africa. The reasoning behind linking Africa and the world does not imply the devaluation of inter-African relations. It only serves to show the influence of global pressures in shaping Africa's international relations.

It is against this background that this chapter seeks to analyse the relationship between the US and Nigeria in the post-1990 era using the political and socio-economic approach. It must be noted, however, that the relationship between the US and Nigeria is not resultant of post-Cold War developments. Their relations can be traced back from Nigeria's early independence in the 1960s.[337] Since then, their

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[336] G. le Pere, "Economic Diplomacy and Trade", paper presented at the Department of Foreign Affairs conference on "Challenges Facing the African Diplomats: now and in the Future", 15-16 July 2008, Pretoria.

[337] R. Stock, *Africa South of Sahara: A Geographical Interpretation*. New York: The Guilford Press, 1995, pp. 371-372.

relations have undergone the ups and downs due to the variety of reasons that would be outlined below.

### 6.2. Nigeria's Domestic Political Situation

Geographically, Nigeria is located on the North-Western side of Africa along the Atlantic Ocean. The oil rich Nigeria was once the colony of Britain and attained its independence in 1960. During the early years of independence, Nigeria emerged as a promising democratic partner in the family of democracies, including the US. But these aspirations were later thwarted by many years of civil war and military misrule in the most populous African state.[338] Regardless of this, Tom Casey argues that despite the ignorance and arrogance of the political elites, the masses of Nigerians have shown a commitment to the ideals and principles of democracy.[339] Therefore, it is not unsafe to state that Nigeria's political history is written with blood and sweat and marked with suffering and misery. This has occurred under various leaderships from different backgrounds that were united in putting their personal interests first, before they could even think about what is good for the nation or national interests.[340] Despite the violent and the radical nature of Nigeria's political landscape, this country has still managed to attract other states like the US to engage with her either economically or diplomatically. As it would be shown below, the nature of the relationship between the successive regimes in both Nigeria and the US is reflective of the wide gap between theory and practice of foreign policy.

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[338] For details on the history of military leadership see, James Oluleye, *Military Leadership in Nigeria 1966-1979*, Ibadan: University Press Limited, 1985.
[339] T. Casey, "Nigeria's elections" press statement, http://www.state.gov, 27 April 2007.
[340] J. Bayart, *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly*, London: Longman Group, 1993, pp. 228-259.

### 6.3. Economic and Political Relations: Theory and Practice

According to Foster Mkhonto, for countries to survive, they need to co-exist peacefully with other states.[341] Also, for the particular state's citizens to survive they need food, clothes and many other basic goods. All these can be achieved through co-existence in political and economic life. As such, states need to co-exist through economic and political relations in order to be able to provide for the economic and political desires of their citizens.[342] For its part, the US has maintained close bilateral ties with Nigeria in both political and economic matters. Nigeria has served as a strategic point for the coordination of the US engagement in West Africa and Africa as a whole.[343] For instance, in 2006 Nigeria was short-changed by the US to deceive Charles Taylor and this move has resulted in his prosecution by the International Court of Justice (ICC). According to David Crane as cited by Baffour Ankomah, this trial was "in the US national interest" and was not really about the realisation of international justice.[344] What can be deduced from the above, however, is that the American-Nigerian relations extend beyond the normal bilateral tracks. They also manifest themselves in international cooperation frameworks and diplomatic channels are very much central in this regard.

However, in spite of the continued commitment by both the US and Nigeria to their relations, the historic development of their relationship is suggestive of an asymmetrical shape that is in favour of the US due to its political leverage. Hence, Clarker argues that "policy differences, failures in communication, and other

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[341] Interview with F. Mkhonto, Researcher, Mpumalanga Provincial Legislature, 06 April 2009.
[342] J. Baylis and S. Smith (eds), *The Globalization of world Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 328.
[343] Interview with R. Iroanya, Research Fellow, Linkoping University, 06 April 2009.
[344] Ankomah, May 2009, p. 9.

irritations have marred US relations with Nigeria since the end of the Nigerian civil war in January 1970."[345] This is true in view of the complexities of the Cold War that was characterised by misperception, misunderstanding and misinterpretation of each other's act between the West and East, which extended also to Nigeria and the US. The above assertion has not lost relevance in the analysis of the US-Nigeria's relations in the post-Cold War era. Hence, scholars such as William R. Keylor have asserted that Africa have lost its strategic significance to the US due to the fall of the Soviet Union.[346] But this has not been the case because other and more serious security issues in the form of terrorist threats emerged and have become central to the US foreign policy towards Africa.

However, according to Irit Back other issues such as economic growth and development of Nigeria (and Africa as a whole), debt crisis and race relations have taken a centre stage in this regard.[347] These are some of the key issues that define the partnership between the US and Nigeria since the fall of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s. This research argues that the above mentioned old thorny issues on US-Nigerian relations have mirrored the pre-1990 international relations that have not fundamentally changed as a result of the aftermath of the Cold War. In other words, most of the issues that shaped the relations between the two countries during the Cold War have actually been transmitted or appropriated in the post-Cold War academic discourse. However, there have been new notable factors to the US engagement with

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[345] H.L. Clarke, "Nigerian-US Relations: Contrasting Styles Reinforce Nigerian Distrust", Report produced by the Bureau of Intelligence and Research. Department of State, 23 March 1973.
[346] W.R. Keylor, *The Twentieth Century World: An International History* (3rd ed). New York: Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 505.
[347] I. Back, "Muslims and Christians in Nigeria: Attitudes Towards the United States from a Post-September 11th Perspective", *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, Vol 24 (1), 2004, pp. 12-15.

Nigeria. These include, among others, the pace of democratisation in Nigeria and the terrorist threat as mentioned above.

Contextually, economic relations can be by means of trade between states, exports and imports or the granting of loans and economic aid where it is necessary. When states co-exist economically they all have to benefit, according to the liberal school of thought.[348] One state does not have to exploit the other but both have to derive mutual benefits from their economic relations. States share their economic goods and services to enhance each other's economic development. This happens when foreign earnings are used to fast-track service delivery including the provision of good, quality and affordable socio-economic services.

