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**COLONIAL SPECTER:  
THE EFFECT OF COLONIZATION ON THE  
SECURITY ENVIRONMENT OF THE AFRICAN UNION**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
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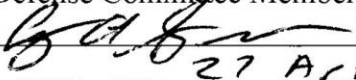
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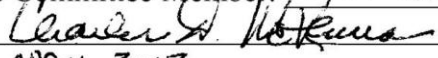
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## **Executive Summary**

**Title:** Colonial Specter: The Effect of Colonization on the Security Environment of the African Union

**Author:** Major Blake Jackson Jr., United States Marine Corps

**Thesis:** African colonial resistance, colonization, arbitrary partitioning, and eventual decolonization directly shape the current political structure, security architecture and foreign policy of the African Union. Furthermore, the US strategy toward Sub-Saharan Africa can be more effective if the organizations charged with its implementation better account for the complexity of the diplomatic and security environment resulting from that colonization.

### **Discussion:**

The history of a state and its people plays a major role in developing the character of its government. The current states of Africa are no exception. This study will examine the factors that led to the successful widespread colonization of Africa and its effect on the current day African affairs. It will begin with a study of the environment of several African cultures, civilizations, and empires prior to colonization, then present explanations detailing why they were unsuccessful in their resistance. Then, it will describe the effect those precolonial environments, colonial resistance, and eventual decolonization have on the current security architecture and foreign policy of the African Union (AU). Finally, it will examine the current US strategy towards Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and make recommendations for improvement.

**Conclusion:** The successful widespread colonization of Africa and subsequent partitioning divided the continent in ways that were not aligned with the tribes, communities, or religions contained therein. This helped create a complex and volatile security environment, one in which the AU attempts to coalesce many disparate cultures by establishing “Pan-African” law. As the US continues to employ its strategy towards SSA, it should focus on direct bilateral coordination with the AU.

*Table of Contents*

|                                       | Page |
|---------------------------------------|------|
| DISCLAIMER.....                       | 3    |
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....                | 4    |
| LIST OF TABLES AND ILLUSTRATIONS..... | 6    |
| I. INTRODUCTION.....                  | 7    |
| II. HISTORICAL REVIEW.....            | 8    |
| Pre-Colonial Sub-Saharan Africa.....  | 9    |
| III. CONQUERING AFRICA.....           | 13   |
| The Scramble.....                     | 13   |
| Resistance.....                       | 15   |
| IV. THE SPECTOR.....                  | 21   |
| The Impact of Colonization.....       | 21   |
| The African Union.....                | 25   |
| The Pan-African Struggle.....         | 30   |
| V. US-SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA POLICY.....  | 32   |
| Current US Strategy.....              | 32   |
| Recommendations for Engagement.....   | 34   |
| VI. CONCLUSION.....                   | 36   |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY.....                     | 38   |

*Illustrations*

|                                                          | Page |
|----------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Figure 1. Map of Pre-colonial Africa (650-1880 A.D)..... | 9    |
| Figure 2. Image of Shaka Zulu .....                      | 10   |
| Figure 3. Map of Zululand.....                           | 10   |
| Figure 4. Map of the Kingdom of Aksum.....               | 11   |
| Figure 5. Map of Post-Colonial Africa .....              | 14   |
| Figure 6. Painting of the Battle of Isandlwana .....     | 18   |
| Figure 7. Image of the Zulu “Bull Horn” Formation.....   | 18   |

*Tables*

|                                                                         | Page |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Table 1. Gross Enrollment Ratios in Secondary Education by Region ..... | 30   |

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The history of a state and its people plays a major role in developing the character of its government. The current states of Africa are no exception. This study will examine the factors that led to the successful widespread colonization of Africa and its effect on the current day African affairs. It will begin with a study of the environment of several African cultures, civilizations, and empires prior to colonization, then present explanations detailing why they were unsuccessful in their resistance. Then, it will describe the effect those precolonial environments, colonial resistance, and eventual decolonization have on the current security architecture and foreign policy of the African Union (AU). Finally, it will examine the current US strategy towards Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and make recommendations for improvement.

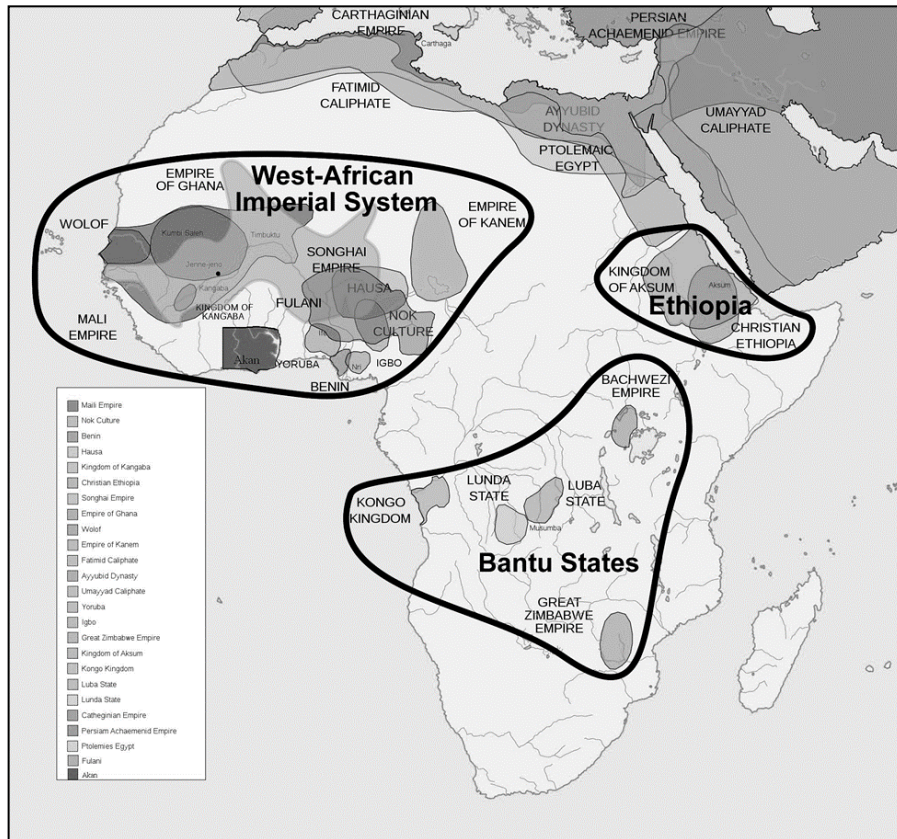
## **II. HISTORICAL REVIEW**

Conflict in one form or another has occurred throughout the existence of humankind. It is ever-present and constitutes part of the human condition. Many conditions and circumstances lead to conflict in civilizations throughout the world, but Africa is unique in the sheer number of conflicts it has endured throughout its distinct history. The preponderance of African conflicts does not suggest that Africans themselves are any more prone to violence than other cultures – communal and intergroup conflicts of various duration and intensity have been present in every world civilization. This chapter will briefly address those internal causation conflicts. That said, external actors have historically served to exacerbate cultural and regional tensions on the African continent leading to increased conflict. Those external forces will be the focus of this chapter. This historical review provides baseline understanding of the fractured nature of pre-colonial Africa. Numerous disparate cultures with desires to gain territory or resources coupled with the countless violent transfers of power created an environment that was filled with division and susceptible to conquest.

