

# **THE NEW TOURNAMENT OF SHADOWS: THE STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS OF CHINA'S ACTIVITY IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA AND AFRICOM'S ROLE IN THE U.S. RESPONSE**

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## **Introduction**

The role of the Hegemon is deeply embedded in China's national identity,<sup>2</sup> and after more than a century adrift, Beijing seeks to reacquire the great power role it sees as its destiny.<sup>3</sup> Economic growth is the means to China's strategic end, and advancing the ship of state requires enormous amounts of energy and raw materials. Given Africa's large reserves of oil, natural gas and minerals, Beijing has made expanding its influence in Africa a strategic priority. China seeks essentially three things from Africa: unimpeded and virtually exclusive access to natural resources; new markets for its export-driven economy; and increased influence among international political bodies.<sup>4</sup> Beijing's strategy has been extremely successful largely because it is accompanied by a "clear government policy in support of African commercial ventures, abundant financing and tax benefits for Chinese firms operating abroad and robust diplomacy toward the region."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The views expressed in this article are the author's and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.

<sup>2</sup> Steven Mosher, *Hegemon: China's Plan to Dominate Asia and the World*, (San Francisco: Encounter, 2000), p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Bernstein and Ross Munro, *The Coming Conflict With China* (New York: Vintage, 1998), p. 4. See also R. Payne and C. Venev, "China's Post-Cold War African Policy," *Asian Survey*, Vol. 38, No. 9, September 1998, p. 868 (explaining that China sees itself "through the prism of its past as one of the world's leading civilizations," and its "rapid economic growth has [reinforced] its self-perception as a great power).

<sup>4</sup> Peter Brookes, "Into Africa: China's Grab for Influence and Oil," Heritage Lecture 1006, [www.heritage.org](http://www.heritage.org), accessed 3/26/2007.

<sup>5</sup> Mauro DeLorenzo, "China and Africa: A New Scramble," China Brief Vol. VII, Issue 7, April 5, 2007, [www.jamestown.org](http://www.jamestown.org), accessed 4/7/2007.

China's Africa strategy, described as "political warfare,"<sup>6</sup> has also been very successful because Beijing possesses advantages in dealing with African nations that the United States does not. First, many African governments do not consider China to be imperialist. Second, China's noninterventionist policy does not demand good governance, democracy, human rights or governmental transparency.<sup>7</sup> As one African official has noted, "the U.S. will talk to you about governance, efficiency, about security, about the environment. The Chinese just ask: how do we procure this license."<sup>8</sup> Third, China uses its position as the sole "developing" member of the United Nations Security Council (the Security Council) to advocate for smaller countries and their interests.<sup>9</sup> Fourth, African countries that sign deals with Chinese companies receive diplomatic protection.<sup>10</sup> For example, China used its position on the Security Council to stymie the investigation and punishment of Robert Mugabe's 2005 "clean-up campaign," where police destroyed slums and markets in Zimbabwe. All of these factors have enabled China to establish "strategic counterbalances designed to increase its power and limit that of the United States."<sup>11</sup>

Like China, the United States also considers Africa an area of strategic significance, especially since it imports sixteen percent of its oil from the Continent. However, U.S. strategic interests in Africa extend beyond oil and other resources to

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<sup>6</sup> See Donovan Chau, *Political Warfare in Sub-Saharan Africa: U.S. Capabilities and Chinese Operations in Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa*, p. 5, <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdf/files/pub766.pdf>, accessed 12/5/2007, (Defining political warfare as a "nonviolent instrument of grand strategy [that] involves coordinated activities, and results in tangible effects on intended targets. . . [it] includes economic aid and development assistance, as well as training, equipping and arming military and security forces").

<sup>7</sup> Margaret Lee, *The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Scramble for Africa*, *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 24, 3, September 2006, p. 318.

<sup>8</sup> Brookes, "Into Africa," [www.heritage.org](http://www.heritage.org), accessed 3/26/2007.

<sup>9</sup> Philippe D. Rogers, "Dragon with a Heart of Darkness: Countering Chinese Influence in Africa," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Issue 47, 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter, 2007, p. 23.