Contrary to the liberal school of thought, the economic relationship between the US and Nigeria is asymmetrical. Although, both countries have a lot to benefit from engaging each other, it is, however, clear that the one (US) is benefiting more at the expense of the other (Nigeria). For instance, in the economic sector, AGOA was signed into law on 08 May 2000. A major rationale of the Act is to assist eligible African countries to open up their economies and build free markets. Equally Nigeria is a beneficiary of AGOA. Since the enforcement of AGOA, the US volume of trade with Nigeria and Africa at large has continued to increase. In 2000, the US was on record to have embarked on a $394 million investment for trade capacity building activities in sub-Saharan Africa. Even though Nigeria has more than 6000 non-oil sector products that can be exported to the US duty free, the state is yet to feel the real

[348] J. E. Spero, *The Politics of International Economic Relations* (4th ed.), London: St Martin's Press, 1990, p. 148.

impact of AGOA.[349] This can be attributed to the fact that AGOA has staged a free and competitive market arena among the American and Nigerian business entities. In theory, this conduct will bring about major economic dividends for both countries.[350] However, this has not been the case because the current AGOA-stimulated economic competition between the giant and heavily subsidised American companies on the one hand and the infant Nigerian industries on the other is unhealthy as it is clear that, it is not between equals. Furthermore, Nigeria's manufacturing infrastructure is underdeveloped as compared to the US and at the end Nigeria exports raw materials to which it has less control over their prices. In contrast, the US exports finished products (including technological equipments) to Nigeria and others at a price far much high than their production costs.[351]

In one way or the other, AGOA is likely to bring short term benefits for Nigeria and Africa as a whole, as long as room for protectionist policies for indigenous companies is not left. However, this area of cooperation can develop and build human and economic capacities that will enhance the economic relations between the US and Nigeria.[352] This can only be realised should AGOA be revisited so that it can be considerate of the economic and social conditions of Africa.

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[349] For a comprehensive analysis of AGOA see, A. Tousignant, "African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA III): An Inside View" in K. Adar, *et al* (eds.), *Foreign Policy and International Relations*, AISA Monograph, Vol 1 (1), Pretoria, Africa Institute of South Africa, pp. 31-40.
[350] R. Gilpin, "Three Ideologies of Political Economy", in S.W. Kentel and A. Tsuneo (eds.), *International Political Economy: A Reader*, New York: Harper Collins, 2002, pp. 4-8.
[351] Kadalie, 2000, pp. 83-84.
[352] United States Diplomatic Mission in Nigeria, "In Focus", http://Nigeria.usembassy.gov, 09 April 2009.

Some students of Global Political Economy contend that economics can be used as a tool of politics and the basis for political power.[353] They then argue that economic relations have a potential to build the political relations between states. Equally true, political culture and the nature of a particular country shape its economic direction. On the basis of the above it can, therefore, be concluded that politics and economics are intertwined and inseparable. Having said that it is difficult to delineate or distinguish political and economic relations of the two countries under review. Thus, the pursuit for economic strength also supports the development of the states' military and political power. States interact economically in order to help each other in the development of their economies. However, the international environment where states contest their national interests is hostile and more or less equivalent to a table or pool of a zero-sum game.[354] Following from this realist perspective, this research argues that any amount of US economic and development support to Nigeria or any other African state is not based on humanitarian grounds but is counted on calculations of the US national security. This is the key issue of the US engagement in Nigeria and if there are to be development benefits in a process, these are incidental or spill-over effects. Hence, Nigeria is the largest trade partner and major supplier of oil to the US in Africa. Thomas-Greenfield corroborated this fact when she remarked that "Nigeria is arguably our most important strategic partner in Africa".[355]

Justifying its support for the development of Africa, the US Trade and Development Agency has previously funded a number of technical assistance programmes in

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[353] Interview with J. Daka and B. Rutsito, Zimbabwean Students, University of Venda, Thohoyandou, 22 April 2009.
[354] A. Bilankulu. "Youth Perspectives on Israeli-Palestine Conflict", Speaking Notes for the Post Graduates Research Seminar, University of Venda, 28 March 2009.
[355] L. Thomas-Greenfield, "Remarks on the US Assistance to Nigeria", US Department of State, http://www.state.gov, 30 October 2006.

Nigeria. These relate especially to the port computerization programme of the Minister of Transport, technical assistance for the privatization of the 600 MW Shiroro hydro-power plant and the 1,320 MW gas-fuelled Egbin power plant near Lagos. Both countries have therefore been partnering in the area of oil and gas as well as power and electricity.[356]

### 6.4. Economic Diplomacy and Security at Play

Political relations can be by means of political diplomacy and political co-existence wherein countries help each other in terms of political emergencies pertaining to a certain state. States help each other to build their democracies and safeguard the sovereignty of their nation states. Political relations help also in a good political environment between parties in different states. During elections in many states, there are some representatives from international organisations and other states to observe and evaluate the electoral processes and make sure that the polls are conducted in terms of international standards.[357]

However, both economic and political relations help in building strong and powerful states that have good records on economic and political development. As such, all states strive for enhanced economic and political power and that requires them to build relationships with others. Most notably, in the 19th century economic diplomacy replaced traditional or political diplomacy due to the increasing role of economics in

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[356] TRALAC, "AGOA News", http://www.agoa.info/index.php?view=.&story=news&subtext=1020, 25 April 2009.

[357] For details on some of the established norms and principles for an internationally accepted conduct of elections see, EISA, *Principles for Election Management, Monitoring and Observation in the SADC Region*. Johannesburg: EISA, 2004.

the conduct of international relations.[358] As a result, no state can survive alone because all states produce different kinds of goods and services and are blessed with a variety of natural resources. For them to be able to put what they have into better use, they need the assistance of others, and vice versa. As such, it is important for states to be linked through trade or economically so that there can be a smooth exchange of goods and services between them. The fact that diplomats are preoccupied with economic issues does not suggest that political diplomacy has been rendered useless. In fact excellent economic relations between two countries like the US and Nigeria can help to mitigate a conflict between them.[359]