**Pre-Colonial Africa  
(650-1880 A.D.)**

The rise of centralized, powerful states and their desire to maintain power and increase regional influence was a significant factor for conflict in precolonial Africa. Powerful states sought to gain territory by waging war on weaker states. Once conquered, the former inhabitants of the weaker states were kept subservient to the newly established central government. For instance, the West African Kingdoms of Western Sudan (Ghana, Mali, and Songhai) waged several wars of expansion, greatly extending the frontiers of their empires.<sup>1</sup>

Figure 1: Map of Pre-colonial Africa (650-1880 A.D)



Source: Penn State Undergraduate Course “Living While Black: Themes in African American Thought and Experience”; Precolonial African Economies.

In addition to wars of territorial expansion, conflict also arose in attempts to gain commercial supremacy. The trans-Saharan trade route that connected commerce from North Africa to West Africa was often the focus of turmoil. Between the 8th and 16th centuries, fighting for control of the trading centers and trade routes were an ever-present feature of conflict for Western Sudanese civilizations. Whoever controlled these routes would attain primacy over trade in the region.<sup>2</sup>

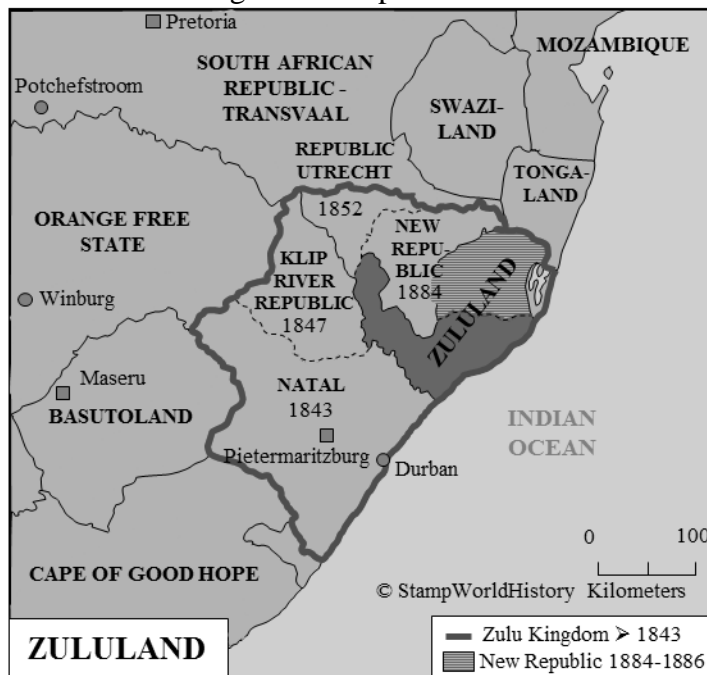
Wars for power consolidation and nation-state establishment were also a significant source of fighting in Africa. In the early 19th century, southern Africa was full of internal conflict. The militaristic Zulu Kingdom emerged under its warrior-king, Shaka, after conflict with its neighbors. When the Zulu's conquered new territory, many groups fled to neighboring areas and established other nations that would serve to create border conflicts in the future.<sup>3</sup>

Figure 2: Shaka Zulu



Source: Ancient Origins: Reconstructing the Story of Humanity's Past

Figure 3: Map of Zululand

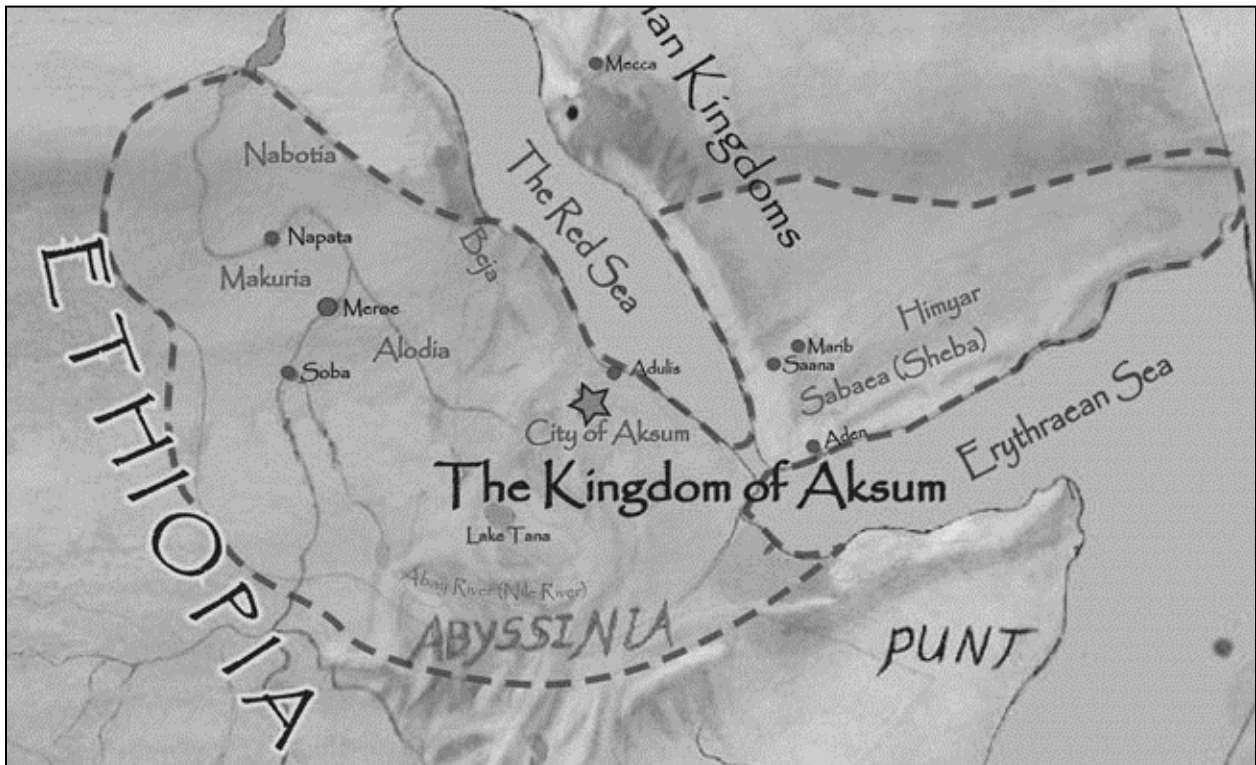


Source: Smithsonian National Postal Museum

External influences from pre-colonial to present have contributed to generating conflicts or exasperating ongoing ones. Historical events on Africa's periphery have played a significant role in shaping its history.