<sup>10</sup> "In Africa, China Trade Brings Growth, Unease," *Washington Post*, June 13, 2006, A14.

<sup>11</sup> Rogers, "Dragon with a Heart of Darkness," p. 23, (citing Todd G. Puntney, "The Inevitability of India," Research Paper, Naval War College, 2005 at p. 5).

preventing the spread of terrorism; promoting responsible government and democratic values; increasing trade and addressing transnational health and environmental concerns. To that end, the U.S. is establishing AFRICOM to improve its strategic position on the Continent by integrating U.S. interagency efforts and assisting diplomatic and developmental initiatives. While the Bush Administration insists that AFRICOM will not exist to counter China's influence in sub-Saharan Africa, its presence and mission will challenge the strategic status quo and likely lead to political and economic conflict.

### **Winning Friends and Influencing People**

The quest for oil drives China's Africa policy, and the character of the supplier is irrelevant. As a Chinese official noted, "[n]o matter if it is rogue's oil or a friend's oil, we don't care. Human rights? We don't care. We care about oil . . . anyone who helps China with energy is a friend."<sup>12</sup> It is estimated that between 2002 and 2025, China's share of world-wide consumption of fossil fuels will rise between seven and twelve percent.<sup>13</sup> Currently, China receives ten percent of its oil from Africa, but Beijing's energy situation is precarious. It is possible that within ten years, China will be the world's largest consumer of oil, yet it possesses no strategic petroleum reserve.<sup>14</sup> Consequently, Beijing is determined to reduce dependency upon Middle Eastern oil. To that end, China has invested billions of dollars for drilling rights in Nigeria, Sudan and Angola, and has exploration or extraction deals with Chad, Gabon, Mauritania, Kenya,

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<sup>12</sup> James Kirchick, "Africa's New Hegemon," March 5, 2007, [www.frontpagemagazine.com](http://www.frontpagemagazine.com), accessed 3/6/2007.

<sup>13</sup> *Id.*

<sup>14</sup> Joshua Eisenman and Joshua Kurlantzick, *China's Africa Strategy*, Current History, May 2006, [www.afpc.org/china-africa.shtml](http://www.afpc.org/china-africa.shtml), accessed 4/11/2007.

Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Ethiopia.<sup>15</sup> Oil, however, is not the only African commodity that interests China. Beijing is actively acquiring the strategic minerals cobalt, chrome and platinum from the Congo, Zambia, Zimbabwe and South Africa.<sup>16</sup> The People's Republic is also attempting to corner the market on minerals such as Cerium, neodymium, lanthanum and dysprosium, which are essential to applications for miniaturized electronics, disk drives, display screens, and missile guidance systems.<sup>17</sup>

China has also used foreign trade to greatly expand its influence in Africa. In 2006, China had over \$55 billion in trade with Africa, and that number could rise to \$100 billion by 2010.<sup>18</sup> However, all that glitters is not gold. The influx of cheap Chinese imports has led to the loss of over 70,000 textile jobs in South Africa, and in order to protect its textile industry South Africa has imposed quotas on textile imports to prevent "dumping" by Chinese manufacturers.<sup>19</sup> Additionally, China's booming construction, manufacturing and extraction industries in Africa have led to massive legal and illegal immigration of ethnic Chinese, which has caused friction with indigenous populations.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, "Africa's need for new and better roads, school buildings, computer networks, telecom systems and power generation has opened a lucrative window of opportunity for Chinese firms,"<sup>21</sup> which often employ large numbers of local workers, albeit at low wages.<sup>22</sup> In Ethiopia, where the state-owned China Road and Bridge Corporation is constructing a new road around part of Addis-Ababa, thousands of ordinary citizens are

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<sup>15</sup> "In Africa, China Trade Brings Growth, Unease," *Washington Post*, June 13, 2006, A14.

<sup>16</sup> Lee, "Scramble for Africa," p. 314.

<sup>17</sup> "Beijing Cornering Strategic Minerals," February 20, 2006, [www.thefreelibrary.com](http://www.thefreelibrary.com), accessed 5/15/2007.