Politically, the relations between the US and Nigeria go beyond the normal bilateral tracks. The two countries have advanced their level of cooperation within organisations such as ECOWAS, AU, UN and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). Despite several constraints on their connections, it is emphasised that the US and Nigeria have maintained excellent, cordial and mutually beneficial relations throughout the time. From the beginning of the uni-polar era, their partnership was consistent with America's promise of a better relationship with Africa. This was evident when President George W. Bush received the Nigerian president Umara Musa Yar'adua in December 2007.[360] Without doubt Nigeria and the US have a long tradition of cooperation in several areas of economic development, political governance issues and maintenance of regional peace and security. To cite an example, the US has been involved in the training of officers and men of Nigeria's

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[358] Harun ur Rashid, , "Economic Diplomacy in South Asia", http://rspas.anu.edu.au/papers/asarc/update/05_IndiaUpdate_Rashid.pdf, 18 August 2005.
[359] International Monetary Fund (IMF), "Globalization: Threat or Opportunity?", IMF, 12 April 2002.
[360] C.W. Corey, "United States, Nigeria Renew Ties", http://www.america.gov/st/washfile-english/2007/December/20071213134135WCyeroC0.1430933.html, 13 December 2007.

armed forces over the years. It has also been giving logistical support to Nigerian military contingents on various peacekeeping operations in Africa and beyond.[361]

### 6.5. Nigeria's Importance to the US

The fairly robust profile of the US-Nigeria relations can be explained based on several factors. These include the political and economic development of Africa, debt crisis, race relations, the Cold War and its aftermath, Arab world's oil export policy, attitudes of the various US administrations towards Africa and Nigeria in particular, and the changing nature of the Nigeria regime since the end of the civil war in 1977.[362] On the other hand are the factors of oil and gas resources and geo-strategic the leverage of Nigeria in the region. Nigeria is Africa's biggest producer of hydrocarbon resources and the sixth largest producer of crude oil in the world. As of today, Nigeria supplies more than fifteen percent (15%) of US oil needs. For Nigeria, the oil resources not only help to boost foreign exchange earnings, but also enhance economic capacity for Nigeria's active involvement in regional peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations in Africa and beyond.[363] For Susan E. Evers: "Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa, has the finances, personnel and equipment required and has often taken the lead in peacekeeping operations in the region".[364] Besides relying on America, the quotation above demonstrates that Nigeria has a means that is required for a country that is expected to act as a sub-imperialist power

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[361] US Department of State, "Background Note: Nigeria", http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2836.htm, December 2009.
[362] T. Dagne, "Nigeria in Political Transition", Policy Brief. Congressional Research Service, 23 February 2003, pp. 9-13.
[363] D. Leatherwood, "The Hazards of Strange Bedfellows: The United States, Nigeria and Peacekeeping in West Africa", *Small Wars Journal*, Vol 1 (1), 2005, p. 2.
[364] S.E. Evers, "An Assessment of the US Peacekeeping Training in West Africa: Is on the Road to Stability", http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA416450&Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf, 11 July 2009.

to nurse and lubricate the vital interests of the US in Africa and West Africa in particular.

While Nigeria is the most populous black nation, the US has the biggest black population outside of Africa. Nigerians represent the second most educated immigrants among the Diaspora in the US. The US currently plays host to a substantial component of the Nigerian Diaspora.[365] In other words, the US mainly gained from Nigeria's brain drain. In relation to this, the UN estimated that there are twenty-two thousand (22 000) highly qualified Nigerian medical doctors in the US excluding pharmacists, nurses and other Nigerian auxiliary health personnel. In general, it can be rightly said that the relationship between Nigerian and American people has not only been a cordial one, but has also in no small measure, complemented government to government relations that has transcended political, military, economic, technical, immigration and cultural cooperation at various levels.[366]

In terms of migration trends, Nigeria is like Zimbabwe and Kenya.[367] Before the year 1999 the political situation in that country was untenable and the key economic sectors were badly affected. It is for this reason that top academics and other skilled personnel in Nigeria embarked on a process of acquiring dual citizenship. Beside the Nigerian citizenship, they opted for American citizenship. This was essential for them to be able to find jobs in the US, without necessarily losing their sense of belonging to

[365] M.O. Afolayan, "African Immigrant Families in the United States: Surviving the Socio-cultural Tide", *The Family Journal*, Vol 15 (3), 2007, pp. 265-270.
[366] Anonymous, "Nigeria Profile", http://www.der.oas.org/Permanent_Observers/Profiles/Profile%20Nigeria.doc, 24 February 2009.
[367] Interview with R. Molapo, Department of Development Studies, University of Venda, Thohoyandou, 03 June 2009.

Nigeria. The dominance of the Nigerian emigration to the US by the skilled personnel prior to 1999 can be partly attributed to the fact that they had already accumulated enough to sustain themselves before the outbreak of the civil war. This was very imperative for their well-being in America for the first days of their arrival and before they could find a job. However, the key issue is that Nigeria's return to civilian rule did not reverse this situation.

Besides relative political stability in Nigeria, there are other issues more attractive about the US to American-Nigerians or African-Americans. One of those issues is the power of the dollar. This issue can be linked to international relations and sport. It is a pity that African states, including Nigeria, have not been doing enough to promote sports as compared to countries like the US.[368] As a result top African athletes and others more talented in other sporting codes are recruited from African states such as Nigeria to the US. The provision of dual citizenship makes the whole process smooth and easy. Whereas the Nigerian immigrants in the US may be repatriating some of the earnings to Abuja, one does not need the assistance of a rated economist to see that the host country is benefiting more. While recognising the contribution of Nigerian or African immigrants to its national economy, the involvement of Nigerians in criminal syndicates (both in the US and across the border) is a bitter pill to be swallowed by American visa and immigration officials. It is for this reason that the US has actually tried to tighten immigration rules and strengthen the safety and security of its air space and also partnered with Nigeria and other African states to tighten security mechanisms in their airports, naval ports and harbours. This is part of the global strategy of the US to contain the spread of terrorist cells, without impairing its

[368] *Ibid.*

economic security. To this end, since the return to civilian rule, Nigeria has been at the centre of the US's decision to regionalise its foreign policy initiatives in Africa. As a regional enforcer of the US foreign policy in West Africa and Africa at large, Nigeria intervened in internal conflicts at different levels of its neighbouring states, including Sierra Leone and Liberia. The US beefed up its military capacity directly through military aid and indirectly within the context of their joint involvement in the UN peacekeeping missions in the Gulf of Guinea. It is reiterated by the researcher that, despite its high levels of corruption and other security threats as highlighted above, Nigeria has remained the powerful candidate for executing the strategies and tactics of Washington due to oil wealth and strategic issues highlighted above.

