Worse than the Disease: The Case Against
Military Intervention in Africa

By “Coach Vance” Trefethen

***Resolved: The United States federal government should considerably decrease its military commitments.***

Case Summary: This case argues that US forces in Africa serve no useful purpose for US national security. They are merely targets for terrorism, and are just pouring gasoline on the “terrorism” fire they are trying to solve. Bringing them home would increase US national security.

NOTE: In every case, the red bracketed notations about END QUOTE and LATER IN THE SAME CONTEXT are added by the brief writer to help comply with the new Stoa evidence rules. When these appear in a contiguous text without any line separation, they indicate that we are merely not-reading the non-underlined portion of the evidence quote, even though it is still present. When they appear with line breaks around them, they indicate that we are moving from one part of the quoted article to more distant part of the article and the skipped text is not preserved nor presented in the brief.

If there are evidence quotes where the evidence contains underlined portions and non-underlined portions, you are still obligated by Stoa rules to enunciate (say out loud) the signals “END QUOTE” and “LATER IN THE SAME CONTEXT” to indicate you are skipping some non-underlined text – even if we do not have the bracketed markers there to remind you.

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Worse than the Disease: The Case Against
Military Intervention in Africa

The United States has escalated its military intervention in Africa under the guise of fighting terrorism. But the proposed cure is worse than the disease; in fact, it’s one of the causes of the disease. Please join us in affirming that: The United States Federal Government should considerably reduce its military commitments.

OBSERVATION 1. DEFINITIONS

Considerable

Merriam Webster Online Dictionary copyright 2020. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/considerably>

1**:**worth [consideration](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/consideration) **:**[SIGNIFICANT](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/significant)

Military

Merriam Webster Online Dictionary copyright 2020 <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/military>

b**:**of or relating to armed forces

Commitment

Merriam Webster Online Dictionary copyright 2020. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/commitment>

c**:**the state or an instance of being obligated or emotionally [impelled](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/impel)

OBSERVATION 1. INHERENCY, the structure of the Status Quo. Two key FACTS

FACT 1. 6000 US troops in Africa

US Defense Dept. Inspector General’s Report to Congress 2020. (directed by Glenn Fine, Principal Deputy Inspector General for the US Dept. of Defense) 21 Feb 2020 EAST AFRICA AND NORTH AND WEST AFRICA COUNTERTERRORISM OPERATIONS <https://media.defense.gov/2020/Feb/21/2002252793/-1/-1/1/LEAD%20IG%20EAST%20AFRICA%20AND%20NORTH%20AND%20WEST%20AFRICA%20COUNTERTERRORISM%20OPERATIONS.PDF>

There are approximately 6,000 U.S. military personnel deployed to Africa. This number includes approximately 800 personnel in West Africa and 500 special operations forces in Somalia.

FACT 2. No longer needed. It’s time to pull American troops out of Africa

Doug Bandow 2020 (JD from Stanford Univ. senior fellow at the Cato Institute, specializing in foreign policy and civil liberties. He worked as special assistant to President Ronald Reagan) America’s Africa Enigma: Why U.S. Troops Are Taking Unnecessary Risks 21 Feb 2020 <https://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/americas-africa-enigma-why-us-troops-are-taking-unnecessary-risks>

America cannot afford to continue doing everything around the world. After meeting France’s defense minister, Esper opined: “My aim is to free up time, money and manpower around the globe, where we currently are so that I can direct it” elsewhere. Such a review is long overdue. Most of America’s forces deployed overseas should come home. [**END QUOTE**] Of course, withdrawals should not stop with Africa. There are some fifty‐​two hundred troops in Iraq, which that nation’s government wants to see withdrawn. Roughly thirteen thousand remain in Afghanistan, nearly twenty years after Washington first intervened. There is talk that Esper might cut those numbers by twenty‐​five hundred and four thousand. That would be another good start. **[HE GOES ON LATER TO SAY QUOTE:]** But the administration should begin with Africa and by bringing American forces home. It is time for President Donald Trump to walk the walk and not just talk the talk when it comes to halting endless wars.