Islam in Africa can be traced to the 7th century when Muhammad commanded some of his early disciples to flee persecution by the pre-Islamic inhabitants of the Mecca and travel to current day Eritrea and Northern Ethiopia (Aksum). The coast of the Horn of Africa became the first-place that Islam would be practiced outside of the Arabian Peninsula. In 639 A.D., after the death of Muhammad, more Arabs arrived in Africa and within two generations, Islam had extended across much of the Horn of Africa and many parts of North Africa.<sup>4</sup>

Figure 4: Map of the Kingdom of Aksum



Source: <http://awate.com/abyssinia-al-habasha-origins-and-language/>

During the following centuries, the growth of Muslim trading networks in connecting East, North, and West Africa gave them immense political influence and power. Although some of this expansion was accomplished through trade and voluntary conversion, much was also realized through force and conflict. It led not only to the formation of new communities in Africa, but it also reconfigured existing African communities and empires to be based on Islamic models. The rise of Islamic states resulted in major changes including commerce, slavery, and warfare. It often spread at the expense of traditional African religions and cultures causing conflict and compulsion in many areas.<sup>5</sup>

### III. CONQUERING AFRICA

#### *The Scramble (1881 – 1914)*

The imperial conquest of Africa, also known as the Partition of Africa or the Scramble for Africa was the occupation, division, and colonization of the African continent by European powers. This time in history, referred to as the “New Imperialism” was a period of colonial expansion by European powers, the U.S, and Japan during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The American Revolution (1765-1783)<sup>6</sup> and the decline of the Spanish Empire in Latin America (1800-1899)<sup>7</sup> ended the previous era of European imperialism. An unprecedented pursuit of overseas territorial procurements distinguishes the New Imperialism period.

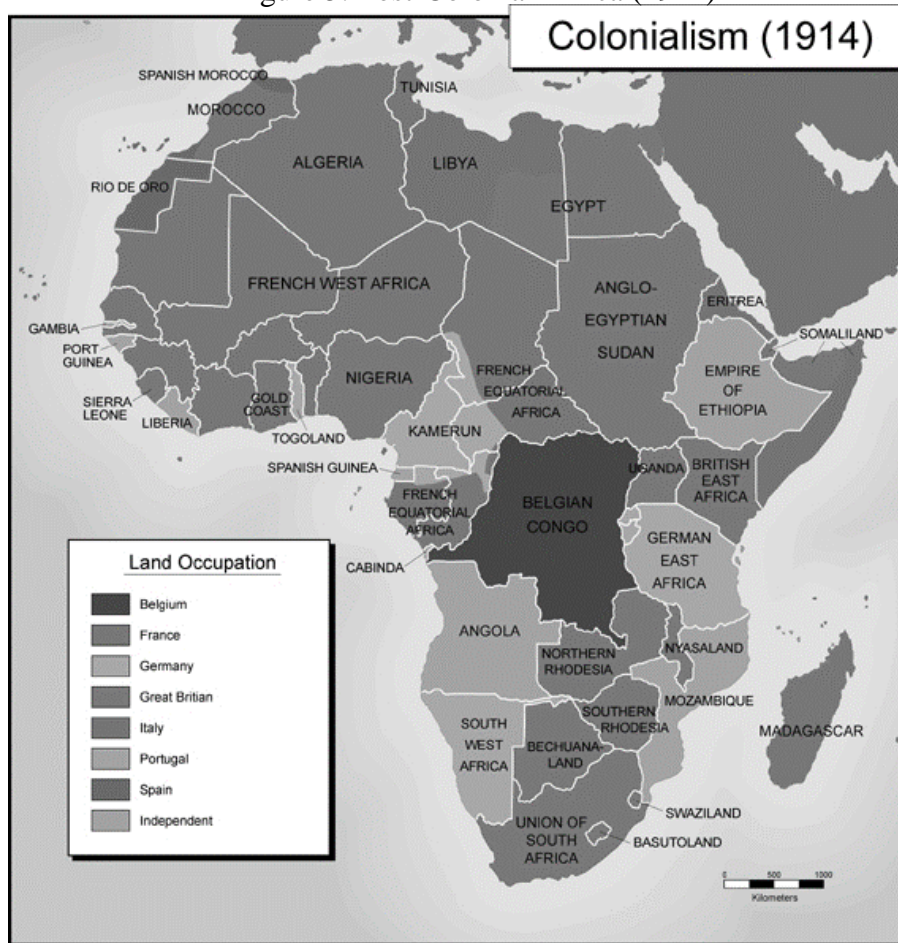
Prior to the New Imperialism period, expeditions focused on colonizing previously uninhabited areas such as the Cape Verde Islands and the west coast of Africa. At the end of the 18th century European exploration of the African interior intensified. By 1835, European explorers were successful in charting most of the northwest portion of the continent.<sup>8</sup> Their expeditions had not yet infringed upon the native’s sovereignty, still treating Africans the same as they did New World natives, forming trading relationships with the indigenous leaders. That relationship would soon change. By the mid-19th century, Europeans considered the whole of Africa disputed territory, primed for exploration, trade, and settlement by the colonists.<sup>9</sup> By the end of the 19th century Europe understood the significant resources of Africa - an abundance of gold, timber, and arable land.

Consequently, European interest in the continent increased dramatically. They began delineating the areas of British, Portuguese, French, and Belgian control. The unofficial and contradictory nature boundaries being drawn independently by different countries had the potential to lead to unintended conflict between European nations. The dispute over imperialist

territorial claims led to the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885. This meeting served to negotiate and formalize which territory belonged to what European nation. This partitioning of Africa was how the Europeans avoided armed conflict amongst themselves over Africa. The conference did not, however, consider the interests and desires of the indigenous Africans.<sup>10</sup>

The colonization served to partition the continent in ways that were not aligned with the tribes, communities, and religions contained therein, the effect of which will be covered in subsequent chapters. The later years of the 19th century saw the European hegemony over Africa (done through military influence and economic dominance) violently transition to direct colonial imperialism through force.

