Bruce Gilley

# The End of the African Renaissance

Twenty years ago, African leaders and intellectuals proclaimed an African renaissance. The grim days of postcolonial Africa, they said, were over. The end of the Cold War and the growing popular disgust with misrule had created an opportunity for lasting change. In its place would come democracy, development, and peace. “Africa cries out for a new birth. We must, in action, say that there is no obstacle big enough to stop us from bringing about a new African renaissance,” President Nelson Mandela of South Africa told a meeting of regional leaders in 1994.[1]

In a nutshell, the African renaissance was an attempt to have a fruitful encounter with modernity after decades of self-destructive ones. While no targets were set, the trends were supposed to be up. For perhaps a decade or so, they were. But since the early 2000s, the trends in the region have worsened. Today, it is time to admit that the African renaissance is over. Across the 48 countries of sub-Saharan Africa, tyranny, stagnation, and conflict are on the march again.

What is troubling, besides the end of the renaissance, is that Western countries have little interest and even less leverage to affect changes in Africa. But preventing Africa’s slide into oblivion is at least a pressing humanitarian issue, if not a security issue. Lives matter, and saving them will require a stiffer resolve than Western leaders showed in the 1960s and 1970s, when the last African renaissance collapsed. Do Western countries, especially the United States, have the political willpower and capacity to rise to the coming challenge?

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## The Return of Economic Stasis

This third and latest African renaissance (after those proclaimed in the nineteenth century and then again in the immediate postcolonial period) began with economics. Senegal, which had driven itself to penury through state intervention, signed a structural adjustment loan with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 1979 that ushered in an era of regional economic liberalization in the 1980s and 1990s. The Lagos Plan of 1980, the last gasp of discredited African Socialism, was replaced by the IMF's Enhanced Structural Adjustment Facility as the main driver of economic growth in the region. Generally speaking, this strategy worked well in Senegal and other African states like Ghana, Tanzania, and Uganda that actually practiced it. The number of African countries where gross domestic product (GDP) per capita growth exceeded 2.5 percent a year rose from just five in the 1980s to 30 in the 2000s.[2]

But the recent global economic slowdown has exposed an uncomfortable truth about the African economic expansion: it was driven by one-off gains in efficiency as excessive state control wound down and markets were allowed to thrive in the midst of a global commodities boom. Africa has created no global companies during its long expansion, nor has it moved up the value-added chain. Most successful regional companies are foreign-owned or run. Now that marketization gains and frothy global commodity demand have ended, the lack of entrepreneurial-led productivity gains in Africa is showing through. Regional gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, which was growing at more than four percent a year in the 1990s and 2000s, shrank in 2009, and according to the IMF, will return to only 2.6 percent in 2010, mainly on the back of more government spending.[3]

In a region living on the edge of survival, that is a calamity. The World Bank puts the *additional* number of infant deaths from malnutrition in the 2009 growth slowdown at between 30,000 and 50,000.[4] Unemployment in powerhouse South Africa (whose figures are considered reliable) reached 25 percent in 2010, uncomfortably close to the 33 percent that the post-apartheid government calculated for 1994 to document the horrors of the old system (the International Labour Organization said at the time that 20 percent was a better estimate).[5] The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)—set by the UN in 2000 to achieve basic education, health, and income in all developing countries by 2015—are now a pipe dream for Africa, according to the World Bank. Africa is the only region in the world that has made insufficient progress or worsened across *every single* MDG indicator over the last decade. The informal economy, which reflects weak business confidence, has actually expanded during the African renaissance, and now accounts for over 70 percent of non-agricultural employment and 42 percent of Africa's GDP.[6]

In the meantime, the rest of the developing world has been racing ahead. Africa's share of global GDP is about 2.4 percent today, unchanged from 1980 and 1990. Under-5 infant mortality fell modestly by 22 percent between 1990 and 2008, but this has been a result of the efforts of international nongovernmental organizations pouring resources and advocacy into Africa. In other developing regions, the declines have been far steeper—for example, a 41 percent decline over the same period in India, whose population is a third bigger than all of sub-Saharan Africa. Africa's absolute levels of under-5 infant mortality remain appallingly high (144 deaths per 1,000 births versus 69 in India) due to very basic problems of health and healthcare that could be easily solved. The UN World Food Programme (WFP) had to assist 36 million Africans (4.5 percent of the regional population) to secure their food needs in 2009—up from 21 million (3.5 percent) in 1997. The share of Africans among all WFP beneficiaries has gone *up* slightly from about one-third to two-fifths of the global total over the same period.[7]