OBSERVATION 2. We need the following PLAN implemented by Congress and the President

1. All US military forces withdrawn from Africa

2. Congress cancels all funding for US military deployments to Africa
3. Enforcement through the normal military chain of command
4. Plan takes effect 30 days after an affirmative ballot and remains in effect until or unless Congress declares war on an African country.
5. All Affirmative speeches may clarify

OBSERVATION 3. ADVANTAGES

ADVANTAGE 1. More effective counter-terrorism

A. The Problem: US intervention makes terrorism worse

Prof. Elizabeth Schmidt 2020 (*professor emeritus of history at Loyola Univ Maryland)* 26 Mar 2020 Lessons from Africa: Military Intervention Fails to Counter Terrorism <https://fpif.org/lessons-from-africa-military-intervention-fails-to-counter-terrorism/>

Where do we start? First, we need to determine what does not work. [Counterterrorism operations, whether conducted by the U.S. or its allies, have been catastrophic](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2018-12-11/crisis-peacekeeping). Intervention in the [Sahel](https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/in-depth/countering-militancy-sahel) exemplifies the problem. In Mali and Nigeria, government actions in insurgent areas, and externally directed drone and missile strikes, have killed countless unarmed civilians. Such actions have [increased local support for insurgent forces](http://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/opinion/2017/09/28/fact-file-unfair-cop-why-african-police-forces-make-violent-extremism-worse). Military successes have generally been short-lived, as violent extremists have regrouped and [shifted their focus to unprotected civilians](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/africa/2019-saw-record-us-airstrikes-in-somalia-why-is-al-shabab-surging/2020/01/15/be9bc808-30c2-11ea-971b-43bec3ff9860_story.html).

B. The Solution: Withdrawing support for repressive governments reduces discontent that foments terrorism

Prof. Elizabeth Schmidt 2020 (*professor emeritus of history at Loyola Univ Maryland)* 26 Mar 2020 Lessons from Africa: Military Intervention Fails to Counter Terrorism <https://fpif.org/lessons-from-africa-military-intervention-fails-to-counter-terrorism/>

The establishment debate misses the point. Mainstream critics haggle over how many troops are needed, which nations should supply them, and where they should be deployed. The real question is whether present counterterrorism strategies are effective — and if not, what policies should be implemented instead. Evidence from Africa makes it clear that military solutions do not work, and prescriptions imposed from above and outside often fail. Local initiatives that address underlying grievances have been more effective. But their impact will be limited without fundamental social, economic, and political change. To effectively counter violent extremism, the U.S. must withdraw support for the corrupt and repressive governments that foster discontent and assist local endeavors that address the people’s needs.

ADVANTAGE 2. Needless sacrifice of lives avoided

A Defense Dept. study finds US intervention in West Africa creates lots of casualties, while failing to reduce terrorism

Nick Turse 2020 (journalist; fellow at The Nation Institute) 27 Feb 2020 “PENTAGON’S OWN MAP OF U.S. BASES IN AFRICA CONTRADICTS ITS CLAIM OF “LIGHT” FOOTPRINT” <https://theintercept.com/2020/02/27/africa-us-military-bases-africom/> (ellipses in original; DODIG= Dept of Defense Inspector General; AFRICOM is the US military organization responsible for US forces in Africa) (brackets added)

The DoDIG’s assessment of West Africa was even more dire. “VEO [violent extremist organization] violence in West Africa grew rapidly over the past 2 years; in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Western Niger, VEO violence increased by 250 percent since 2018,” according to the report. AFRICOM told the DoDIG that security in West Africa continued to deteriorate during the final quarter of 2019 as terrorist groups “launched a growing number of offensive attacks against military facilities and troops … often resulting in large numbers of casualties” to U.S.-allied armed forces. “[VEOs in West Africa are not degraded nor contained to the Sahel and Lake Chad region](https://www.stateoig.gov/system/files/q1fy2020_leadig_ea_nw_africa_cto.pdf),” the command admitted.