### 6.6. The Economic Support for Nigeria's Democratization by the US

For centuries, the US foreign policy has been outwardly characterized by its diplomatic and economic encouragement of hatchling democracies around the world. In particular the nations of Africa are seen to benefit from America's idealistic foreign policy agenda. After forty years of independent struggle and civil war, Nigeria had a freely elected leader in the person of Musa Yar'Adua who expressed the willingness to strengthen his nation's global position through international trade and assistance at this critical stage for the century of Africa's political and socio-economic development.[369] In respect of the above, Kevin H. Ellsworth wrote that,

> [A]s the Clinton Administration promoted democracy in Nigeria, it employed representational practices to enhance the likelihood of its success, by rendering democracy meaningless as a substantive guide to

[369] Goodluck Jonathan has succeeded Musa Yar'Adua as the President of Nigeria following the latter's death in May 2010.

governance while enhancing greatly its symbolic value in both social and economic terms.[370]

Contrary to the analytical premise of the American policy literature, the quantity and quality of the US aid to Nigeria is characterised by tensions, motivations and global pressures. In order for Nigeria to find a true and stable democracy, US policy must establish Nigeria's role as an independent partner in the exchange of natural resources. As part of its genuine effort to bolster its domestic capability, since 1990 Nigeria has been driven by a concern of democracy, accountability and human rights.[371] As a token of gesture, the US supported the process of democratization in Nigeria throughout the 1990s and bolstered its consolidation as of 29 May 1999 when the democratically elected government of General Olusegun Obasanjo came to power.[372] The swearing in of Obasanjo's administration in May 1999 marked the birth of the fourth republic of Nigeria. It also contributed to the restoration of Nigeria's positive image, integrity, prestige and status as a regional power in Africa along with South Africa. The newly found social identity of Nigeria resonates well with the US policy that seeks to use Abuja as a launching pad to spread and intensify democracies in West Africa and Africa as a whole. Although it is only recently that the 2007 Nigerian elections were described as largely flawed, the Nigerian democratization lends important insight to American foreign policy at this moment.[373]

Notwithstanding the fact that the US played an important role in ensuring Nigeria's return to civilian rule, it is argued that the economic involvement of the US especially

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[370] K.H. Ellsworth, "Dawn of Democracy and 10, 000 Dead: International Discourse and Nigeria's Fourth Republic", Arizona State University, 2003, p. 71.
[371] B. de Villiers, *Foreign Relations and the Provinces: An International Perspective*, Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), 1995, p. 116.
[372] T. Dagne, "Nigeria in Political Transition", Congressional Research Service Report, 28 July 2006, pp. 8-9.
[373] C.I. Obi, "Nigeria: Democracy on Trial", *NAI Newsletter*, Nordic Africa Institute, September 2004, pp. 1-3.

when Abuja was under military rule was mischievous. This precedent goes well with the dictum that, in Africa democracy becomes an issue for the US if the regime of the country concerned is not friendly to the US, yet it has something that the Washington wants. Hence, the US claimed to have withdrawn from Nigeria under the strongman rule of Sani Abacha (1993-1998) but that was only at the rhetorical level because US companies remained in Nigeria and at times, their activities fuelled conflicts among the various ethnic and armed groups in Nigeria. This policy paradox is articulated by Essential Action in these words:

> In word, the United States is a strong critic of the Nigerian government, both past and present. It has condemned the existence of the military regime, of election cancellations, and of the situation in Ogoniland. It has threatened to take action. Yet it never does. As the largest consumer of Nigerian oil, the US could be the strongest advocate for human rights and justice, yet it refuses to take on that role. The US government has even protected Nigeria from economic sanctions by states and cities within the US. In March 1998 an official from the Clinton administration warned the Maryland House and Senate that bills creating state-wide economic sanctions against Nigeria for human rights abuses are a violation of US commitments to international trade agreements and to membership in the World Trade Organization.[374]

It is therefore safe to state that the US was a partner in the democratisation of Nigeria by denouncing human rights violations and authoritarian rule, but its activities have also contributed to the delay in ending military rule in that country. Washington's hesitance to invoke an aggressive US foreign policy towards Nigeria was driven by the major American oil companies such as Mobil and Shell Petroleum (of the US).[375] In fact they warned President Clinton that a possible hardline stance of the US against the military regime of Nigeria was not in the national interests of the US. The

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[374] Essential Action, "Shell in Nigeria: What are the Issues", http://www.essentialaction.org/shell/issues.html, 21 March 2009.

[375] Shell is popularly known as a Dutch company, but it includes companies like Shell Petroleum of the US (which wholly owns Shell Oil of the US and many subsidiaries).

continued inaction of the Clinton Administration with regard to human rights violations in the Ogoniland and other parts of Nigeria is a testimony that the promotion of the rule of law and democracy is secondary to US economic interests, based especially on energy and mineral wealth. Consequently, it was the death of Abacha that presented a golden opportunity for Nigeria to return to civilian rule and it is therefore hypocritical for the US to claim incalculable credits in this regard. The reality is that international pressures coupled with domestic events including the death Abacha have both facilitated Nigeria political transition from dictatorship to multiparty political system. However, the Nigerians were the primary drivers of the transition while the US and other members of the international community played a supportive role in the form of technical assistance, diplomatic and political support.

### 6.7. Terrorism: A Threat or Boon for Re-energised Security Relations?

As opposed to the conventional views about the relations between Washington and Abuja, it is argued that the partnership between the US and Nigeria can best be described as a master and slave relationship. For instance, the Nigerian government secretly gave the US special rights in the post-September 11 incident in the name of cooperation and collaboration. This move provided a passage for Nigeria to allow the Federal Bureau of Intelligence (FBI) to operate in the country and other parts of West Africa. Following that the US intelligence agents could come secretly in the night to forcefully repatriate Nigerians that were wanted in the US for various crimes. It appeared that the two countries would benefit from this form of cooperation as it was meant to combats cross-border crime between them. At the fundamental level, however, the US military and Pentagon advisers were given too much access to

Nigerian defence that was assigned under the guise of cooperation. In return, the US was to harness the human and natural resources of Nigeria towards building a cohesive, responsive and self–reliant society.[376] Radical analysts would argue that this is a luxury that the US administration could not afford as it has a primary constituency (American population) to serve and it would not sacrifice or risk the confidence of its people at the expense of Nigerians.[377] Given this state of affairs, it is no coincidence that Nigeria is yet to receive tangible economic benefits from the US. The dichotomy between terrorism and Islam and the wider gap between promise and action on the part of the US has raised mixed emotions from the Nigerians across the religious lines.