## Democratization in Reverse

Democratization was the second key dimension of the African renaissance. It began in Benin, the country with the most coups in Africa since independence in 1960. In 1989, long-time dictator Mathieu Kérékou renounced Marxism-Leninism and announced plans for a national conference on the country's future. In 1991, he was voted out of office. That same year, the first notable revival of the term "African Renaissance" appeared in the *New York Times* in an opinion article by American law scholar Makau Mutua, a native of Kenya.[8] Overall, the most significant democratic gains in Africa took place between 1989 and 1995. The average democracy rating for the 48 sub-Saharan African countries, as measured by Freedom House, improved by 18 percent in those six years.[9] The subsequent decade witnessed continued democratic gains, but at a slowing pace.

> **Plain words about Africa are in short supply today.**

Since 2005, however, Africa has witnessed four consecutive years of overall democratic decline. The year 2010 is likely to be the fifth. It is not just that democracy is backsliding, but *where* it is backsliding too. Kenya and Nigeria, the key states of West and East Africa respectively, have suffered democratic setbacks in recent years. Mozambique, South Africa, and Uganda—three darlings of the African renaissance—have also slipped backwards. Even Botswana, the only black African country to have remained democratic since independence in 1966, is at risk since the ruling Botswana Democratic Party has never lost an election. “The likely trajectory of the country is a downward spiral,” writes Kenneth Good, a professor of politics at the University of Botswana for 15 years, in the new book, *Democratization in Africa: Progress and Retreat*, whose subtitle reflects the gloomy expert consensus on the trend.[10]

Even the all-too-familiar coup is back in fashion—in Togo in 2005, Mauritania and Guinea in 2008, Madagascar in 2009, and in the Niger in 2010—after a period in the 1990s when it virtually disappeared. Another de facto coup took place in Guinea-Bissau in 2010 when the military chief, loyal to the elected government, was overthrown in a mutiny. That coup is widely believed to have been orchestrated by suspected drug baron José Américo Bubo Na Tchuto, a former navy chief of staff who was operating out of the local UN office at the time.[11]

Africans are noticing the democratic decay and they do not like it. Across 11 countries tracked by the Afrobarometer public opinion survey project—Botswana, Ghana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia—average satisfaction with democratic performance slipped by 5 percent (from 61 to 56 percent) between 1999 and 2008.[12] There is a growing sense in Africa today that the democratic promises of the African renaissance are devolving in the same way that they did after independence. “The democratization process on the continent is not faring very well,” Jean Ping, the Gabonese chairman of the African Union Commission, told *Newsweek* in July 2010. “The crises, they are repeating themselves.”[13]

## Regionalism on Hold

The third leg of the African renaissance—strengthened regionalism aimed at building peace and raising Africa’s role in global politics—has also faltered. The good governance-oriented African Union (AU), created in 2001, has been largely impotent aside from peacekeeping roles. Attempts to transform governance through peer pressure oriented initiatives, such as the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) under which countries agree to have their governance scrutinized by others, have created only incoherent bureaucracies, overblown rhetoric, and political games. In its first nine years, only 27 of the region’s 48 countries have even accepted the APRM in principle, and of these only 14 have actually begun the process. The much-vaunted Pan-African Parliament, set up in 2004 as an advisory body to the AU, now holds just two brief meetings a year.

Meanwhile, plans for a regional free trade area and common currency made under the Abuja Treaty, signed by 51 sub-Saharan and North African countries at Abuja, Nigeria in 1991, are dead. “Once more Africa has drifted to the periphery, contrary to what we sought to achieve," former president Thabo Mbeki of South Africa said in May 2010.[14]

Smaller regional initiatives are also stalled. The nine border-straddling "transfrontier parks" in southern Africa, aimed at boosting tourism and tourism-related investment by offering larger and more secure areas for sight-seeing, have gone nowhere. The 13,500 square mile Great Limpopo park, for instance, which lies along the South African–Mozambican–Zimbabwean border, has been dogged by poor infrastructure, mine-clearances, poaching, and population relocations. A $16 million German gift to get the park going now looks like a write-off; most travelers are staying on the South African side, and talk of 200,000 visitors a year has ended.