ADVANTAGE 3. Human rights upheld

US military facilities promote illegal imprisonment, torture and killing

Nick Turse 2020 (journalist; fellow at The Nation Institute) 27 Feb 2020 “PENTAGON’S OWN MAP OF U.S. BASES IN AFRICA CONTRADICTS ITS CLAIM OF “LIGHT” FOOTPRINT” <https://theintercept.com/2020/02/27/africa-us-military-bases-africom/> (AFRICOM is the US military organization responsible for US forces in Africa) (brackets added)

The 2019 AFRICOM planning document notes that U.S. forces will “continue to conduct counter-VEO-focused activities” from 16 separate bases. Even discounting the two counter-VEO [violent extremist organization] bases in Libya that appear to have been closed since the map was created by AFRICOM, this leaves one each in Kenya, Mali, and Tunisia, as well as five in Somalia, four in Niger, and two in Cameroon at Garoua and Maroua. The site in Garoua is a drone base that [was profiled](https://theintercept.com/2016/02/25/us-extends-drone-war-deeper-into-africa-with-secretive-base/) by The Intercept in 2016. In 2017, the Intercept revealed that while the U.S. military fortified its base in Maroua, known as Camp Salak, the outpost also served as a scene of [illegal imprisonment, torture, and even killings](https://theintercept.com/2017/07/20/cameroonian-troops-tortured-and-killed-prisoners-at-base-used-for-u-s-drone-surveillance/).

ADVANTAGE 4. De-militarization.

A. The Link: AFRICOM, the US military command for Africa, militarizes problems that should be handled by civilians.

Prof. Elizabeth Schmidt 2018 (*professor emeritus of history at Loyola Univ Maryland)* Foreign Intervention in Africa after the Cold War <https://www.ohioswallow.com/extras/9780896805040_OhioUniversityPress_OpenAccess.pdf>

As the Pentagon took over initiatives previously under the jurisdiction of USAID, soldiers engaged in activities for which they were not trained—and trained experts were shunted aside. Threats to human security, such as poverty, disease, climate change, corruption, and political oppression, were considered problematic only insofar as they led to chaos and instability that opened the door to extremist recruitment. The counterterrorism lens distorted the US response. US-led training programs emphasized elite counterterrorism forces and underplayed the importance of civil policing and humane responses to epidemics and climate-related disasters.

B. The Impact: All the problems got worse

Prof. Elizabeth Schmidt 2018 (*professor emeritus of history at Loyola Univ Maryland)* Foreign Intervention in Africa after the Cold War <https://www.ohioswallow.com/extras/9780896805040_OhioUniversityPress_OpenAccess.pdf>

As a result, African partners often engaged in abuses against civilian populations and were implicated in military coups, strengthening the insurgencies they were expected to combat. Finally, AFRICOM personnel often continued past trends of conflating local grievances with international terrorism and strengthening the military capacity of armed forces that attacked civilians. Increased US military presence sometimes sparked popular backlashes, exacerbating rather than abating regional insecurity. Although AFRICOM was billed as promoting “African solutions to African problems,” its programs were not developed in consultation with African civil societies, and US rather than African security concerns dominated its agenda. As a result, AFRICOM and its constituent programs frequently intensified rather than reduced international terrorist threats.

2A Evidence: Africa

OPENING QUOTES / AFF PHILOSOPHY

INHERENCY

Military presence in East Africa is increasing

Nick Turse 2020 (journalist; fellow at The Nation Institute) 27 Feb 2020 “PENTAGON’S OWN MAP OF U.S. BASES IN AFRICA CONTRADICTS ITS CLAIM OF “LIGHT” FOOTPRINT” <https://theintercept.com/2020/02/27/africa-us-military-bases-africom/> (brackets in original)

While the five U.S. outposts in Somalia rank second only to the six in Niger when it comes to America’s footprint on the continent, AFRICOM is actively seeking to expand its presence in the Horn of Africa. “Additional posture and/or capacity is required in East Africa to more efficiently employ limited aviation resources in support of U.S. activities in southern Somalia,” according to the formerly secret files, which also mention the “potential establishment of one or more [contingency locations] in Somalia to support Somali National Security Force development.” The 2019 planning documents also state that five “contingency locations” were recommended to be upgraded to “semi-permanent” status: Baledogle, Kismayo, and Mogadishu in Somalia, and Arlit and Diffa in Niger.

