

## 39. Africa

FOR decades, Africa was noted more for poverty, broken states, or proxy Cold War battles than for its strategic importance to U.S. foreign policy. Many of these traditional concerns, including the democracy deficit, lack of development, trade barriers, and diseases like HIV/AIDS, remain critically important, and the U.S. should continue to help address these problems. But sub-Saharan Africa's significance is now augmented by its growing strategic importance. Africa supplies the U.S. with about 18 percent of its oil imports, rivaling the Middle East as a source of energy, and production is expected to double in the next 10 years. Increasingly, instability and humanitarian crises such as the atrocities in Darfur demand attention from the United Nations and the United States as the consequences of these problems cross borders. Africa is also a key front in the war on terrorism. Al-Qaeda operations were well-established in Sudan before shifting to Afghanistan, and the attacks on U.S. embassies in Eastern Africa foreshadowed terrorist ambitions for attacking the U.S. on 9/11. Islamic extremists continue their efforts to gain influence in Africa.

by *Brett D. Schaefer*

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### Recommendations

**1. Develop a comprehensive strategy toward Africa to oppose the forces that stunt African development.** U.S. strategy toward the region is fractured rather than a comprehensive network of complementary policies. Relevant U.S. agencies should develop a common strategy to deal with the challenges and obstacles.

**2. Increase the diplomatic profile of the United States in Africa.** The U.S. dedicates significant resources to promoting economic growth and development, representative government, health, and human rights in Africa, but this commitment goes unappreciated, in part because of America's low diplomatic profile. This situation hurts U.S. bilateral relations, but also undermines support for the U.S. in international organizations where African nations constitute a sizable voting bloc. Secretary Rice's reorganization of diplomatic posts to shift personnel to Africa should help, provided the new officers are charged with publicizing U.S. efforts in Africa to raise America's visibility and concentrated in key

states (regional powers, energy producers, and states vulnerable to terrorism) to boost support for U.S. interests. A lengthy trip by President Bush to discuss shared interests would also help.

**3. Encourage human rights, democratic principles, and good governance.** The U.S. should make a more consistent effort to punish repressive African regimes and help African democracies strengthen institutions and policies conducive to a free, open, stable, and prosperous society. America has made good governance, the rule of law, and economic freedom requirements for the Millennium Challenge Account; it should elevate the level of commitment to basic human rights and freedoms in decisions to allocate bilateral economic assistance and apply that policy in international financial institutions and the United Nations. The U.S. and other donor nations have spent over \$550 billion on development assistance (in 2003 dollars) since 1960 to help poor countries in sub-Saharan Africa attain economic growth and prosperity, but to little avail. This failure is due not to insufficient funds, but to the counterproductive policies of recipient countries. Development depends on developing countries implementing policies that promote economic freedom, good governance, and the rule of law.

**4. Increase trade and economic ties.** U.S. trade with Africa, though accounting for only about 1 percent of total U.S. trade, is growing rapidly. Instrumental in this growth is the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which provides duty-free access to nearly all goods exported to the U.S. from African countries provided they have established or are making progress toward market-based economies, enhancing the rule of law, representative governance, lowering barriers to U.S. trade and investment, improving human rights, and other goals. Under AGOA, two-way trade between the U.S. and sub-Saharan Africa (in constant 2000 dollars) doubled from \$20 billion in 1999 to \$41.1 billion in 2004. The United States should continue to press for trade liberalization in the World Trade organization, eliminate trade-distorting subsidies in the U.S., and seek free trade agreements with African countries that liberalize trade, lower investment barriers, and strengthen property rights to encourage economic growth and ties between the U.S. and Africa.

**5. Develop energy resources.** Africa is an increasingly important source of oil for the U.S. According to Barron's Online, America was more dependent on oil imported from Africa in the first 10 months of 2005 than it was on imports from the Middle East (18.6 percent from Africa vs. 17.2 percent from the Middle East). Within the next decade, U.S. imports of African oil are forecast to increase to 25 percent. America should press African countries to make their oil and gas sectors

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more open to foreign investment and remove regulatory and other barriers that constrain resource development.

**6. Increase security engagement.** The U.S. should pursue and expand security assistance, engagement, and training arrangements with countries to advance U.S. military principles, such as civilian control of the military, and enhance counterterrorism and peacekeeping capabilities. The U.S. also should adjust its regional command structure to give higher priority to Africa and bolster intelligence assets in the region to counter terrorist efforts. Overall, the U.S. should shift its treatment of the continent from one of benefactor to one of partnership, and both assistance and debt forgiveness should be conditioned on the willingness of African governments to assume responsibility for their role in resolving the region's problems.

## Facts and Figures

■ Sub-Saharan Africa's 719 million people face tremendous challenges, including the world's highest incidence of HIV/AIDS, deep poverty, unemployment, political instability, and a host of related problems. According to IREN-Kenya, an African think tank, per capita food production has fallen every year since 1962, and seven out of 10 Africans are extremely poor or on the verge of extreme poverty.

■ Total GDP (in constant 2000 U.S. dollars) for the 48 countries of sub-Saharan Africa in 2004 was \$385.6 billion: approximately the same GDP as Michigan or New Jersey in a region nearly three times the size of the United States in land area and population.

■ America has provided \$51.2 billion (in 2003 dollars) in bilateral official development assistance to sub-Saharan Africa since 1960.

■ Under President George W. Bush, America has nearly tripled its assistance to sub-Saharan Africa from \$1.2 billion in 2000 to \$3.4 billion in 2004, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

■ Nearly half of all countries eligible for the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) in 2004 and 2006 were in sub-Saharan Africa.

■ The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) is the world's largest source of bilateral and multilateral support to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other infectious diseases. The five-year, \$15 billion program was created to support bilateral and multilateral HIV/AIDS programs around the world with a focus on the 15 nations that

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represent half of the world's infections. All but three of these nations are in sub-Saharan Africa: Botswana, Ivory Coast, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia.

■ In the first 10 months of 2005, the U.S. imported more oil from Africa than from the Middle East. According to *Barron's Online*, "As a percentage of total U.S. oil imports, Africa accounted for 18.6% over the January–October period versus a 17.2% share for the Middle East." Over that period, Nigeria, Algeria, and Angola together accounted for over 15 percent of total U.S. oil imports, compared to Saudi Arabia's share at 11.5 percent.

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*This chapter can be read online at [issues2006.org/africa](http://issues2006.org/africa).*

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### Additional Reading

Greg Mills, Ph.D., "Ten Things that Africa Can Do for Itself," Heritage Foundation *Lecture No. 923*, February 27, 2006, at [www.heritage.org/Research/Africa/hl923.cfm](http://www.heritage.org/Research/Africa/hl923.cfm).

Brett D. Schaefer, "Multilateral Economic Development Efforts in Sub-Saharan Africa," Heritage Foundation *Lecture No. 858*, December 20, 2004, at [www.heritage.org/Research/TradeandForeignAid/hl858.cfm](http://www.heritage.org/Research/TradeandForeignAid/hl858.cfm).

Ariel Cohen, Ph.D., and Brett D. Schaefer, "Addressing Nigeria's Economic Problems and the Islamist Terrorist Threat," Heritage Foundation *Executive Memorandum No. 933*, May 19, 2004, at [www.heritage.org/Research/Africa/em933.cfm](http://www.heritage.org/Research/Africa/em933.cfm).

Brett D. Schaefer, "Economic Freedom: The Path to African Prosperity," Heritage Foundation *Lecture No. 778*, February 20, 2003, at [www.heritage.org/Research/Africa/hl778.cfm](http://www.heritage.org/Research/Africa/hl778.cfm).