The number of armed conflicts waiting to happen in Africa has not changed either. Localized violence in the Niger River Delta is on the rise again as the amnesty for delta oil rebels there falls apart. Conflicts in Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Uganda, and Zimbabwe are all simmering. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees says there are 10 million refugees and internally-displaced people in sub-Saharan Africa, double the number of a decade ago. State failure is increasingly an African phenomenon: 22 of the 37 states "on alert" in the *Foreign Policy Magazine*/Fund for Peace Failed States Index are in Africa.[15]

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## A Victim of Vultures

As the hopes of the African renaissance have faded, vultures have moved in. In pursuit of natural resources and allies, China is gainfully buying off the region's governments who have lost their commitments to rights and democracy. Latin American drug barons, meanwhile, have exploited the same weaknesses to develop new trafficking routes to Europe. According to the UN, between $1 billion and $2 billion in cocaine is being trafficked through West Africa every year, up from virtually nothing ten years ago.[16] Piracy off the Somali coast is in danger of spreading to the South African cape, according to maritime experts.[17]

Developments on the ground have also been disappointing. In April 2010, Senegal's president Abdoulaye Wade unveiled a looming statue in Dakar called "The African Renaissance," a monstrosity of heroic, loin-clothed figures made by North Korean builders. The statue is supposed to represent the vigor of the African continent as it throws off the chains of colonialism (or "neocolonialism" according to the more exotic interpretations). The estimated costs of the monument, which Wade paid for by giving the North Koreans land that they subsequently sold, ranges from $28 to $70 million. If the United States were to spend a similar proportion of its national income (0.2 percent using the lower estimate) on such a statue, it would cost about $29 billion. Wade has asked the AU to declare the monument's date of unveiling as an annual African Renaissance Day. He has filed for a U.S. patent for the statue under his own name, as if billions of global citizens will buy trinkets of the monstrosity the way they do of the Statue of Liberty. More troublingly, Wade, elected in 2000, has manipulated the term limits of the 2001 constitution to extend his term and allow himself to run again in 2012.

Wade's statue symbolizes how little has changed in the last 20 years. Corruption, nepotism, mismanagement, and decay still abound. In 2005, *The Nambian* reported that a quotation from that country's former president Sam Nujoma, which was carved into the plinth of a similar statue built there by the same North Korean company in 2002, has since crumbled: "The 'S' of Sam is broken, the 'N' of Nujoma is gone altogether, and what was supposed to be 'motherland' is missing some of its letters, which are still hanging precariously from the remainder of the word."[18] How long until Wade's statue—and the unfulfilled promise of the African renaissance that it represents—crumbles as well?

It is no wonder that world opinion has balked at calls for a new "big push" to pour resources into Africa, made most recently in former Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom's 2005 Commission for Africa Report titled "Our Common Interest."[19] G-7 aid to sub-Saharan Africa is running at only $20–$30 billion a year, far less than the $40 billion promised at the group's 2005 Gleneagles summit.[20] Gadfly aid critics from Africa, like Zambian economist Dambisa Moyo, now utter the previously unutterable: most aid to Africa should be stopped because it feeds dependency and corruption, contributing nothing to actual development. Donors have forgiven much debt—Africa's average external debt has fallen by half to 40 percent of GDP since 1996—but new infusions, both public and private, are drying up. Bono aside, aid to Africa is no longer chic.

## What Went Wrong?

Africa has had its share of bad luck to be sure. Global climate change, in the form of desertification and drought, is hitting the continent particularly hard. The tragedy of HIV/AIDS continues to claim one and a half million African lives a year, which is three-quarters of the global total, and has left 14 million orphans. But the domestic responses to these external shocks have been inadequate, especially when compared to those of other developing countries. The African Renaissance Coalition, a nongovernmental organization based in Lagos, chastised in June 2010 that African nations need to share the blame for their poor response to climate change: "A country like Nigeria, which is perhaps the largest contributor to climate change in Africa with its gas flaring, does not require or deserve the handouts from the West to stop this grossly anti-environmental activity."[21] More broadly, blaming outside factors has never explained Africa's maladies.

The direct blame lies with corrupt leaders. Ironically, this is a bitter vindication of a key premise of the African renaissance, namely that bad leadership was at the heart of the region's postcolonial problems. Mandela's much-quoted words at the annual summit of the Organization of African Unity in 1994 have come back to haunt the region: "We must face the matter squarely that where there is something wrong in how we govern ourselves, it must be said that the fault is not in our stars but in ourselves, that we are ill-governed."[22]