Dozens of US bases and 6,000 or more US troops in Africa

Nick Turse 2020 (journalist; fellow at The Nation Institute) 27 Feb 2020 “PENTAGON’S OWN MAP OF U.S. BASES IN AFRICA CONTRADICTS ITS CLAIM OF “LIGHT” FOOTPRINT” <https://theintercept.com/2020/02/27/africa-us-military-bases-africom/>

It’s also worth noting the documents state that U.S. Army Africa uses space at “host nation facilities” in Theis, Senegal, and Singo, Uganda, even though the bases are not listed on AFRICOM’s maps. While these “cooperative training locations” are not officially considered outposts by the command, they raise the question of whether 29 bases is actually a more accurate count. Whatever the real number of bases, the recent alteration of AFRICOM’s footprint in 2019 appears to be a strategic consolidation as the command fortifies its presence in some of the continent’s hottest hotspots. Of the 6,000 or more U.S. personnel deployed in Africa, about 1,200, according to Manley, are in West Africa, with [a significant percentage in Niger](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/text-letter-president-speaker-house-representatives-president-pro-tempore-senate-8/), which has become the key American hub on that side of the continent. Around [500 Special Operations forces](https://www.stateoig.gov/system/files/q1fy2020_leadig_ea_nw_africa_cto.pdf) are reportedly deployed on the other side of the continent in Somalia, the site of America’s most intense and longest-running undeclared war in Africa.

HARMS / SIGNIFICANCE

West Africa: Terrorism and casualties are increasing as US military effort increases

Nick Turse 2020 (journalist; fellow at The Nation Institute) 27 Feb 2020 “PENTAGON’S OWN MAP OF U.S. BASES IN AFRICA CONTRADICTS ITS CLAIM OF “LIGHT” FOOTPRINT” <https://theintercept.com/2020/02/27/africa-us-military-bases-africom/>

There are now roughly [25 active militant Islamist groups](https://africacenter.org/spotlight/threat-from-african-militant-islamist-groups-expanding-diversifying/) operating in Africa, up from [just five in 2010](https://africacenter.org/spotlight/fronts-fluctuate-in-battle-against-african-militant-islamist-groups/) — a jump of 400 percent — according to the Defense Department’s Africa Center for Strategic Studies. Militant Islamist activity also hit record levels in 2019. There were [3,471 reported violent events](https://africacenter.org/spotlight/threat-from-african-militant-islamist-groups-expanding-diversifying/) linked to these groups last year, a 1,105 percent increase since [2009](https://africacenter.org/spotlight/fronts-fluctuate-in-battle-against-african-militant-islamist-groups/). Reported fatalities resulting from African militant Islamist group activity also increased by 7 percent over last year, to an estimated 10,460 deaths. The situation has become so grim that U.S. military aims in West Africa have recently been scaled back from a strategy of degrading the strength and reach of terror groups to nothing more than “[containment](https://www.stateoig.gov/system/files/q1fy2020_leadig_ea_nw_africa_cto.pdf).”

Military escalation doesn’t work and distracts us from better solutions to violent extremism in Africa

Nick Turse 2020 (journalist; fellow at The Nation Institute) 27 Feb 2020 “PENTAGON’S OWN MAP OF U.S. BASES IN AFRICA CONTRADICTS ITS CLAIM OF “LIGHT” FOOTPRINT” <https://theintercept.com/2020/02/27/africa-us-military-bases-africom/>

“The current, overly militarized approach to fighting terrorism in Africa is not working,” said William Hartung, the director of the arms and security project at the Center for International Policy, or CIP. “As the U.S. military footprint and military activities have increased, terrorist violence has grown and terrorist groups have proliferated.” His colleague, Temi Ibirogba, a program and research associate with the Africa Program at CIP, noted that the rise of violent extremism in Africa in the face of persistent U.S. military engagement since 9/11 should be cause for skepticism of the “more is better” strategy. “The U.S. military should be considering alternative approaches like better coordination with African regional and continental organizations and encouraging African governments to consider negotiations in certain cases,” she told The Intercept.