In relation to the above stated fact, Back asserts that there is no clear distinction on religious lines in Nigerian attitudes towards the US. She further indicates that Christians are not all pro-American and Muslims are not all anti–American. Throughout the time, according to Back, cooperative economic relations, personal ties and amicable diplomatic relations have existed between the Muslim leadership in Nigeria and various administrations in the US.[378] However, the expressions of anti-American attitudes among Christians in Nigeria have dominated the public discourse in the 1990s and post September 11 attacks. During the 1990s two main developments were central in shaping the attitudes of the Nigerian society toward the US process of intensification of religious identity and the politicization of religion. Despite the objection of some parts of Nigeria's Muslim majority in the North that support Osama Bin Laden, Nigeria has joined the US global coalition in the war against terrorism.

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[376] Interview with O. Obafemi (not true name), Lecturer, Department of Statistics, University of Venda, Thohoyandou, 07 April 2010.
[377] R.S. Waters and David H. Blake, *The Politics of Global Economic Relations* (4th Ed), New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1992, pp. 228-237.
[378] Back, 2004, *Ibid.*

General Obasanjo showed his government solidarity with the US, its war on terrorism, but Nigeria has not been sufficiently rewarded on economic terms.[379] Despite Nigeria's commitment to the US led war on terror and the fact that this stance cemented their relations, it is important to state that the post September 11 offensive has mainly antagonised America with many Arabic and Muslim nation states.

Secondly, Afghanistan has produced collateral damage in Nigeria since the September 11 attacks that was signified by bloody clashes between Nigerian Muslims and Christians that has resulted in the loss of land, life and massive property.[380] This is a clear reflection of the clash of security interests between the US and Nigeria and the extent to which misperception of one country's international relations and national security can compromise the safety of the citizens of the other or both of them. It is argued that terrorism is too dangerous for human kind and the US does not have monopoly over this concern. The Bush Administration has actually suffered from a perception deficit after the September 11 historic event because not all Muslims are terrorists as indicated above. The ultimate results of this analysis have hampered the cultural cooperation between the Muslims and other religious groups in Nigeria. As indicated above Nigeria has a fair percentage of the Muslim population and this is an issue that was ignored by Obasanjo when he connived to enforce the National Security Strategy of the US in West Africa. This is an issue that has a potential to alienate Nigeria from its neighbours and Arab and Muslim countries in Africa and the world at large.

[379] M. Watson, *Foundations of International Political Economy*, New York: Macmillan, 2005, p. 36.
[380] Interview with Obafemi, 07 April 2010

Though difficult to prove, it is generally believed that there are Muslims who have supported the US war on terror and have actually benefited out of it. Despite all the talks of a paradigm shift in US foreign policy, the growth of US-Nigerian bilateral trade has been slow and the US investments are primarily within the oil sector of the economy.[381] For this American policy makers blame the above cited incident on the lack of a friendly business environment in Nigeria when the US and Nigerian relations reached their lowest points. This situation goes to validate some of the questions raised by African scholars about to depth of the US commitment to democracy.[382]

### 6.8. Difficulties of the US Partnership with Nigeria

The US-Nigeria relations have, however, not been without challenges that call for closer cooperation and better understanding. There is an unacceptable level of negative perception about Nigeria and bad publicity about Nigerians in the US media and elsewhere. The very stringent visa policy towards Nigerian applications has not been very helpful to the development of a better understanding between the two countries. The US's global influence can lend significant diplomatic support to Nigeria's efforts to making crude oil theft less attractive to the oil market.[383] Unfortunately, the US has not taken decisive action to help Nigeria in its quest to derive full benefits of the Kimberley Process (KP).[384] According to the US State Department, such kinds of situations have actually helped to build the widely held

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[381] Interview with Vukor-Quarshie, 07 April 2010.

[382] Ellsworth, 2003, p. 72.

[383] F.T. Ihonvbere, *Nigeria and the International Capitalist System*, Colorado: Bynne Rienner, 1998, p. 43.

[384] The Kimberley Process is a joint governments, industry and civil society initiative to stem the flow of conflict diamonds – rough diamonds used by rebel movements to finance wars against legitimate governments.

Nigerian perception that view the US "as the major power with which they differ over the widest range of substantive issues".[385]

Despite the real and perceived setbacks to their engagement, their relationship has contributed immensely to the renewal and development of Nigeria's economy. Nigeria had a devastated economy after colonial rule and many years of military misrule and war. But since the relations between them have been renewed following Nigeria's return to civilian rule in 1999, Abuja's economy has grown rapidly. Both countries benefit from the relations, but at an unequal footing as alluded to earlier. This does not mean that the US is a key to Nigeria's economic well-being. The reality is that Nigeria's return to civilian rule has actually opened a window for investment opportunities from the US and other countries in the international system.