The Ghana-born economist George Ayittey distinguishes between the "hippos" who ran Africa into the ground after independence by ruling like village chiefs, and the new generation of "cheetahs" who emerged during the African renaissance with promises of good governance.[23] The problem now is that some cheetahs are transmuting into hippos, while elsewhere hippos are coming back into power. Wade in Senegal, Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, Paul Kagame in Rwanda, and Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia are all cheetahs who came to power in ravaged countries at the outset of the African renaissance in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In many ways they have delivered, and their countries will not likely revert to the calamities of the past. But all of them have increasingly come to believe that they are indispensable to their nations, and cracked down on opposition and civil society voices who respectfully disagree, risking becoming hippos themselves. The once-genteel Kagame increasingly bristles at foreign criticism, telling a rally in April that foreign critics who support an effective opposition want to impose "political hooliganism" on the country.[24] As Ugandan journalist Elias Biryabarema wrote of Museveni: "What started as a fundamental change now also has characteristics of a fundamental failure."[25]

> **Since 2005, Africa has witnessed four consecutive years of overall democratic decline.**

Elsewhere, hippos are returning after brief cheetah interludes. South Africa's Jacob Zuma—who has no formal education, has fathered 20 children from multiple concurrent wives, and has constantly run into laws relating to rape, corruption, fraud, money laundering, racketeering, and tax evasion—would not be out of place in a safari suit and leopard-skin hat. To be fair, Zuma is only a borderline hippo so far, but the fact that anyone of his poor caliber could lead the region's superpower is deeply symbolic of the broader reversion. Meanwhile, the African National Congress's (ANC) bombastic and radical 29-year-old youth league leader since 2008, Julius Malema, would make even Idi Amin of Uganda look like a cheetah. A key Zuma supporter, Malema has inflamed ethnic tensions by singing violent anti-Boer songs and has repeatedly called for the nationalization of the country's mines. Most expect him to be handed a plum elected office in the ANC-led state.

The hippos are returning Africa to the days when the resources of the modern state were employed to perpetuate a traditional form of personalistic rule. Building on the concept of "patrimonialism" developed by German sociologist Max Weber, this modern version has been called "neo-patrimonialism." In Africa, it has a special name: "big-man rule." Under big-man rulers, power is highly concentrated in the leader who doles out favors through face-to-face relationships in order to keep himself, rather than his party, in power. There is virtually no room for bureaucratic or judicial independence, much less effective oppositions. Super-sized coalitions (as well as super-sized titles) develop around the big man himself. While other parts of the world, from early modern Europe to contemporary Asia, have enjoyed "developmental states," where meritocratically-chosen leaders had an incentive to deliver broad growth and security, Africa has generally been populated by anti-developmental states, where neo-patrimonial "big-man rulers" or "hippos" had incentives to deliver personalistic favors that undermine broad growth and stability.

State failure is increasingly an African phenomenon.

The bigger question is: how is it that African people are getting stuck with the hippo-like big-man rulers again? One unintentional cause is the very institutionalization that the African renaissance ushered in. Institutions, as Lenin knew, can be effective tools of repression as well as accountability, a fact often forgotten by the earnest state-builders of the foreign aid community. In Côte D'Ivoire, for instance, President Laurent Gbagbo has used Article 48 of the constitution, authorizing him to take exceptional measures when the institutions of the state are threatened, to dissolve the government and the electoral commission. Examples like that are now legion. The uncomfortable truth is that state-building in Africa has often empowered big-man rulers even if they have delivered short-term developmental gains.

Still, institutions are always in flux and can be seized by broad social forces intent on the common good. Where are those forces? Here is where most of the expert community abandons the trail. Even those who study Africa as academics risk professional opprobrium if they venture into social or culturalist arguments. It is far easier to blame the big man than to blame the societies that produce them, far easier to denounce the presidential pomp than to take note of the crowds of ecstatic supporters**.** When Zenawi walked off with Ethiopia's May 2010 election, hundreds of thousands of people marched on the capital, Addis Ababa (and in the cities of Bahir Dar and Awasa) in protest . . . against a Human Rights Watch report that documented the election's flaws.

For many decades, social factors were a staple argument for the failures of postcolonial Africa. But only doyens of the field—like Goran Hyden, distinguished professor emeritus at the University of Florida, who are safe enough professionally to no longer care—still talk about the problems of African society. For others, aside from some French intellectuals who still write about "la crise culturelle" in Africa, this is taboo. Hyden has long advocated the view that pre-colonial forms of social organization stand at the heart of contemporary African problems.[26] This view is unpopular because it implies that colonialism's main flaw was that it changed *too little* of Africa rather than *too much*. Under pressures from what Africa specialist and recently-appointed Colgate president Jeffrey Herbst has called the UN "decolonization machine,"[27] colonial powers were forced to hand over the reins of modern states to local elites who styled themselves as glorified tribal chiefs. This compounded the problems of big-man rule, but it did not create them. As the latest African renaissance falls to a revitalized onslaught of big-man rulers, Hyden's views are germane again.