Figure 5: Post-Colonial Africa (1914)



Source: <http://www.graphatlas.com/africa.php/>

## *Resistance*

Almost everywhere on the continent, Africans resisted European colonization. While some societies proved no match for the imperialist forces, others put up determined and prolonged opposition. Such is the case of Abyssinia (modern day Ethiopia).

In 1868, the Abyssinians imprisoned several British missionaries and government representatives. This led to a successful British punitive Expedition to Abyssinia. Following this defeat, the Abyssinians realized the need to improve their military capability to effectively combat any further European invasions. They subsequently began industrialization, imported European weapons, and brought in military advisors from Russia.

On March 25, 1889, the Shewa ruler Menelik II, conquered Tigray and Amhara and declared himself Emperor of Abyssinia. He then signed the Treaty of Wuchale with the Italians, which gave them control over Eritrea, the Red Sea coast to the northeast of Ethiopia, in return for recognition of Menelik's rule. Due to significant differences in translations, Italy believed they had gained control over all of Ethiopia. Emperor Menelik insisted that his version stated he could contact foreign powers and conduct foreign affairs through Italy only if he so chose. Italy took this interpretation as an affront to their sovereignty as stated by their version of the treaty and decided to invade. As Italy prepared for invasion, the Abyssinians undertook an empire wide mobilization. They mobilized an army of 196,000 men, much of which was armed with modern rifles.<sup>11</sup> Menelik had spent years obtaining a supply of modern weapons and ammunition, acquired from the French, British, Italians, and Russians.

Referred to as the First Italo-Abyssinian War, the Abyssinians were successful in winning the battles of Akkele Guzay, Amba Alagi, and Adwa. Adwa was the decisive battle of

the war, won because of numerical superiority, adequate arms, careful preparation, and the army's ability to properly execute Menelik's strategic plan. The Italians sustained approximately 14,000 killed, 1,500 wounded, and 4,000 imprisoned.<sup>12</sup> The Abyssinian's losses amounted to around 3,000 killed and 6,000 wounded. In October of 1889, Italy was forced to recognize the independence of Ethiopia and signed the Treaty of Addis Ababa. This treaty delineated the borders of Eritrea.<sup>13</sup> Conversely, the Second Italo-Abyssinian War of 1935 ended in Italian victory, resulting in the military occupation of Ethiopia. This conflict is often cited as the start of World War II and the eventual decline of Europe as the most powerful region in the world. This period also saw the rise of the United States and the former Soviet Union to superpower status. U.S. influence will later facilitate the start of decolonization in Africa.<sup>14</sup>

Another example of initially successful African resistance to European invasion is Anglo-Zulu War, fought in 1879 between the British Empire and the Zulu Kingdom. Following Britain's successful confederation of Canada in 1867, the British government believed that a similar feat could be accomplished in Africa. In 1874, the High Commissioner for the British Empire, Sir Henry Bartle Frere, was dispatched to South Africa to lead this effort. The independent states of the South African Republic and the Kingdom of Zululand would be the greatest obstacles to achieving this goal.<sup>15</sup>

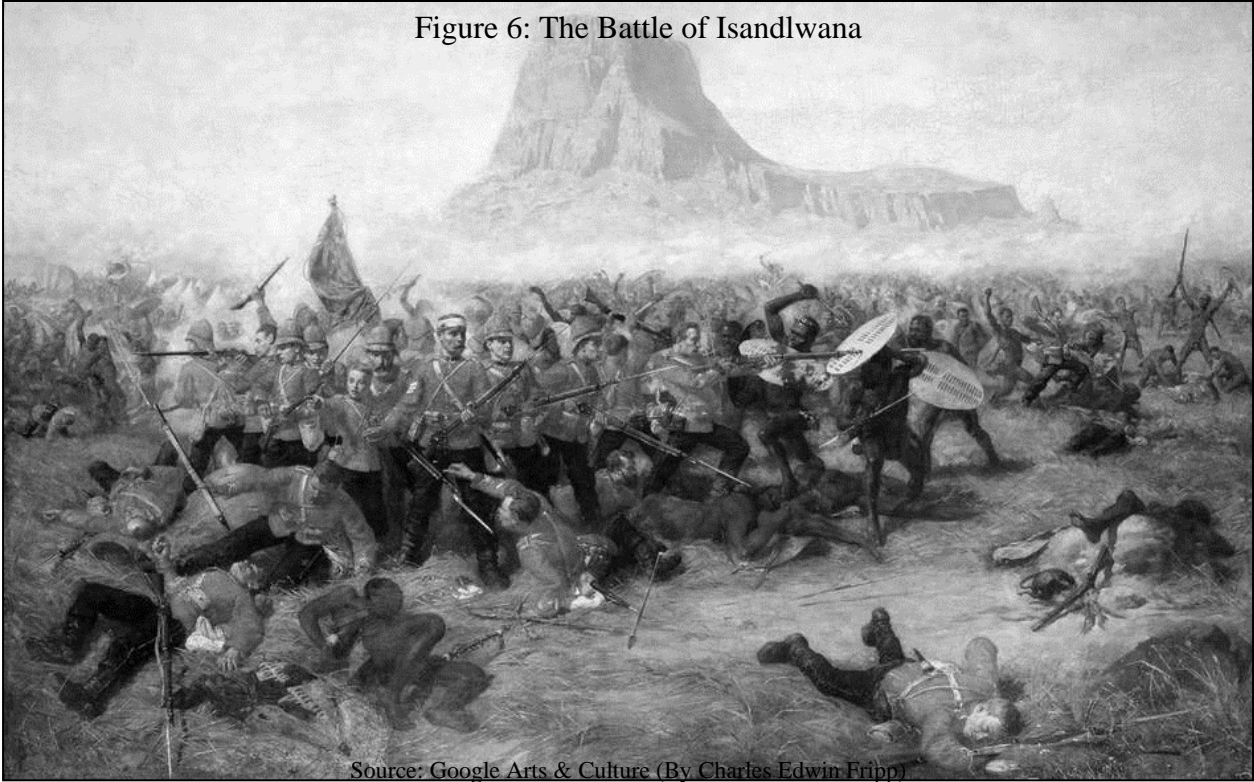
The South African Republic, also known as the Transvaal Republic, was annexed by Britain using a special warrant. The Boers contained therein initially objected, but understood that conflict with the British would leave them susceptible to attack from the adversarial Zulus. Although the British Prime Minister did not want a war with the Zulus, Frere had already concluded that the Zulu Kingdom stood in the way of necessary British expansion and that the Zulu army posed a threat to the peace of the area.<sup>16</sup> In 1878, disregarding British government

reluctance to further colonial war, Frere demanded that the Zulu King, Cetshwayo, disband his army and accept British hegemony. Cetshwayo refused, setting the stage for a bloody resistance.