The flow of light weapons in the West African region, which sustains violence in the Niger Delta, has been a cause for concern to the US.[386] This fact reverberates well with Nigeria's openness and willingness to cooperate with the US on security and military issues. It also serves to consolidate the position of Nigeria as the coalition partner of the US in the war against terrorism. But the internal security threats in West Africa, the Niger Delta in particular, have naturally pushed for the very stringent visa policy towards Nigerians and it has tragically brought about mixed results for Nigeria. In short, the stringent visa policy towards Nigeria and the inclusion of Nigeria on the list of countries categorized as unsafe for air travel is a bitter pill to be swallowed by

[385] US State Department, "Nigerian-US Relations: Contrasting Styles Reinforce Nigerian Distrust", http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/frus/nixon/e6/67454.htm, 26 April 2009.
[386] Rachel Stohl, "The Legacy of Illicit Small Arms: Devastation in West Africa", http://www.cdi.org/program/document.cfm?documentid=2225&programID=23&from_page=../friendlyversion/printversion.cfm, 20 May 2004.

the Nigerian policy makers.[387] Consequently, the strict immigration rules as they apply to the Nigerians in the US and the classification of Nigeria's air routes as unsafe is an impediment to the realisation of its visions and national policy goals. It imposes harsh limits on Nigeria to be able to take full advantage of the benefits of AGOA because of the slow and controlled movement of goods across the borders of the two countries. It also brings about delays on the part of certain Nigerian entrepreneurs who might wish to undertake business missions in the US. In the same logic, the strict visa policy solidifies the negative image created by the Western media against the Nigerians. Whether they are real, perceived or exaggerated, the internal security threats within Nigeria and other challenges cited above, the key issue is that this "mixed bag" is inimical to the development policies of Nigeria.[388] However, it is not Nigeria alone that suffers from what Obiozor terms "uneasy friendship" with the US.[389] Obviously, the hard-line stance of the US on Nigeria raises anti-American sentiments in that country, especially in the Muslim dominated North region. Equally important, Bush's policy framework on the war on terror made it impossible or impractical for international cultural cooperation between the Muslims in Nigeria and those in the US.

The current literature on African affairs is distorted with the biased analysis by European and American scholars along with their disciples in Africa.[390] Closely associated with this fact, a logical creative reading of the relationship between Nigeria

[387] TRALAC, http://www.agoa.info/index.php?view=.&story=news&subtext=1020, 25 April 2009.
[388] N.I. Nwosu, "Constraints on Nigeria's Foreign Policy", *African Study Monographs*, Vol 14 (3), October 1993, pp. 123-128.
[389] G. Obiozor, "Nigeria-US Relations", *Ambassadorial Insights*, African Studies Lecture, 20 October 2006.
[390] N.J. Tauatswala, "The Babirwa of Tauyatswala: Aspects of the Socio-Cultural and political History of an African Community, 1930-1990", Unpublished MA dissertation, University of Venda, 2005, pp. 151-155.

and the US would conclude that their economic partnership received some boost under the Clinton and Bush administration. But the key question is, for whose benefit. It is argued that the US development assistance to Nigeria does not prioritise the developmental needs of the domestic population of the latter. This follows from the fact that most of the US aid to Nigeria under both Clinton and Bush was directed mainly towards security and military cooperation.[391] This has been especially the case in oil producing zones where the American oil companies, their subsidiaries and their partners are involved. According to the Essential Action, both Shell and the Nigerian government admit that Shell Oil Company contributes to the funding of the military in the Niger Delta region.[392] Offering an explanation of the nature of the US engagement in Nigeria, Obi wrote that Nigeria is the "largest producer of petroleum and gas in Africa, and it is critical to the energy security calculations of the West, particularly the US, that is increasingly looking towards West Africa and Nigeria as a source of diversifying oil supplies from total dependence on the volatile Middle East".[393]

This research argues that the same pattern of the Cold War features of US-Nigeria economic and strategic relations recurred in the post-Cold War era under, George Bush Sr., Bill Clinton and George W Bush Jr. In effect the gap between promise and action has been consistently and extremely wide and the status quo is still the same. On the economic sector, it is emphasised that the US interests seems to be limited to the petroleum extraction industry in Nigeria. American investors have been hesitant to put a lot of resources and capital in other sectors that can add more meaningful value

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[391] J. Garamone, "US, Nigeria Discuss Defense Cooperation", http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=45099, 29 April 2010.
[392] Essential Action is an international organisation that initiated and drove the 'Boycott Shell Campaign' following its dirty deals with governments with poor human rights record including Nigeria, under military rule., http://www.essentialaction.org./shell/issues.html, 21 March 2009.
[393] Obi, 2004, p. 2.

to the Nigerian economy and create jobs for the unemployed Nigerians, the youth in particular. Given the positive potential of good relations, Nigeria's relationship with the US needs to be expanded in relation to infrastructural development. This would enhance the economic development of Nigeria and consolidate its position as a pivotal state within the framework of the US National Security Strategy.[394]

The gestation and abortion of democracy in Nigeria has roughed its relations with the US. For instance, Nigerians, Americans and the international community had thought that the 1993 presidential elections in Nigeria would pave the road to the restoration of democratic practices, the rule of law and respect for fundamental human rights. The US put both moral and material support to ensure that a successful election is staged. However, US observers witnessed the intensified erosion of human rights and the failure to embark on a meaningful democratic transition after the contested outcome of the 1993 election. The 1993 coup in Nigeria naturally attracted sanctions from the US and the international community that were imposed as a way of pushing the military leadership to relinquish power and allow the leadership determined through democratic processes to take over.[395] Regardless of how effective the US sanctions against Nigeria were, it can not be overstated that the death of Abacha provided a historic opportunity for different political actors in that country. It also provided a passage for a comfortable relationship between Abuja and Washington.

[394] K. Shillington, *Encyclopedia of African History*, vol. 2. New York: Fitzroy Dearbon, 2005, p. 123.
[395] Africa Action, "International roundtable on Nigeria", *Africa Policy E-journal*, http://www.africaaction.org/docs97/nig9706.us.htm, 24 April 2009.

### 6.9. The Renewal of the US-Nigeria Ties

It goes without saying that in the early 1990s the relations between the US and Nigeria were relatively low and this pace was worsened by the nullification of the 1993 election results by Babangida and later the imposition of General Sani Abacha as the leader of Nigeria. It should be noted that, although the relations between Nigeria and the US were low especially from 1990-1998, there were moves to improve them. For instance, relations were only reduced at the government to government level while the US provided support to the NGOs devoted to the promotion of democracy and the rule of law. In other words, the political conditions of Nigeria at the time (pre-1998 era) dictated the shift from government to government track of relations to government to non-governmental level. It should also be noted that for strategic reasons, the US has never completely disengaged herself from Nigeria despite pressures from countries such as South Africa and the international community at large.[396] However, the US maintained that it is in the best interest of smooth civilian transition for her not to keep a distance from Nigeria. In fact, the US wanted to have an influence on the political reforms as a guarantee for an opportunity to determine or manipulate the future policy direction of that country. It is well documented that the US maintained closer economic links with Nigeria throughout the 1990s, with less political engagement.[397] Although the sanctions reduced or limited the areas of cooperation between the two countries, more emphasise was put on the prohibition of arms sales because military hardware is critical for the maintenance of dictatorship. As a result, the US condemned the

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[396] J.A. Ayam, "The Development of Nigeria-US Relations", *Journal of Third World Studies*, Fall 2008, p. 117.
[397] Africa Action, http://www.africaaction.org/docs97/nig9706.us.htm, 24 April 2009.