Seen in this light, the case of Mugabe's Zimbabwe takes on a centrality that is disturbing. Ten years after unleashing a reign of terror that has reduced his country to penury, Mugabe remains defiant. It is easy to dismiss him as a relic of the past, but Mugabe is actually an augur of the future. This point was made by the Botswana political scientist Zibani Maundeni in a 2004 article presciently titled "Why the African Renaissance is Likely to Fail." The African renaissance idea of "throwing off the shackles of colonialism" and "returning to pre-colonial trajectories" was fatally flawed, he argued, because it was those pre-colonial legacies that had caused the harm in the first place. Mugabe was never a soldier or a bureaucrat in the colonial Rhodesian state before it became Zimbabwe. In other words, he was never a "neocolonial" parasite, only an "authentic" pre-colonial artifact. Yet, pre-colonial Zimbabwe, according to Maundeni, was characterized by "a general culture of armed gangs that lived by robbing merchants and the propertied classes."[28]

Throwing out white colonists and their postcolonial subalterns in order to return to pre-colonial times—the core premise of the African renaissance—was rather like leaping from the frying pan into the fire. At independence, Mugabe was a great conciliator who spoke of good governance and an end to conflict.

Outside factors have never explained Africa's maladies; the blame lies with corrupt leaders.

Over time, this cheetah became a hippo. Others are now following. Like Darth Vader, Mugabe stretches out his hand to the African renaissance and whispers: "I am your father."

Indeed, it is not too much to claim that "Comrade Bob" begat the growing crisis in South Africa. Former South African president, Thabo Mbeki, did not challenge Mugabe's misrule, nor confront the reality of AIDS, because he believed that both issues were being used by the West to beat down Africa, as Mark Gevisser shows in his recent study of Mbeki.[29] Mugabe's African renaissance in Zimbabwe was thus part and parcel of what Mbeki, a prominent figure in the African renaissance movement, believed in. The ANC also wanted to restore authenticity to their nation, and now appears to be succeeding rather too well. Zimbabwe is now an omen not a relic.

Similarly, Meles Zenawi's slow strangulation of the 78 million people of Ethiopia has a historical resonance that raises uncomfortable truths. Ethiopia was never colonized and so should have enjoyed a leg-up in the African renaissance devoted to recovering "authentic" African traditions. Zenawi the conciliator came to power in 1991, following the communist-induced famine of 1984. The international community poured an astounding $28 billion (in 2008 dollars) into the country between 1991 and 2008. Despite those advantages, Zenawi has slowly snuffed out democracy (his party took 97 percent of parliamentary seats in a May 2010 election) and sabotaged growth and security. His pointless border war with Eritrea from 1998 to 2000, an early sign of the failing African renaissance, killed 70,000 people. Authenticity has undermined progress—Zemawi's supporters sang patriotic songs, dating to Ethiopia's resistance to Italian colonialism in World War II, in celebrating his stolen election in May 2010. The trends in Ethiopia, as elsewhere, are down. The World Bank, meanwhile, continues to churn out jaunty-sounding reports like "Capturing the Demographic Bonus in Ethiopia" and "Strategies for Improving Ethiopia's Investment Climate."[30]

## What Should Be Done?

Why does all this matter? Although the end of the African renaissance will generate larger migration flows, greater disease, and a loss to the world economy, these impacts will be minimal. The strategic implications in terms of rising terrorism and expanded Chinese influence will be only moderate. The main implication is humanitarian: the 860 million people of sub-Saharan Africa face decades more of stunted lives. That is reason enough to raise the alarm. But what can be done?

The first thing is to speak plainly. In 1969, the former British colonial civil servant Leonard Barnes, travelling under the auspices of the UN Economic Commission, warned that "the surface trends, political and economic, are downward not upward." He went on to catalogue worrying tendencies among African leaders toward "political instability," "administrative incompetence," "a reckless squandering of economic resources," "an absolutely king-size capacity for corruption," and "a morbid relish for meeting their difficulties with violence and savagery."[31] If his words had been heeded, the world might have been more prepared for the disasters unfolding as he wrote.