In January of 1879, after months of the deliberation over the ultimatum, a British force invaded Zululand without authorization by the British Government.<sup>17</sup> This force consisted of three columns. The center column, consisting of approximately 7,800 men, would fight in the Battle of Isandlwana - the greatest victory the Zulu Kingdom would accomplish during the war. The British force would face the main Zulu army of 40,000 men, armed with Assegai thrusting spears, clubs, throwing spears and cowhide shields.<sup>18</sup> Zulu victory resulted from mass, concentration of force, knowledge of the terrain, maneuver, and valor. They use a "bull horn" formation, where the main force (the chest) would close with and fix the enemy, while units on the left and right (the horns) would flank and defeat it. A large reserve (the loins) was hidden and positioned behind the chest, ready to reinforce or counter attack.<sup>19</sup>

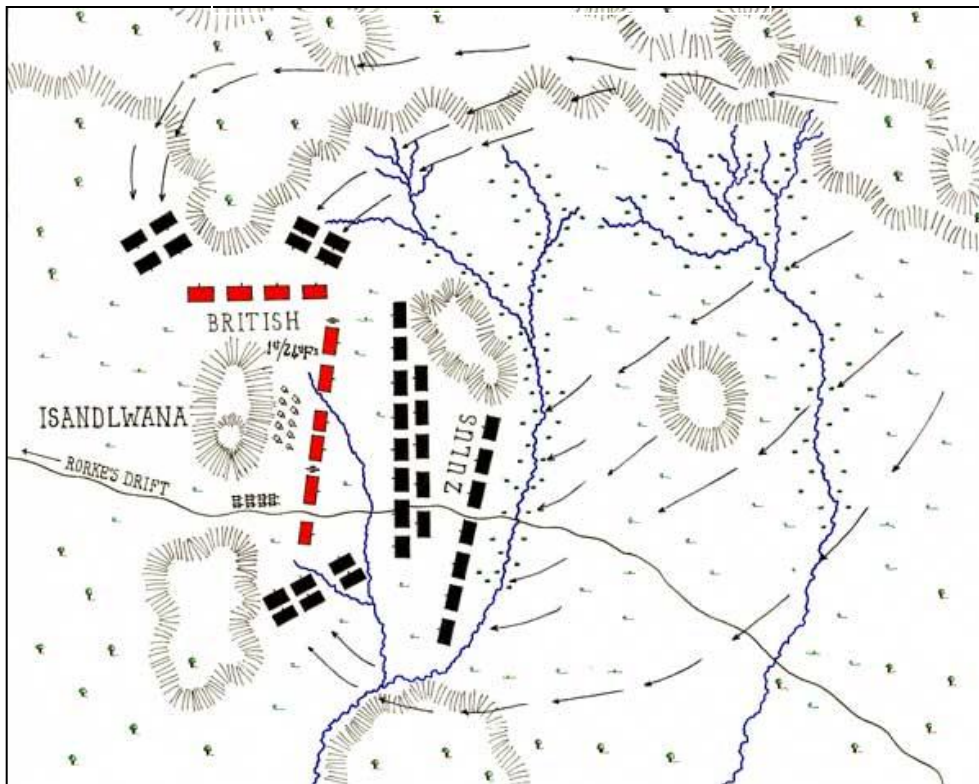
The British center column was destroyed, with heavy casualties and the loss of all its supplies and ammunition. The defeat caused much of the British force to conduct hastily retreat out of Zululand. Following the Battle of Isandlwana, approximately 4,000 Zulu hastily conducted a raid on the nearby British post that would later be called the Battle of Rorke's Drift. After 10 hours of fighting, the Zulus would be defeated. The war ultimately ended in a British victory and the end of the Zulu nation's supremacy of the region.<sup>20</sup>

Figure 6: The Battle of Isandlwana



Source: Google Arts & Culture (By Charles Edwin Fripp)

Figure 7: Zulu “Bull Horn” Formation



Source: <http://www.britishbattles.com/zulu-war/isandlwana.htm>

Yet another display of fearsome colonial resistance is the Mau Mau Uprising of 1952. Following the British establishment of the Colony and Protectorate of Kenya in 1920, European settlers began to acquire large areas of farmland. This caused the colonists to own a disproportionate share of fertile land when compared to the majority population of native Kenyans. Combined with a steady increase in the black Kenyan population, this inequality became a major source of tension.<sup>21</sup>

In addition, the lack of native Kenyan representation in government, segregation, and significant wage disparity between whites, blacks, and an ever-growing Asian population led to bitter contention and conflict. The ethnic group most affected by this socioeconomic inequality were the Kikuyu, who lived in Kenya's Central Province. Although resistance to this inequality had existed since the inception of colonial rule, the 1950s marked a significant change in the conduct of the struggle for equal rights and equal representation.<sup>22</sup>

During this period, three political blocs emerged in Kikuyu society. The conservative element, comprised of chiefs and senior Christian leaders, supported colonial rule. The moderate nationalists pushed for socioeconomic equality and political representation through dialogue and redressing grievances through government frameworks. They would eventually establish the Kikuyu Central Association and the Kenya African Union. The third group were militant nationalists who would be the foundation of the Mau Mau insurgency. Completely dismissive of the conservatives and impatient with moderate failures to accomplish meaningful progress, the Mau Mau sought to realize their goals through violent revolution.<sup>23</sup> This took the form of attacks on white settlers and their property and assaults on perceived black colonial loyalists.

OPERATION ANVIL was a British counterinsurgency operation designed to eliminate Mau Mau's presence within Nairobi and disrupt their lines of communication. It would be one of

the largest cordon and search operations in the history of the continent. The operation netted significant results. After one month, more than 50,000 Mau Mau suspects had been detained.

## IV. THE SPECTOR

### *The Impact of Colonization*

The Berlin Conference of 1884 was designed to reduce conflict among imperial powers in Africa by establishing official boundaries between European possessions. It also incited imperial expansion into areas of the continent that were not yet colonized. European leaders believed they were in a race to acquire these areas to maintain influence and prevent an unfavorable tip in the balance of power among European empires.<sup>24</sup>

To gain legal ownership of a territory, imperial powers had to acquire a treaty signed by a local African leader. Many of these treaties were signed by Africans who were not in positions of authority to make such transactions. Even documents signed by reputable African officials were most often not written in their native language, as was the case with the Abyssinia-Italy Treaty of Wuchale referenced in Chapter III. The true intent of these treaties was misunderstood or purposefully misrepresented. These dubious techniques led to the degradation of African leadership credibility and influence over their respective states. The colonists gave no regard to the will and interests of native African governance, thereby transforming African politics and society.

