

## *Editor's Corner*

Africa. The word conjures up images of an impoverished continent, of great human suffering and unspeakable atrocities, a land that long languished on the margins of global geopolitics.

No longer. “Africa plays an increased strategic role militarily, economically and politically,” General Jim Jones, Commander of the U.S. European Command (EUCOM), told the *Wall Street Journal* this past spring. “We have to become more agile in terms of being able to compete in this environment.” If anything, Jones’ words were an understatement. Today, EUCOM—traditionally the military command responsible for assisting safety and security throughout Europe—is estimated instead to spend some 70 percent of its time dealing with Africa.

Africa, in other words, is beginning to take center stage on Washington policy planners’ agendas. Therefore, in this issue of *The Journal*, we take a preliminary look at the problems, and the prospects, that confront the United States there with a series of six articles. Former Maryland Lieutenant Governor (and current Africa hand) Michael Steele examines the energy potential of West Africa—and what the United States can do to harness it. James Madison University’s J. Peter Pham outlines the likely shape of the Pentagon’s new military command for the continent, AFRICOM. John Prendergast, one of the most recognizable Africa activists around, gives his thoughts about what a real “Plan B” to curb the genocide in Darfur would look like. Islam scholar Robert Spencer chronicles the short, unhappy reign of the Islamic Courts Union in Somalia—and the lessons to be learned from it. Then, Reuven Paz and Moshe Terdman of Israel’s PRISM Center provide a bird’s-eye view of Islam’s inroads into the African continent, and likely future trouble-spots. Last, but most certainly not least, Claudia Rosett of the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies provides a scathing critique of Africa’s exploitation by the United Nations, the one international body believed to be most dedicated to its betterment.

Our second set of feature articles deals with new thinking on a quartet of seemingly intractable problems. Keith Smith of the Center for Strategic and International Studies outlines the threat to Europe posed by Russian energy pressure, and what the continent can do about it. The American Foreign Policy Council’s Stephen Yates looks anew at the U.S.-China relationship—and the principles that can and should underpin the next president’s China policy. Author Gordon Chang offers his thoughts on the reasons behind Washington’s persistent failure to formulate a successful strategy against the Stalinist regime in North Korea, and how it can start to do so. And analyst Eric Rozenman provides a provocative examination of what comes next in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, now that the dream of an independent “Palestine” is well and truly dead.

This issue also boasts three “dispatches” from foreign experts. The Honorable Elmar Mammadyarov, foreign minister of Azerbaijan, explains his country’s strategic priorities, and outlines his vision of a future regional role for the former

Soviet republic. French geopolitical expert Frederic Encel takes an early look at the changes that can be expected in his country's foreign policy, now that the baton has been passed from longtime premier Jacques Chirac to his young and vibrant successor, Nicolas Sarkozy. Finally, Hiroyasu Akutsu of Japan's Okazaki Institute assesses the evolution of the strategic ties between the U.S. and Japan, and gives his thoughts on the likely trajectory of one of America's most important international partnerships. Rounding out the issue are reviews of three important books: *The War of Ideas* by terrorism expert Walid Phares; *Überpower* by Josef Joffe, one of Europe's most articulate and ardent strategic thinkers; and *Second Chance*, former National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski's latest controversial look at future U.S. foreign policy.

As always, we at *The Journal* welcome your comments, questions and responses. Debate is not just important to informed foreign policy, it is essential to it. And we are confident that this issue, like previous ones, will give its readers much to contemplate.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ilan Berman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ilan Berman  
*Editor*