<sup>18</sup> "Sino-African Trade Likely to Hit 100 Bln Before 2010," *People's Daily Online*, November 14, 2007 (<http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/90883/6301978.html>), accessed 12/4/2007.

<sup>19</sup> "Cheap Imports Batter Africa's Businesses," *Washington Times*, May 7, 2007, A1.

<sup>20</sup> Elizabeth Economy, "Perils of Beijing's Africa Strategy," *International Herald Tribune*, [www.iht.com](http://www.iht.com), accessed 4/11/2007.

<sup>21</sup> "China in Africa: Developing Ties," [www.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7086777.stm](http://www.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7086777.stm), accessed 11/29/2007.

<sup>22</sup> Id.

being forced to leave their homes and are not hopeful of receiving any relocation subsidy from the Ethiopian government.<sup>23</sup>

Beijing, which depends upon African support for its policies in the U.N. and other international bodies, is very sensitive to any African discontent. President Hu Jintao promised in a recent speech that Beijing would broaden “win-win economic cooperation” so that “both sides will share the benefits of development.”<sup>24</sup> Thus, Beijing has promised to send 51 agricultural experts to Africa in order to improve harvest levels.<sup>25</sup> Reaffirming Beijing’s nonintervention policy, President Hu noted that “China has never imposed its will or unequal practices on other countries and will never do so in the future.”<sup>26</sup>

### **Vaulting Ambition**

China’s relentless quest for oil, strategic minerals, new markets for its goods and increased political influence poses numerous strategic challenges for the United States. First, the United States seeks an Africa that “lives in liberty, peace and growing prosperity,”<sup>27</sup> but China’s unconditional financial aid and infrastructure assistance damages Africa by undermining years of western foreign assistance efforts aimed at increasing responsible government in Africa’s fragile, pseudo-democracies that lack strong civil liberties and other foundational elements of democracy.<sup>28</sup> Unfortunately, for

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<sup>23</sup> “China in Africa: Rebuilding Addis,” <http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7081530.stm>, accessed 11/29/2007.

<sup>24</sup> Address by Hu Jintao at the Opening Ceremony of the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, [http://english.focacsummit.org/2006-11/04/content\\_4978.htm](http://english.focacsummit.org/2006-11/04/content_4978.htm), accessed 1/8/2008.

<sup>25</sup> “China Pledges to Grant More Aid to Africa,” *People’s Daily Online*, November 14, 2007 (<http://english.people.com.cn/90001/90776/90883/6301978.html>), accessed 12/4/2007.

<sup>26</sup> “Hu Says Chinese Drive Will Not Hurt Africa,” [www.reuters.com](http://www.reuters.com), accessed 1/8/2008.

<sup>27</sup> National Security Strategy, September 2002, p. 10, [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov), accessed 12/13/2007.

<sup>28</sup> Eisenman and Kurlantzik, *China’s Africa Strategy*, [www.afpc.org/china-africa.shtml](http://www.afpc.org/china-africa.shtml), accessed 4/11/2007.

many African nations the “lure of immediate, lucrative, and needed investment is too tempting to ignore.”<sup>29</sup>

Perhaps the worst example is China’s relationship with the Sudan, where according to the *Washington Post* Beijing is “countenancing genocide.”<sup>30</sup> China has invested over \$8 billion in joint oil exploration contracts in Sudan, including the Darfur region.<sup>31</sup> Amnesty International has alleged that China is supplying arms<sup>32</sup> used in the Darfur conflict in return for oil, and despite evidence that Sudan’s government is contributing to mass murder Beijing remains Khartoum’s top business partner.<sup>33</sup> At the 2006 China-Africa Cooperation Forum, Sudanese President Hassan al-Bashir thanked China for blocking a U.S. sponsored resolution in the Security Council that called for the deployment of an international peace keeping force to Darfur. China has also used its veto power in the Security Council to weaken sanctions against Sudan for the genocide in Darfur.<sup>34</sup> As the head of Human Rights Watch Africa Division has noted concerning China, “[t]hey see no evil. They hear no evil. That’s very bad for Africans.”<sup>35</sup>

Second, China’s financial practices are potentially destabilizing to African nations. By offering easy money, Chinese lending may lead to the “rapid reestablishment of an unsustainable level of debt in Africa once again,”<sup>36</sup> and has caused the U.S. Treasury Department to label the Middle Kingdom a “rogue creditor”

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<sup>29</sup> Rogers, “Dragon with a Heart of Darkness,” p. 23.