Intervention in Mali and Nigeria increases the civilian casualties with no lasting reduction in terrorism

Prof. Elizabeth Schmidt 2018 (*professor emeritus of history at Loyola Univ Maryland)*Foreign Intervention in Africa after the Cold War <https://www.ohioswallow.com/extras/9780896805040_OhioUniversityPress_OpenAccess.pdf>

In both Mali and Nigeria, the foreign military operations decimated insurgent forces in some areas but dispersed them to others, where the rebels targeted unprotected civilian populations. Ordinary citizens were caught in the crossfire, victimized by both insurrectionary and governmental forces. The abuse of civilians by state security personnel, and the failure of the international forces to protect them, undermined broader counterterrorism objectives. In both Mali and Nigeria, foreign intervention resulted in some short-term gains. However, long-term solutions remained elusive. The governments in Bamako and Abuja failed to address the deeply rooted grievances that had precipitated the insurgencies in marginalized areas. They did not redistribute state resources to provide badly needed infrastructure and governmental and social services to the neglected northern regions. Once the military forces withdrew, extremist groups in both countries reestablished themselves in remote areas where they operated with renewed vigor.

Terrorism in West Africa surges as US military commitment increases because they’re retaliating for US military actions

US Defense Dept. Inspector General’s Report to Congress 2020. (directed by Glenn Fine, Principal Deputy Inspector General for the US Dept. of Defense) 21 Feb 2020 EAST AFRICA AND NORTH AND WEST AFRICA COUNTERTERRORISM OPERATIONS <https://media.defense.gov/2020/Feb/21/2002252793/-1/-1/1/LEAD%20IG%20EAST%20AFRICA%20AND%20NORTH%20AND%20WEST%20AFRICA%20COUNTERTERRORISM%20OPERATIONS.PDF>

The UN envoy to West Africa stated publicly that the region has experienced “a devastating surge” in terrorist violence against civilians. The envoy told the UN Security Council in January 2020 that more than 4,000 civilian and military deaths from terrorist attacks were reported in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger in 2019, compared to 770 in 2016. For example, on November 6, jihadists attacked a Canadian-owned gold mine in Burkina Faso, killing 39 people. Simultaneous attacks on December 24 in Burkina Faso killed 35 civilians in the town of Arbinda and 7 soldiers at a nearby military base. Earlier that month, 14 civilians were killed during an attack on a church in Hantoukoura, according to open sources. In Nigeria, ISIS-West Africa released a video on December 26 showing the execution of 11 people in what the group said was a “message for Christians.” The executions were reportedly in retaliation for the death of ISIS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, who was killed by U.S. forces in October.

Historical background explanation of “WHY” US military intervention backfires and fuels more terrorism rather than stopping it

Prof. Elizabeth Schmidt 2018 (*professor emeritus of history at Loyola Univ Maryland)* Foreign Intervention in Africa after the Cold War <https://www.ohioswallow.com/extras/9780896805040_OhioUniversityPress_OpenAccess.pdf>

During the Bush administration, repressive African regimes routinely played up the international terrorist threat as a means of obtaining US funds and military assistance—just as their predecessors had exaggerated the communist menace during the Cold War. In many instances, security forces that had been trained and financed by the United States were used to crack down on internal opposition and fight regional wars, rather than to counter actual terrorist threats. Governmental repression and US support for those responsible resulted in backlashes that heightened hostility toward the United States. As a result, instead of winning hearts and minds, US intervention tended to alienate local populations, rendering them more susceptible to the appeals of international terrorist organizations and undermining America’s long-term security interests.