Almost a century of colonial rule left the new states of Africa with a political map drawn based on the economic and political interests of imperial Europe. The continent was set up for ethnic, religious, and political conflict from the beginning. These artificial boundaries, while not created based upon pre-colonial cultural and political systems, were the starting point for a newly independent Africa.<sup>25</sup> The speed with which decolonization occurred also had lasting consequences. The process was not universally deliberate and left Africa states with governing architectures they were not equipped to effectively employ.

Since Africans were not well represented (if at all) in the political process, governance familiarization was done hastily prior to the departure of European political leaders. African leaders often used former imperial leaders as examples of effective governance. This was not ideal because colonial governance focused on using the resources of Africa to bolster the economies of European powers. Creating a self-sustaining economy and independent system of government for native Africans was never the goal. Thus, the new African leadership's adherence to the imperial model created a governing class that was more concerned with a consolidation of resources and power than an equitable distribution of wealth and prosperity. This form of neopatrimonialism led to more authoritative governance (like the imperial model) that incited vertical distribution of resources and the rise of patron-client relationships built around a powerful individual or party. In short, authoritative native Africa governments replaced authoritative imperial powers.<sup>26</sup>

Another impact of colonialism was the social inequality caused by colonial policies. Most colonial territories experienced some form of disparity between social classes or among ethnic groups because imperialist governments created prospects for some and blocks for others.<sup>27</sup> For instance, in combating colonial uprising the British employed the tactic of divide and rule. This involved exasperating existing internal grievances within a target population. The population would fight amongst itself rather than unite against a common enemy. If these internal grievances did not already exist, the British would create them by favoring one group over another in trade or land lease. This would cause one sect to become resentful over the other and, consequently, less trusting. During the Mau Mau Uprising, the British capitalized on the rift within Kikuyu society, leveraging the conservatives and moderates in combating the militant nationalist Mau Mau. They portrayed the conflict as civil war as opposed to a black versus white

struggle. The British attempted to isolate Mau Mau from the Kikuyu and the Kikuyu from the rest of the population.<sup>28</sup> The effects of this rift and many similar one are ever-present in modern African affairs.

Yet another challenge facing independent Africa was the effect of post-colonization imperial power dependency. This issue is seen through the lens of two schools of thought - dependency vs. decolonization. The dependency school of thought, often called neocolonialism, supposes that legal independence did not significantly change the economic, political, military, and cultural ties connecting Africa to its former colonial powers. Conversely, the decolonization perspective states that legal independence was the first step in an evolutionary process towards full autonomy of governance. This theory acknowledges the power of colonial influence at the beginning of the post-independence era, but proposes that foreign control and influence is further removed over time as part of the natural progression of independence.<sup>29</sup>

The African decolonization timeline is not straight-forward, but it is accepted that it starts with Libyan independence from Italy, Britain, and France in 1951 and ends with Namibia's independence from Germany in 1990.<sup>30</sup> Also known as the Contemporary Independence Era, this period began the examination over how these newly independent states would execute their foreign policies. The Pan-African Congress of 1945 marked the first official debate concerning pan-African ideals and policies. It was at this conference that participants presented the "Declaration to the Colonial Peoples" that declared their right to "be free from foreign imperialist control, whether political more economic" and "to elect their own governments, without restrictions from foreign powers".<sup>31</sup>

Although all African states involved overwhelmingly agreed on a "whole of Africa" approach to decolonization and policy, there remained considerable disagreement about the

appropriate method to accomplish this lofty unity. One option was the minimalist approach of states conducting economic and security coordination through diplomatic practices. This approach did not provide for the creation of any continent-wide governing institutions. Another school of thought argued that a political union of all states was necessary for the successful promulgation of pan-African ideals and policy. Adherents to this belief sought to model this institution after the United States, with the sovereignty of member states subjugated to the power of the federal African government.<sup>32</sup>

The third school of thought believed that the attempts to subjugate the sovereignty of member states would be met by stiff resistance. It assumed that African leaders would not be willing to trade former European imperial hierarchy for that of an African federal government. This group proposed a less rigid organization that would cooperate on economic, scientific, educational, security, and social issues. This methodology would account for the member state unwillingness to relinquish sovereignty while promoting unity and shared interests across the continent.<sup>33</sup> It would form the basis of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Security cooperation would eventually be one of the most challenging aspects of this architecture.

## *The African Union*

The creation of the OAU in 1963 and subsequent establishment of the African Union (AU) in 2002 served to unite the African continent with the goal of “removing all forms of colonialism, advancing economic stability, and promoting regional security.”<sup>34</sup> Numerous cultures, both regional and tribal, create an environment rife with territorial disputes, violent regime changes, and long term conflict. Accordingly, the AU established the official body of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) as a collective security arrangement between member states to facilitate timely and effective response to conflict and crisis situations in Africa. The primary arm of response for the PSC is the African Standby Force (ASF). While the African Union (AU) has established mechanisms, methodology, and forces for policy enforcement and peacekeeping, it still struggles to maintain a sound security architecture due to a limiting intervention framework, an ineffective intervention force, and a complex and volatile security environment.

It is important to define several key terms when describing collective security arrangements to provide a baseline of understanding. These terms are as follows: Conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peace enforcement, and peacebuilding. Conflict prevention involves diplomatic measures to keep intra-state or inter-state tensions and disputes from escalating into violent conflict. Peacemaking generally includes measures to address conflicts in progress and usually involves diplomatic action to bring hostile parties to a negotiated agreement. Peace enforcement involves the application of a range of coercive measures, including the use of military force. It requires the explicit authorization of the Security Council. It is used to restore international peace and security in situations where the Security Council has decided to act in the face of a threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression. Finally, peacebuilding aims to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at

all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and development.<sup>35</sup>

The security council of a governing body comprised of several sovereign states must have clearly delineated and appropriate authority (policy) by which to enforce violations of established laws. The OAU, the precursor to the AU, initially established a non-interventionist security policy that required a request from a member state as a prerequisite for any intervention.<sup>36</sup> This policy was useful if a duly elected, policy abiding government was the projected victim of a coup. If that government could not effectively defend itself against being overthrown, then a request for OAU support was likely. Conversely, it had limited utility if the established government was in fact the violator of OAU and international law. The “righteous” coup force was not a recognized state actor and, therefore, had no mechanism to request assistance in the regime change. Any OAU intervention would be viewed by that member state government as interference in internal state matters. It was eventually deemed an ineffective model that often left the OAU response force as bystanders, merely observing and condemning atrocities.