<sup>30</sup> “China’s Games,” *Washington Post*, May 29, 2007, A12.

<sup>31</sup> Lee, “Scramble for Africa,” p. 319.

<sup>32</sup> Rogers, “Dragon with a Heart of Darkness,” p. 24 (China has also sold arms to Burundi, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Tanzania).

<sup>33</sup> “China’s Games,” *Washington Post*, May 29, 2007, A12.

<sup>34</sup> Under Article 23 of the United Nations Charter, China is a permanent member of the Security Council. Under Article 27, when voting on non-administrative matters, all permanent members must concur with the decisions of the Security Council.

<sup>35</sup> “In Africa, China Trade Brings Growth, Unease,” *Washington Post*, June 13, 2006, A14.

<sup>36</sup> Brookes, “Into Africa,” [www.heritage.org](http://www.heritage.org), accessed 3/26/2007.

that practices “predatory lending.”<sup>37</sup> China has also forgiven the debts of thirty five African nations by turning “loans” into grants.<sup>38</sup> Additionally, Beijing’s willingness to provide more loans than the World Bank undermines the effectiveness of programs like the Millennium Challenge Account,<sup>39</sup> which offers financial assistance to countries that meet standards of accountable governance, and the African Growth and Opportunity Act, which grants African countries preferential access to U.S. markets.<sup>40</sup> All of this matters because it is in unstable areas and failed states where Islamic terrorists establish footholds.

Third, China’s activity in West Africa potentially threatens United States access to oil. In the 2006 State of the Union address, President Bush called on America to “replace more than 75 percent of our oil imports from the Middle East by 2025.”<sup>41</sup> According to the Energy Department, the United States has taken significant steps to wean itself from Middle East fossil fuels, largely due to Africa’s abundant energy resources.<sup>42</sup> To that end, the United States now imports fifteen percent of its oil from Africa.<sup>43</sup> Surprisingly, Nigeria has moved past Saudi Arabia as America’s third largest supplier of oil, and if you add the oil purchased from Angola, the two states supply more oil to the United States than Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates combined.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Id.

<sup>38</sup> Kirchick, “Africa’s New Hegemon,” [www.frontpagemagazine.com](http://www.frontpagemagazine.com), accessed 3/6/2007.

<sup>39</sup> See [www.mcc.gov](http://www.mcc.gov).

<sup>40</sup> See [www.agoa.gov](http://www.agoa.gov).

<sup>41</sup> State of the Union Address by the President (January 31, 2006), [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov), accessed August 15, 2007.

<sup>42</sup> Peter Pham “Africa Command: A Historic Opportunity for Enhanced Engagement – If done Right,” pp. 5-6, [www.internationalrelations.house.gov/110/pha080207.htm](http://www.internationalrelations.house.gov/110/pha080207.htm), accessed 8/6/2007.

<sup>43</sup> Princeton Lyman and Patricia Dorff, “In Africa, Beyond Humanitarianism,” [www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com), accessed 12/10/2007.

<sup>44</sup> Pham, “Africa Command,” p. 6.