Exaggerating the terrorist threat leads to US military assistance, which leads to crackdowns, which creates backlash, which creates… a terrorist threat

Prof. Elizabeth Schmidt 2018 (*professor emeritus of history at Loyola Univ Maryland)* Foreign Intervention in Africa after the Cold War <https://www.ohioswallow.com/extras/9780896805040_OhioUniversityPress_OpenAccess.pdf>

Rather than addressing the deprivation and inequality at the root of the conflicts, Washington’s counterterrorism partners played up the terrorist threat to obtain US military assistance. The policies backfired when US-trained security forces cracked down on internal opposition and intervened in neighboring countries. Such actions fueled extremism and rendered local populations more susceptible to international terrorist appeals.

Governments supported by the US in East Africa commit awful human rights abuses

Prof. Elizabeth Schmidt 2018 (*professor emeritus of history at Loyola Univ Maryland)* Foreign Intervention in Africa after the Cold War <https://www.ohioswallow.com/extras/9780896805040_OhioUniversityPress_OpenAccess.pdf>

In 2003, the United States launched the East Africa Counterterrorism Initiative (EACTI), a $100 million multi-department program to combat terrorist activities in Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda.26 Personnel from these countries were trained in border, coastal, and aviation security, and in general police work. EACTI also established programs to thwart money laundering and terrorist financing, along with education programs to undermine the appeal of extremist ideologies. Just as the Cold War had produced many unsavory partnerships, the war on terror resulted in assistance to governments that were engaged in human rights abuses. EACTI partners included Ethiopia, which was described by USAID as “the linchpin to stability in the Horn of Africa and the Global War on Terrorism.”27 Yet the Ethiopian government detained and killed political opponents, perpetrated electoral fraud, and suppressed dissent. Kenya, another EACTI partner, engaged in systematic harassment of Muslim citizens, who constituted approximately 11 percent of the population, and in 2007 the Mwai Kibaki regime engaged in electoral fraud that unleashed a wave of ethnically targeted killings that left more than 1,000 civilians dead. Political and community leaders were implicated in planning the attacks, and human rights organizations charged that the police were responsible for nearly 40 percent of the deaths. The same year, the EACTI-funded Anti-Terrorism Police Unit in Kenya arrested civilians who were alleged to be al-Qaeda operatives and transferred them to Ethiopia, where they were brutally interrogated in the presence of FBI and CIA operatives. In EACTI’s most recent reconfiguration, Partnership for Regional East Africa Counterterrorism (PREACT), member countries Burundi, Rwanda, South Sudan, and Sudan have engaged in serious human rights abuses against large segments of their populations and have manipulated ethnicity to perpetuate the regimes in power.

US counterterrorism efforts in Africa mean supporting corrupt governments that engage in major human rights violations

Prof. Elizabeth Schmidt 2018 (*professor emeritus of history at Loyola Univ Maryland)* Foreign Intervention in Africa after the Cold War <https://www.ohioswallow.com/extras/9780896805040_OhioUniversityPress_OpenAccess.pdf>

US counterterrorism partners in North, West, and Central Africa, as in East Africa and the Horn, included corrupt governments that engaged in serious human rights abuses. Burkina Faso was ruled for twenty-seven years by Blaise Compaoré, a military strongman whose regime engaged in violence against civilians, arbitrary arrests and detentions, and support for brutal insurgencies in neighboring countries. Chad was run by Idriss Déby, another military despot, who seized power in 1990 and whose corrupt regime was responsible for widespread arbitrary arrests, torture, rape, and murder. Opponents viewed Déby’s counterterrorism partnership with the West as an attempt to bolster a regime without internal legitimacy. A succession of Nigerian governments were also deeply corrupt and engaged in major human rights abuses against civilian populations, especially in the oil-rich Niger Delta and the volatile northeast.