Nigerian tyranny in all possible terms, but still engaged with her on the trade of oil and other products.[398]

Meanwhile, it is safe to state that the death of General Abacha in June 1998 and his replacement by General Abubakar opened a new and promising phase of improved relations between the two countries. Since the death of General Abacha, the transition to democracy progressed alongside the increased removal of visa restrictions. These steps towards the democratic path facilitated the high levels of visit of the US officials where discussions of future assistance were staged. Dialogue between the Nigerian and American leadership also touched on the issue of the granting of vital national interests and certification on counter-narcotics effective in March 1999.[399] In one way or the other, the death of Abacha was the key to unlocking the door for the re-establishment of closer ties between the US and Nigeria as a key partner in the region and the African continent.

Since the renewal of the relations between the US and Nigeria in 1998/9 the two countries have worked together on common foreign policy goals such as peacekeeping and their cooperation in this area has been very excellent.[400] It is interesting to note that the cooperation of the US and Nigeria on peacekeeping missions was not limited to the African continent, but was also facilitated through the auspices of the UN. According to American diplomats it is a priority of the US to invest in people (including the Nigerians) as part of its foreign assistance programs. The US's ability to help Nigeria comb public health shortcomings contributes directly

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[398] Ayam, 2008, p. 118.
[399] Interview with Maryjane Obi, Nigerian Student, University of Venda, Thohoyandou, 24 April 2009.
[400] For details on the US-Nigeria collaboration in peacekeeping in Africa see, Leatherwood, 2005, pp. 2-25.

to good governance, societal stability and economic growth. It also reinstalled confidence in the US concern for the Nigerian immunisation, polio eradication, birth preparedness and the failure to supply adequate health care services to the people due to the high population density.[401] This research argues that any comprehensive delineation of the policy difference and/or indifference between the US and Nigeria must take a holistic view of the current trends of diplomatic practice and the countries' domestic socio-economic climate. Looking at the place of Nigeria on the continent in relation to its palpable role in the US national security, Marxists would argue that the well-being of Nigeria and Africans at large is not a priority or the primary goal of the US.[402] Notwithstanding the sweet diplomatic language the American officials, the current research argues that any positive contribution of the US to the well-being of the Nigerians was meant to create an enabling environment wherein the US economic and strategic interests can thrive. This is in view of the fact that states look after their national economic interests because that is an important ingredient for their national security.[403]

### 6.10. Conclusion

The US and Nigeria have developed closer bilateral relations since Abuja's return to majority rule in the year 1999. Their relations cut across the military, political and socio-economic spectrum. However, the relationship between them is asymmetrical and it was often riddled with difficulties that emanated from the domestic political conditions of Nigeria. While the US derived a lot of economic and strategic benefits

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[401] Ayam, 2008, p. 117.
[402] A. Hussein, "Kwame Nkrumah: Leninist Tzar or Leninist Garvey", in O.H. Kokole (ed), *The Global African: A Portrait of Ali A. Mazrui*. Trenton: Africa world Press, 1998, pp. 151-154.
[403] Shillington, 2005, p. 1125.

from engaging with Nigeria, it has not been able to bridge the wider gap between promise and action. Meanwhile, the US was embarrassed by Nigeria's social identity as pariah state with no respect for democracy and the rule of law. These factors pressurised the US to reconsider its engagement with Nigeria. But the death of General Abacha in 1998 paved the way for improved relations between the two countries and were normalised after the inauguration of a democratic and civilian regime in 1999. Despite the ups and downs in the partnership between the US and Nigeria, Washington's policy towards the former has been consistent, with only a change on rhetorical terms. To this end, the US engaged with Nigeria mainly at the economic level, but still condemned its military regime. Although the two countries have challenges regarding their relations, they still have more to benefit from each other, especially on economic and security matters.

The following chapter sums up the arguments and analysis and then puts forward recommendations.



## Chapter Seven

## General Conclusion

Africa is the second largest continent after Asia and it is rich in oil and other mineral resources. As such, some major players in the international arena such as the US and China are heavily reliant upon the continent for such commodities and other strategic interests tied to issues of interest that the continent can offer. This study was an attempt to examine the US foreign policy towards Africa in the post Cold War era. Owing to the vastness of Africa as a continent, this study can not claim to be comprehensive. However, it has used both Nigeria and Kenya (in terms of regional focus) to show the pattern of the US foreign policy towards African states as it has been found by similar studies. At the core this research explored the economic, political and military dimensions in US foreign policy towards Africa by focusing on oil, democracy and national security. These are the three areas in which the US engagement in Africa was found to be robust.

However, the availability of oil on the African continent together with the perceived terrorist threat was found to be the major influences to US foreign policy to Africa. With reference to the test cases for this study, the issues of democracy and terrorism appear to be the common denominator to both of them while oil is only applicable to Nigeria in this regard. In contrast, Kenya distinguishes itself both as a victim of terrorism and terrorist threat. Yet, oil in Nigeria is important for the US both as an economic resource and strategic energy source for wartime period. Periodically, this study covered the presidencies of George W. Bush Sr, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush Jr.

First, it was found that George W. Bush Sr. was at the helm of the US for a limited period of two years in the post-Cold War era and was not able to develop a clear foreign policy towards Africa. This was because of the disappearance of the communist threat in Africa following the collapse of the Soviet empire in the late 1980s and the emergence of major powers such as China. In this regard, he simply continued on the same space of his predecessor while pledging support for emerging democracies in Africa. For this reason, a distinction should be drawn between rhetoric and action. Contextually, one could say that new challenges of the post-Cold War era and limited time robbed Bush of his privilege to develop an independent foreign policy towards Africa and instead put him at the spotlight of analysts for having left no legacy for Africa. In this respect, Bush Sr.'s foreign policy in Africa envisaged the following: protection of few vital American interests and the promotion of open trade. This is symbolic of the change of foreign policy that was Cold War orientated as compared to the one that puts its focus on new areas of concern.