Beijing's relentless pursuit of energy resources in Africa is of particular concern to Washington. In 2006, China's national petroleum company, CNOOC, signed an agreement with Nigeria to pay \$2.3 billion for interest in an oil and gas field.<sup>45</sup> This followed an \$800 million crude sales agreement, wherein China agreed to buy 30,000 barrels per day from Nigeria for five years. Should Nigeria come to favor China as a customer, the U.S. would have to find an alternate supplier of oil, which could significantly impact both the American and world economies. General Bantz Craddock, Commander of the U.S. European Command has stated that AFRICOM will be "out front" in safeguarding West African oil and other energy production against terrorist attack, especially since instability in the Middle East has placed a premium on U.S. security alliances and energy sources in Africa.<sup>46</sup>

Fourth, China's influence may challenge U.S. access to major African ports, which could have both economic and military implications. As a maritime nation, freedom of the seas and access to major ports is pivotal to American security. The National Strategy for Maritime Security states "[t]he safety and economic security of the United States depends in substantial part upon the secure use of the world's oceans."<sup>47</sup> Consequently, Africa's seaports are vital points of access for imports and exports, and there are few on the continent capable of handling the largest ships.<sup>48</sup> On the Atlantic Ocean, only Capetown, South Africa has a deep enough port to support large and

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<sup>45</sup> Lee, "Scramble for Africa," p. 319.

<sup>46</sup> "Securing African Oil a Major Role for New Command," [www.civpol.org](http://www.civpol.org), accessed 1/8/2008. See also, Statement of General Bantz J. Craddock, USA, United States European Command, Before the House Armed Services Committee on March 15, 2007, <http://www.dod.mil/dodgc/olc/docs/TestCraddock070315.pdf>, accessed 1/8/2008.

<sup>47</sup> The National Strategy for Maritime Security, September 2005, p. ii, [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov), accessed 7/6/2007.

<sup>48</sup> Gordon Maggenheim, "Chinese Influence on U.S. Operational Access to African Seaports," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Issue 45, 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter 2007, p. 23.



medium speed roll-on/roll-off vessels (LMSR),<sup>49</sup> while on the Indian Ocean, only Durban, South Africa has LMSR berths. The only remaining LMSR berth is at Mombasa, Kenya. The West Coast, including the oil rich Gulf of Guinea, has no LMSR ports. Understandably, China has formed strong economic relationships with South Africa and Kenya, describing the former as “a key African partner of China,”<sup>50</sup> and the latter as “an important nation in East Africa with [a] good basis for economic development.”<sup>51</sup>

Should the ports be unavailable to the U.S., it could significantly impact America’s ability to trade with African nations or to receive oil. Militarily, the U.S. would need access to the LMSR ports to conduct humanitarian or military operations in Africa, and should access be either denied or unavailable, the missions may either be impossible or impeded. This means that “American military planners must confront the reality that access for the largest class of vessels capable of delivering sizeable amounts of equipment and material into available African seaports may be denied due to conflict with commercial interests at the port for all but a forced entry scenario.”<sup>52</sup> For the U.S., such a situation is strategically unacceptable.

## Playing Catch Up

In contrast to China’s systematic and well-planned efforts, U.S. engagement in Africa has been “a patchwork of generally successful but unsynchronized initiatives and

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<sup>49</sup> Patrick Patterson, “Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea,” *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Issue 45, 2<sup>nd</sup> Qtr 2007, p. 28.

<sup>50</sup> “China, South Africa to Launch Free Trade Talk,” *Peoples Daily Online*, July 1, 2004, [www.http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/english/doc/2004-07/01/content\\_344575.htm](http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/english/doc/2004-07/01/content_344575.htm), accessed 12/13/2007.

<sup>51</sup> “China to Promote Cooperation with Kenya: Chinese Premier,” *Peoples Daily Online*, August 19, 2005, [www.http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200508/19/print20050819\\_203345.html](http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200508/19/print20050819_203345.html), accessed 12/13/2007.

<sup>52</sup> Patterson, “Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea,” p. 26.

policies that cross intragovernmental boundaries.”<sup>53</sup> The Bush Administration understands Africa’s strategic significance and has established AFRICOM in order to:

. . . strengthen our security cooperation with Africa and help to create new opportunities to bolster the capabilities of our partners in Africa. Africa Command will enhance our efforts to help bring peace and security to the people of Africa and promote our common goals of development, health, education, democracy and economic growth in Africa.<sup>54</sup>