When the AU was created in 2002, it sought to revise its security policy. The organization chose to model its policy after the United Nations (UN) framework.<sup>37</sup> The UN security framework stresses not only conflict prevention but also proactive peacemaking. Chapter 7 of the UN Charter (Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression) details the UN mandate to use measures short of armed force at all reasonable costs, but does not require the consent of offending member states for armed intervention if said state is committing atrocities or crimes against humanity. While the UN does

list “consent of the parties” as a principle of UN peacekeeping it is not specifically stated in the charter.<sup>38</sup>

The AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) Protocol similarly lists the following peacekeeping principles: respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Member States; non-interference by any Member State in the internal affairs of another; sovereign equality and interdependence of Member States; inalienable right to independent existence. Then, it provides its own statement of proactive peacemaking, proclaiming “the right of the Union to intervene in a Member State pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of grave circumstances, namely war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity.”<sup>39</sup> Here lies the delicate balance of regional and international security arrangements; exercising the authority of enforcement while ensuring member state sovereignty.

Since its inception, the AU has provided more than 64,000 peacekeepers to missions throughout Africa, supporting peacemaking and peacekeeping operations in Darfur, Somalia, and Mali to name a few. These deployments have been conducted at the request of those member states. In April 2015, protests began in Burundi against their president’s decision to run for a contested third consecutive term. The deteriorating security environment led to more than 400 people killed and 200,000 more seeking refuge in neighboring countries. The AU initially stated that it would invoke its right to intervene without member state consent based on the atrocities being committed. This potential humanitarian intervention would not just exercise the AU right to intervene, but also show its commitment to its responsibility to protect African citizens. The Burundi government stated that any AU troop deployment within its borders would be considered an invasion. The AU decided not to intervene, raising questions about whether it had the political will to execute a peacemaking deployment without host nation consent.<sup>40</sup>

This change of stance also highlights the AU's struggle to husband the resources and well-trained peacekeepers necessary to execute a credible intervention by force. Governing bodies require the appropriate means with which they can enforce established laws. The AU PSC Protocol establishes the roles of member states concerning the composition of the African Standby Force (ASF). Their responsibilities include: release the standby contingents with the necessary equipment for operations; make available to the Union all forms of assistance and support required for the promotion and maintenance of peace, security, and stability on the Continent, including rights of passage through their territories.

This statement is broad to give flexibility and scalability of response to the AU. Conversely, it also gives member states the ability to provide only what they deem is necessary (or feasible) in support of a mission. It also means that an ASF formed for a particular mission will be comprised of forces with various levels of training and competence.<sup>41</sup> These factors amount to a force that often does not have the capability or capacity to provide a credible deterrence and/or response.

The ASF has been attempting to build and maintain Rapid Deployment Capability (RDC), capable of deploying and intervening within 14 days in cases of war crimes, genocide, and human rights abuses. The complexity of rapid deployment means significant resources and man-hours must be devoted to training. Financial challenges prevent forces from being on standby or achieving the objectives outlined by established mandates. These challenges are compounded by political differences, weak partnerships, and dual commitment among member states. In addition, the slow political decision-making process of the AU often impedes rapid deployment. These issues coupled with the political complexity of peacekeeping intervention

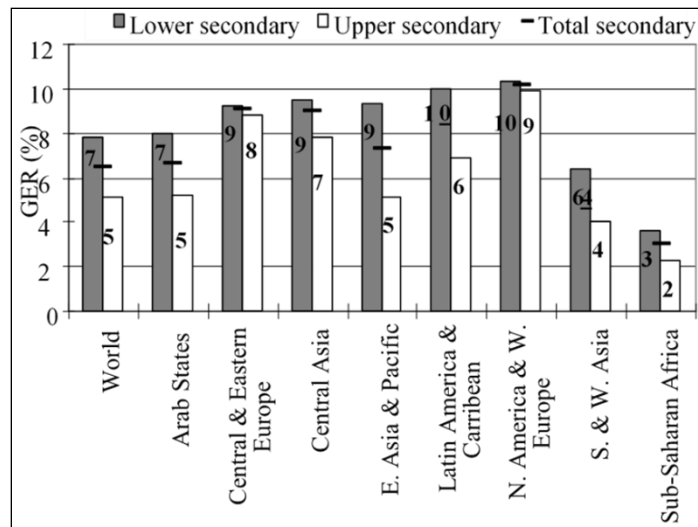
(with or without consent) lead to suboptimal performance of the ASF security institutions in responding to conflict.

### *The Pan-African Struggle*

Although AU security framework and enforcement mechanisms are lacking in many areas, it is the very nature of its environment that offers the most challenging issues. AU stability is challenged on many fronts. Concerning indicators of stability, 8 of the 10 countries with the lowest pre-primary net enrollment rates are in sub-Saharan Africa. Seven out of 10 rural youth have never attended school and secondary schools can accommodate only 36 percent of qualifying secondary students.<sup>42</sup> The high level of conflict in Africa makes security matters complex, immediate, and ceaseless. Corruption and human rights abuses are ever-present in member states and often dictate the complexion of their interaction with the AU. There are currently active conflicts in the Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic People's Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan, Egypt, and Libya. The DRC has had 3,662,725 fatalities since 1996 and 1,555,100 internally displace persons (IDPs) in 2015 alone.<sup>43</sup>

Table 1: Gross enrollment ratios in secondary education by global region

Source: UIS Global Education Digest



One need only look at the continent's history to appreciate its fractured nature. The successful widespread colonization of Africa and its effect on current day African affairs is evidenced by the AU Charter which states the goal of removing all vestiges of colonialism. Examine 19th century changes in the political geography of Africa, during which many African kingdoms and empires met their demise. The subsequent reconfigurations were founded on different ideological and social principles. During the transition to these newly formed societies, African nations were organizationally weak and politically unstable, making them more susceptible to defeat and subsequent colonization. The colonization served to partition the continent in ways that were not aligned with the tribes and communities contained therein. Fast forward to modern day Africa and it is apparent that the attempt to establish "Pan-African" law is a most noble experiment in coalescing many disparate cultures.

There are varying interpretations of AU rules of conduct and international law by member states based on cultural biases and/or desire to maintain power. Every member state does not always well receive the concept of moral universalism. Internal conflicts within a state often arise when the cultural identities of tribes often have more drive on social norms and behavior than the policies of the states. These factors make the enforcement of AU and international law especially tenuous. The current foreign policy of the AU displays connection to the continent's history of colonial resistance. Its relationship with the US, European Union (EU), China, and Russia demonstrates the AU policy of foreign power relationship "diversification", which it believes best serves the interest of Africa considering its history of colonization.