However, one could argue that the change of regime in the US in the post-Cold War era did not bring about any radical changes on the substance of its foreign policy towards Africa. The strategies developed and executed by the US under the administration of either the Democratic Party or the Republic Party in the post-Cold War era are more or less the same. They all contracted their foreign policies in Africa to client states or what they call "pivotal states" such as Kenya and Nigeria and this practice actually dates back to the Cold War period. Although the US may not have as much interest in non-pivotal states like Swaziland and Gambia as compared to Kenya

and Nigeria, it has more to do with partnering with regional leaders in order to maximise its foreign policy benefits than with neglect on Washington's part.

The foreign policies of respective administrations have also featured the essential elements of both realism and idealism. At the same time Americans, both democrats and republicans seldom differ on realist foreign policy priorities in Africa and elsewhere. It is within this continuum that successive US administrations viewed Africa through the perception of a potential threat and fear. The 1998 bombings of the US embassies in Nairobi and Mombasa strengthened the position of the Clinton administration that Africa is a high security risk and this was further solidified following the September 11 attacks. Despite this, respective US administrations also acknowledge that Africa is an opportunity and if engaged properly, it can be a guarantor of their national security. Both Clinton and Bush sought to use Africa to diversify US's energy sources in competition to those of the Middle East and Latin America.

Whereas African oil anchored the economic security of the US, this research found that its proceeds have not been used effectively to develop the population of the oil exporting countries especially those in Africa due to corruption, illegal trading and poor macro-economic management among key reasons. The US has done very little to improve the situation due to the limits imposed by its national interests. Some of the abnormalities in the affairs of the African oil exporting countries were blessed by the US in order to guarantee their availability as its suppliers of energy. Some of the illegal activities in oil trading in Africa have mushroomed as a result of the involvement of the American officials who often share the returns of the loot with the

local ruling political elites at the expense of the interest of the nationals. It is now clear from this study that there are no visible points of convergence between the policy goals of African states and the US especially in the area of oil trade and any other sector whatsoever. This is an area that needs to be revisited by American politicians in order to arrest the globalisation of Africa's problems. Whereas it is important to help Africa police its borders to prevent the circulation of terrorists, the US should also capacitate Africa on non-military sectors instead of taking advantage of this continent's economic vulnerabilities. The nature of the US military engagement in Africa is driven by the desire to safeguard its selfish commercial interests centred on oil resources and the perceived threat of terrorism is just an afterthought that is probable of inducing the Africans to be open to the Americans.

Furthermore, the US foreign policy does not have clear principles as it is often claimed. The values that are often mistaken to constitute the principles of America's foreign policy towards Africa are universal. The framework of US engagement differs from country to country depending on what a particular country can offer. Irrespective of what is written in a particular strategy, the American actions in Africa illustrates that tactical interests trump values in times of increased threat to security and commercial interests. To this end, the US's influence in the political and economic governance has often brought about mixed results. It has groomed and trained dictators and rebels alike. On the other hand, it has backed processes and institutions that enabled democracy to thrive relatively in some states like Nigeria and Kenya. The US foreign aid remained among the key ingredients of political development in Africa. But its positive role was often negated when it was provided in order to sustain a particular political course that undermined positive political and socio-

economic relations. While emphasis on values in the development and implementation of foreign policy is understandable, such can not be applied across the board but where possible, it can be used as a means to rally support for further strategic goals of the strategy in question.

It is clear that the manifestation of AGOA through its inhumane system of capitalism is parasitic of the benefits proclaimed by the liberal democratic project. The difference between Clinton and Bush in terms of Africa policy was on approach and focus, while the content of their policies was the same. The pattern of the deeds is the same, but there is no coherence regarding rhetoric. Clinton preferred rhetorical flexibility while his successor opted for harsh diplomacy. This is an area that heightened profile at the level stage despite failures on the question of Somalia and Rwanda in Africa. Hence, Clinton dangled a "carrot" in the form of AGOA to gain more accessibility to the African markets. This is part of Clinton's policy that resembles the elements of the foreign policy of his predecessor in addition to a focus on human rights and nation building in Africa. Although AGOA was actualised under Clinton's successor, Bush's approach to the terrorist threat dampened the human face of his foreign policy in Africa. There is little doubt Africa would be counted as one of Bush Jr.'s foreign policy legacies on humanitarian issues including poverty and HIV/ AIDS. While PEPFAR contributed immensely in the war against HIV/ AIDS in Africa, the reality is that it was a calculated move by the Bush administration to help arrest this epidemic in Africa because its prevalence also threatens the security of the US as indicated earlier in the study. To be sure, PEPFAR and its associates were feeding into the US strategy to combat the threat of terrorism and countries that benefited from it were expected to rally behind Washington. Linked to this,

preventive war was the framework of Bush's foreign policy and the promotion of democracy was only stated as part of the overall strategy to combat terrorism. Chicago Council on Global Affairs conducted a study that illustrates that in the past decade and half, realist priorities have consistently earned more than sixty percent (60%) in the US while liberal policy priorities obtained less than fifty percent (50%) of the public support. The ultimate implications are that America's relations in Africa are not based on principles or values but desperate political interests.

While this study has also drawn from the theories of International Political Economy such as Marxism and Securitisation, it maintains that the realist and idealist school of thought remain relevant to the analysis of the foreign policy of the US and others. It is suggested that this should be complemented by the evolving theory of constructivism that seeks to close the gap between realism and idealism. In addition to this, it is recommended that Afro-centricity as articulated by prominent scholars such as Molefi Kete Asante and Ama Mazama must also be considered. To some extent Afro-centricity agrees and reinforces the Eurocentric frameworks of classical realism and idealism. Therefore, anyone who wants to understand foreign policy must view Eurocentric and Afrocentric schools of thought as complementary rather than competing. The consideration of the two paradigms is likely to provide a qualitatively enriched picture of the US foreign policy as compared to a mono-cultural closed system of thought. Lastly, this study is not a final word on US foreign policy towards Africa. It contributes to an existing body of literature on African-American affairs and it therefore serves as a stepping stone for future research in this area.

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