AFRICOM will be unlike existing combatant commands because its primary mission will not be operational. In fact, AFRICOM will be an almost quasi-diplomatic organization that works closely with other U.S. government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and African regional organizations such as the New Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD) and the African Union to oversee theater security activities and enhance strategic cooperation while building support for nonmilitary missions.<sup>55</sup> Consequently, AFRICOM, will not have a large troop presence and will try to be as “small and as unobtrusive as possible,” according to Ryan Henry, the Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy.<sup>56</sup> AFRICOM’s goal is not to assume a leadership role on the continent, but instead to support African leaders by emphasizing humanitarian missions, civil affairs, and assisting in the improvement of border and maritime security.<sup>57</sup>

AFRICOM will help implement the following interlocking U.S. national security strategies delineated in the 2002 National Security Strategy: (1) the establishment of stronger bilateral relations with four major impact countries: South Africa, Kenya,

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<sup>53</sup> Rogers, “Dragon with a Heart of Darkness,” p. 22.

<sup>54</sup> “President Bush Creates a Department of Defense Unified Combatant Command for Africa,” [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov), accessed 1/8/2008.

<sup>55</sup> Brett Schaefer, “Creating an Africa Command”, February 9, 2007, [www.heritage.org](http://www.heritage.org), accessed 4/15/2007.

<sup>56</sup> “State Department: U.S. Military’s Africa Command to Help African Leaders,” *U.S. Fed News Service*, April 24, 2007, <http://proquest.umi.com>, accessed 5/4/2007.

<sup>57</sup> *Id.*

Ethiopia and Nigeria; (2) coordination with European allies and international institutions essential to conflict mediation and peace operations; and (3) the strengthening of Africa's reforming states and sub-regional organizations to address transnational threats.<sup>58</sup> Building bilateral security partnerships will be a "key mandate" for the new command,<sup>59</sup> so AFRICOM will work with African militaries to improve their level of professionalization and technical proficiency. Additionally, AFRICOM will work with regional and international organizations to prevent conflict by "addressing threats at their inception through theater security cooperation."<sup>60</sup> Implicit in this task is working with the African Union, which has a standby force that has already performed peace operations in Burundi, Darfur and the Comoros. The focus on security and stability will directly involve AFRICOM in the inter-agency process and "require a major break with conventional doctrinal mentalities both within the armed services . . . and . . . government agencies."<sup>61</sup> Strong State Department and USAID presence on the AFRICOM staff evidences the intent to work with regional organizations to help states develop the political and economic stability necessary to address transnational threats such as AIDS and radical Islam. Given its structure, AFRICOM will be well suited to working with NEPAD, which works to place African countries on a path of sustainable governance by enhancing the full integration of Africa into the global economy.

A recent editorial suggested that the U.S should develop an African Marshall Plan complete with expanded pledges of humanitarian aid; enhanced participation in

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<sup>58</sup> National Security Strategy (NSS), September 2002, p. 11, [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov), accessed 12/13/2007. The NSS 2002 has been superseded by the NSS 2006, which reaffirms Africa's geostrategic significance and the U.S. commitment to working with African nations. See NSS 2006, p. 37, [www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss/2006/nss2006.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss/2006/nss2006.pdf), accessed 2/20/2008.

<sup>59</sup> Lauren Ploch, "Africa Command: U.S. Strategic Interests and the Role of the U.S. Military in Africa," Congressional Research Service, May 16, 2007, p. 17, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RL34003.pdf>, accessed 12/10/2007.

<sup>60</sup> Id. at 5.

<sup>61</sup> Id., citing J. Peter Pham, "Getting AFRICOM Right," *World Defense Review*, February 15, 2007.

existing U.N. relief and security apparatus; increased high level diplomatic contacts, and the implementation of comprehensive economic stimulus package complete with low cost loans, grants, and infrastructure development.<sup>62</sup> Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair raised the idea in 2004 when he formed the Commission for Africa, which recommended, *inter alia*, a \$25 billion annual increase in aid to Africa by 2010, with a focus on more grants and less burdensome donor processes.<sup>63</sup> President Bush supported the idea, but he disagreed with the British plan to create an international finance facility to administer the aid due to legal constraints on Congress's authority to enter into long-term financial commitments.<sup>64</sup> While the British plan relied heavily upon the existing aid system, the *Financial Times* recently commented that:

[a] true Marshall Plan for Africa could ignite growth and reduce poverty, but only through a different set of institutions than the current aid system. . . Aid plans foster government-led development with an emphasis on social services. The Marshall Plan fostered business sector development with an emphasis on loans and economic infrastructure. It was something Africa has never seen on a large scale – a business sector support project.<sup>65</sup>

While an in-depth analysis of an African Marshall Plan is beyond the scope of this paper,<sup>66</sup> should the U.S. pursue such a plan, it would likely use a combination of government aid and business sector initiatives. Regardless of the approach, however, security will be essential to the plan's success<sup>67</sup> and will require AFRICOM to engage in

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<sup>62</sup> Fred Stakelbeck, "African Marshall Plan, U.S. Must Counter China's Courtship," May 19, 2007, [www.washingtontimes.com](http://www.washingtontimes.com).

<sup>63</sup> "Our Common Interest: Report of the Commission for Africa," p. 16, [www.commissionforafrica.org/english/report/introduction.html](http://www.commissionforafrica.org/english/report/introduction.html), accessed 12/5/07.

<sup>64</sup> Mark Tran, "Brown Calls for African Marshall Plan," June 3, 2005, <http://www.guardian.co.uk>, accessed 12/6/2007.

<sup>65</sup> "Why Africa Needs a Marshall Plan," *Financial Times*, June 4, 2007, [www.ft.com](http://www.ft.com), accessed 11/29/2007.

<sup>66</sup> For an excellent analysis of the potential pitfalls of an African Marshall Plan see D. Chollet and J. Goldgeier, "The Faulty Premises of the Next Marshall Plan," *Washington Quarterly*, Winter 2005-06, Volume 29, Number 1, pp. 7-19.

<sup>67</sup> *Id.* at 16.

security cooperation activities, which are “inherently joint, interagency and multinational” and include “a diplomatic, information, and economic flavor.”<sup>68</sup>

U.S. defense policy now includes security cooperation in every phase of operational planning with special focus on the “shaping” phase<sup>69</sup> where the purpose is to alleviate a crisis before U.S. military intervention is required.<sup>70</sup> Thus, in implementing an African Marshall Plan, AFRICOM would engage in multinational exercises, training, and education; security assistance; military to military contacts; humanitarian and civic assistance; security assistance; and international military education. These types of activities are particularly important because they are foundational to the remaining phases of military operations.<sup>71</sup>

Perhaps no other issue will be more critical to AFRICOM’s strategic effect than its location.<sup>72</sup> Suspicion of the military plus the history of colonialism has led to much skepticism about AFRICOM’s presence on the continent, and the reaction of African nations has varied. Kenya, Zambia, Algeria, Cameroon, South Africa and Libya have all expressed either reservations or outright rejection; Morocco has expressed preliminary interest in hosting AFRICOM, and Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has officially offered her country to serve as host, since it would have a “most beneficial effect on the West Africa sub-region, as well as the entire continent.”<sup>73</sup> AFRICOM is currently located in Stuttgart, but the Bush Administration is still seeking to establish a permanent

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<sup>68</sup> Clarence J. Bouchat, “An Introduction to Theater Strategy and Regional Security,” *The L’Etort Papers*, August 2007, U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, p.22, (citing Joint Publication 3-0, p.xxvi).

<sup>69</sup> Gregory Dykeman, “Security Cooperation: A Key to the Challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century,” p. 2, <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/>, accessed 12/8/2007.

<sup>70</sup> Joint Publication 3-0, “Joint Operations,” p. VII-1, [http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/new\\_pubs/jp3\\_0.pdf](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/new_pubs/jp3_0.pdf), accessed 12/10/2007.

<sup>71</sup> Bouchat, “An Introduction to Theater Strategy,” p. 31.

<sup>72</sup> Pham, “Africa Command,” p. 22.