Yet, plain words about Africa are in short supply today. President Barack Obama has an opportunity to speak to Africans because of his heritage in the region. Yet, he has given far less attention to the region than his two predecessors. When other pressing foreign and domestic policy issues decrease in urgency, Obama should return to the Africa file. He should be joined by other prominent African-American administration officials such as U.S. Ambassador to the UN Susan Rice and Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Johnnie Carson. Simple rhetoric about the need for societies to recognize and support good leaders, and reject bad ones, would be an important piece of advice.

What can the United States do to encourage those choices? For a start, the United States must continue to distance itself from the Clinton-era policy of investing in cheetahs who may be turfed out by hippos, or become hippos themselves. Carson told a House committee in March 2010 that the administration was focused on "process and progress, not on personalities. African leaders must recognize that the United States is engaging and building long-term ties with their countries and not just with them."[32] Yet, the special bilateral partnerships that Washington has recently established with Angola, Nigeria, and South Africa are being touted by the administration as driven precisely by close personal relationships between Obama and the far-sighted leaders there. "We've had a long relationship with South Africa, but it has not always been extremely close," Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Africa Susan Page told the press in April 2010: "With the inauguration of President Obama and President Jacob Zuma, this has really changed. People are very excited about the relationship, about these two energetic presidents, and really wanted to forge a stronger relationship." The dialogues, she said, are "meant as a way to show our commitment to these administrations in the three countries."[33] This type of relationship is a mistake, a return to the good-old-boy approach of Clinton. A neo-patrimonial foreign policy will only strengthen the resurgent big-man rulers of Africa.

Western countries have little interest and even less leverage to affect changes in Africa.

Former president George W. Bush sought to downplay the personal approach by launching the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) in 2004. Under the MCA, aid is dispensed *after* African leaders have made reforms, not before. But MCA-like initiatives require coordination with European and international donors to be effective. The EU and the IMF rushed to offer Guinea-Bissau $140 million in new aid after its drug- and military-backed coup in 2010, reducing the incentives presented by MCA promises.

Besides the MCA, other "smart aid" policies to consider include various schemes of "shared sovereignty,"[34] under which international organizations or foreign states are contracted to manage parts of African states that could easily fall prey to corruption or abuse, and some sort of international certification of good governance practices. The Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI), for instance, is a collaboration of government officials from oil- and mineral-producing countries, international donors, and activists. If EITI awards a country a clean bill of health on corruption, it opens the way for exports and donor finance. The EITI has recently refused to issue a bill of health to the Republic of Congo, where President Denis Sassou-Nguesso lives in oil-soaked opulence. (A French police investigation in 2009 found that Sassou-Nguesso and his relatives have 24 French properties, including a Paris mansion worth $28 million, and 112 separate bank accounts in France.[35]) But its impact has been blunted by the World Bank and the IMF, which extended $1.9 billion in debt relief to Sassou-Nguesso's government in early 2010 citing its "remarkable progress."[36]

Another way to encourage good leaders is to establish a zero-tolerance policy on stolen elections. In March 2010, the U.S. Congress urged Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton to monitor Uganda's upcoming 2011 election. When Museveni tries to steal the election, as he is certain to do, the United States should cut off aid as well as impose travel bans, and other democratic nations should join in.

Policies that strengthen the likelihood of women leaders are another cost-effective tool. Much evidence indicates that females are less prone to big-man/hippo tendencies in Africa, in part thanks to the patriarchal traditions of the region.[37] Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the first elected woman government leader in the region, told the hippos gathered at the opening of the African renaissance statue in Senegal in March that they should get over their hang-ups about colonialism and focus on governing well. That was good advice.

More might change the trend. Elsewhere, potential women leaders are plentiful: women account for 56 percent of parliamentary seats in Rwanda, the highest in the world, 45 percent in South Africa, and 31 percent in Uganda. Donors should encourage electoral rules that give women politicians a better chance.

Ultimately, however, the best way to rescue the African renaissance is to change the soil in which bad leaders grow. At the outset of the latest African renaissance, in 1990, the Cameroonian policy analyst Daniel Etounga-Manguelle published a book in French under the provocative title *Does Africa Need a Cultural Adjustment Policy?*[38] His play on words with IMF policies was intentional, and his answer was "yes." The past 20 years have shown how little cultural change has occurred in Africa. Accelerating the transition to modern forms of social and political organization which do not revolve around personalistic ties to village chiefs is a major priority. How to achieve that aim is something for Africans to decide and the world to support. A good place for both parties to start would be to recognize that the African renaissance is at an end, and that the looming reversal requires deep-rooted changes.

## Notes

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