## V. US-SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA POLICY

### *Current US Strategy*

The current US Strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa states its mission as follows:

“The United States will partner with sub-Saharan African countries to pursue the following interdependent and mutually reinforcing objectives: (1) strengthen democratic institutions; (2) spur economic growth, trade, and investment; (3) advance peace and security; and (4) promote opportunity and development. Across all objectives, we will: deepen our engagement with Africa’s young leaders; seek to empower marginalized populations and women; address the unique needs of fragile and post-conflict states; and work closely with the U.N. and other multilateral actors to achieve our objectives on the continent.”<sup>44</sup>

Although all four themes of this strategy are essential to successfully facilitate peace and prosperity in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), this section will deal specifically with how they relate to the “advance peace and security” tenet. The whole of government approach to US engagement in SSA (diplomacy, information, military, and economic [DIME]), is key to success on the continent.

While the challenges to providing security assistance to the AU are many, the varying relationships of its member states poses one of the most significant obstacles. Each state has a unique set of circumstances. In addition, the way states address those security issues is just as disparate. In the past, the U.S. has attempted to aid SSA states through a series of bilateral engagements. Although this method allowed the US to be very specific about what support was provided to what African State based on their needs and compliance with international law, it did

not provide a unifying framework that worked through the AU to bolster the overall security situation on the continent.

By using the bilateral engagement framework, the US acknowledged one important fact; the AU is not the US. Although both institutions associate states under an overarching federation-like administration, member states of the AU maintain significantly more sovereignty than member states of the US. For instance, although US states maintain the ability and right to independently govern their states in accordance with the Constitution, they are not permitted to make any foreign policy – that responsibility lies with the federal government. Conversely, African states are in fact completely autonomous with the ability to develop security architectures and foreign policy irrespective of the AU.

While the US acknowledges and respects the complexity of this relationship, it also understands the necessity of supporting and bolstering the AU in their attempts to provide continental and regional security. Consequently, in 2013 the US moved to a more encompassing multilateral engagement framework that considered the effectiveness of common African intent (Pan-Africanism). Nevertheless, African interests would be best served by primarily focusing on US engagement directly with the AU.

### *Recommendations for Engagement*

While bilateral engagements with individual African countries recognizes the sovereignty and exceptional circumstances of these states, they risk of being perceived as part of a neocolonial policy. The term neocolonialism was first applied to European policies that were perceived as plans to maintain control of former African colonies.<sup>45</sup> The history of European imperialism and its effect on present day Africa is highlight by the OAU charter which lists “...eradicate all forms of colonialism from Africa” as a purpose of the organization.<sup>46</sup> While the AU charter does not specifically mention colonialism, it does state that it will “[Consider] the principles and objectives stated in the Charter of the Organization of African Unity...”<sup>47</sup> On July 11, 2009. President Obama addressed the Parliament of Ghana in Accra, declaring that “the 21st century will be shaped by what happens not just in Rome, or Moscow or Washington, but by what happens in Accra as well...Africa’s future is up to Africans.”<sup>48</sup> Although US policy does dictate frequent cooperation with the AU, it still exercises most its engagements through individual countries. Strengthening and directly leveraging the AU as the mechanism of engagement with African countries should be paramount. This not only bolsters its effectiveness, it also increases the credibility of the institution most important to the unity and prosperity of the continent.

The complexity of the issues confronting Africa coupled with the varied interests of the US makes this course of action especially challenging. While US engagement is based on the principle of enabling African countries to manage their own security challenges, many of these countries have weak security capabilities and lack financial resources to effectively deal with threats. This highlights the delicate balance of AU enabling operations vs multilateral

engagement. To achieve this mission, there are several organizations that the US employs to facilitate security sector reform on the African continent.

One organization is the United States Mission to the African Union (USAU). It works with the AU PSC to support the following:

1. Conflict mitigation to mediation and peacekeeping.
2. A continental early warning system that will detect threats to peace and security on the continent before they are erupt.
3. The ASF, a network of five regionally based peacekeeping forces that will rapidly deploy to quell conflicts that arise in any African state.
4. A coordination and communications plan for maritime safety and security.<sup>49</sup>

Another tool of US security assistance is the United States Africa Command (USAFRICOM). USAFRICOM, with national and international partners, “disrupts transnational threats, protects U.S. personnel and facilities, prevents and mitigates conflict, and builds defense capabilities in order to promote regional stability and prosperity.”<sup>50</sup> USAFRICOM is often referred to as a “Combatant Command Plus.” The “plus” designator signifies the command’s combining of the roles ascribed to traditional geographic combatant commands with a broader the Department of State (DoS) directive to build a stable security environment. Prior to AFRICOM’s creation, Department of Defense (DoD) required the command’s headquarters to include personnel from other agencies.<sup>51</sup> This architecture supports whole of government approach to US engagement in SSA.

## VI. CONCLUSION

The AU and the African continent are making strides in governance and economic improvements. Nevertheless, the intricacy of the security environment and the threats posed by state and non-state actors place constant pressure on the AU's leadership. While the AU has established architecture and forces for policy enforcement and peacekeeping, it still struggles to maintain a sound security architecture due to a limiting intervention framework, an ineffective intervention force, and a complex and volatile security environment. It attempts to close gaps in capability and capacity by leveraging partnerships with other nations as well as international and regional organizations.

As military professionals and government representatives, we are required to solve the most complex of problems. We are taught to develop operational designs that leverage our strengths against weaknesses in the system of a problem. This involves identifying current conditions, a desired endstate, and obstacles between the two. As a fire supporter, I often address problem framing with a target development methodology. Joint Publication 3-60 (JP 3-60) defines target development as, "the systematic examination of potential target systems – and their components, individual targets, and even elements of targets – to determine the necessary type and duration of the action that must be exerted on each target to create an effect that is consistent with the commander's specific objectives."<sup>52</sup> In other words, the identification of what parts of a system need to be affected, and how, in order to achieve the desired endstate.

With this framework in mind, a key tenet in problem framing is researching the target area history. While not directly stated in JP 3-60, fire supporters often look at the history of the target set to determine patterns and prior activity. This process provides context on the nature of the target entity and, in turn, the system writ large. This will dictate the method of engagement

most effective for mission accomplishment. Frequently, research of this history merely spans the recent past, often only the history as it directly pertains to the immediate mission. This is appropriate for operations where the endstate is short term or the system is simple.

When applying this target development construct to US-SSA security engagement, research of the target area history must go deeper. It must go further back in time to get a true appreciation of the system. An understanding of the complex and deep rooted effect of colonization should inform our decisions about our method of engagement. While not a true federal government in the United States of America sense, the continental wide security architecture of the AU is better culturally equipped to address the conflicts in Africa. This method assumes risks – to both the mission and the force – in the short term. Nevertheless, US-SSA security policy must establish the primacy of AU “by-with-through” engagement for sustainable long term security on the African continent.

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