<sup>73</sup> “Will AFRICOM (Africa Command) Be an Impetus for Changing U.S.-Africa Trade Policies,” [www.craigeisele.wordpress.com](http://www.craigeisele.wordpress.com), accessed 1/8/2008.

headquarters on the Continent. While the nature of AFRICOM's reception on the continent is uncertain, there is some basis for optimism. As President Sirleaf has stated, African nations:

. . . must acknowledge that security and development are inextricably linked. There is no greater engine for development than a secure nation, and no better way [to] build secure nations than through professional militaries and security forces that are responsible to civilian authorities who safeguard the rule of law and human rights. . . AFRICOM should be seen as the end-product of a significant strategic realignment a long time in the making . . . AFRICOM is undeniably about the projection of American interests – but this does not mean that it is to the exclusion of African ones.<sup>74</sup>

AFRICOM's success will depend largely upon convincing its African partners that President Johnson's words are true.

### **Rattling the Cage**

In international relations, conflict is the rule, not the exception, since nations pursue their strategic interests often at the expense of others. That said, in the past decade China has achieved great strategic success in Africa and has profited handsomely from America's disjointed efforts on the Continent. The establishment of AFRICOM will challenge the strategic status quo in Africa, and Beijing is not pleased. Although China has not issued an official statement concerning AFRICOM, the *People's Daily* has warned of the impending U.S. military "infiltration" of Africa and noted that "the continent has been subjected to the joint jurisdiction of the U.S. European, Pacific and Central commands. . . The independent AFRICOM will surely facilitate coordinating or

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<sup>74</sup> Peter Pham, "Africa Command," p. 22, citing "AFRICOM Can Help Governments Willing to Help Themselves," [www.allAfrica.com](http://www.allAfrica.com), (6/25/2007).

overseeing U.S. military actions . . . for an effective control of the whole of Africa.”<sup>75</sup> In a June 2007 article, the *People’s Daily* asserted that the establishment of AFRICOM has been “unpleasant and out of sorts” and provides evidence that Americans have a “complex sense of self-arrogance or self-importance.”<sup>76</sup> Beijing’s unease is understandable, since its indifference to good governance and democratic values has brought virtually unfettered access to oil and markets throughout sub-Saharan Africa. The last thing that China wants is AFRICOM working with individual governments and regional organizations such as NEPAD and the African Union to advance democratic values, the rule of law and accountability, since such developments might threaten China’s strategic objective to become the dominant Asian power.

Moreover, by establishing bilateral relations with African nations and working with African regional organizations, AFRICOM’s presence may threaten the considerable political influence that China has established both on the Continent and in international bodies such as the U.N. African nations comprise twenty five percent of U.N. membership, and China has come to rely upon their support for its policies. Consequently, Beijing does not want a larger pro-American block in the U.N, which has been a valuable surrogate in thwarting the United States around the globe. Adding to Beijing’s unease is the reality that its position in Africa is not invulnerable. China’s involvement in Darfur has lowered its international reputation; its trading practices threaten native African industries and labor markets; its nonintervention policy angers

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<sup>75</sup> “U.S. Moves to Step Up Military Infiltration in Africa,” <http://en.0437.gov.cn/dispArticle.Asp?ID=1104>, accessed 1/8/2008.

<sup>76</sup> “U.S. Embarrassment in Africa,” [http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200703/15/print20070315\\_357931.html](http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/200703/15/print20070315_357931.html), accessed 1/8/2008.

human rights groups, and it has a history of working with repressive Islamic governments in order to meet its short-term needs while countering U.S. interests.<sup>77</sup>

Regardless of China's discontent, U.S. strategic interests are well-served by a stable, healthy and prosperous Africa contributing to global security and a stronger world economy. The worst case scenario for the U.S. is a "possessive-minded China heavily influencing Africa on economic, political and military issues, resulting in decisions being made to benefit China exclusively at the expense of U.S. regional interests."<sup>78</sup> While the U.S. is not establishing AFRICOM to become the cop on the beat, the new command will play a part in ensuring that the above-mentioned scenario remains hypothetical.

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<sup>77</sup> Stakelbeck, "African Marshall Plan," [www.washingtontimes.com](http://www.washingtontimes.com).

<sup>78</sup> *Id.*



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