Militarizing US Africa policy makes everything worse

Prof. Elizabeth Schmidt 2020 (*professor emeritus of history at Loyola Univ Maryland)* 26 Mar 2020 Lessons from Africa: Military Intervention Fails to Counter Terrorism <https://fpif.org/lessons-from-africa-military-intervention-fails-to-counter-terrorism/>

Current [U.S. Africa policy](https://www.cambridge.org/us/academic/subjects/history/african-history/foreign-intervention-africa-cold-war-war-terror), developed during the Cold War, was conceived by leaders and proponents of the U.S. [military-industrial complex](https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/eisenhower001.asp). Marked by militarism and misunderstanding, it has failed to identify the factors that undermine human security and offered wrong-headed solutions that often exacerbate the problem. The post-9/11 [war on terror has led to particularly grievous results](https://www.ohioswallow.com/book/Foreign%2BIntervention%2Bin%2BAfrica%2Bafter%2Bthe%2BCold%2BWar).
Military Solutions Don’t Work
Contrary to common misconceptions, religion and ethnicity are not the root causes of African conflicts. Rather, the sources are deep structural inequalities — poverty, underdevelopment, and political repression — and the devastating impact of climate change. Governmental neglect and the drying up of Lake Chad ignited the Boko Haram insurgency in northeastern Nigeria; the expanding desert in western Sudan has pitted herders against farmers in the struggle for water and usable land; and the destruction of the fishing industry by foreign trawlers led to piracy off the coast of Somalia.

US intervention in Somalia isn’t helping: It’s making everything worse, creating popular backlash and preventing peace

Prof. Elizabeth Schmidt 2020 (*professor emeritus of history at Loyola Univ Maryland)* 26 Mar 2020 Lessons from Africa: Military Intervention Fails to Counter Terrorism <https://fpif.org/lessons-from-africa-military-intervention-fails-to-counter-terrorism/>

Foreign intervention in the Horn of Africa has had similar results. In Somalia, the intensification of US airstrikes has stimulated [increased extremist activity](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/21/world/africa/al-qaeda-somalia-shabab.html?searchResultPosition=1) and a corresponding refocus on civilian targets. Abuses by [unaccountable regimes and foreign troops](https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2018/country-chapters/somalia#15e26b) have generated a popular backlash, and externally brokered peace accords that excluded local voices have resulted in a succession of [failed governments](https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/somalia/somalia-transitional-government-life-support).

Militarization mindset blocks real solutions in Africa

Prof. Elizabeth Schmidt 2020 (*professor emeritus of history at Loyola Univ Maryland)* 26 Mar 2020 Lessons from Africa: Military Intervention Fails to Counter Terrorism <https://fpif.org/lessons-from-africa-military-intervention-fails-to-counter-terrorism/>

First, we must question our [current framing of U.S. national security interests](https://www.ohioswallow.com/book/Foreign%2BIntervention%2Bin%2BAfrica%2Bafter%2Bthe%2BCold%2BWar). Like Trump’s America firsters, establishment liberals tend to view U.S. national security primarily in military terms that focuses on the defense of national borders against external military threats. Instead, we need to embrace a [more expansive concept of “human security”](http://www.africafocus.org/editor/taf0902.pdf) that focuses on people rather than territory and includes health, education, employment, environment, and respect for human rights and civil liberties as factors critical to human well-being. The safeguarding of both U.S. and global security requires a multidimensional approach that addresses the root causes of problems that threaten the world today.

SOLVENCY / ADVOCACY

Reversing US military policy in Africa is essential: Continuing on the present path = greater mayhem

Prof. Elizabeth Schmidt 2020 (*professor emeritus of history at Loyola Univ Maryland)* 26 Mar 2020 Lessons from Africa: Military Intervention Fails to Counter Terrorism <https://fpif.org/lessons-from-africa-military-intervention-fails-to-counter-terrorism/>

Most establishment intellectuals embrace the notion of [American exceptionalism](https://foreignpolicy.com/2011/10/11/the-myth-of-american-exceptionalism/), arguing that the United States is a unique force for good in the world, and to fulfill its mission, it must maintain its position at the helm of the global order. Proponents of this view ordinarily promote military solutions, as well as economic development and (sometimes) democracy. Progressives, in contrast, [reject this sanguine characterization of U.S. actions](http://www.africafocus.org/docs20/usa2001.php) and [denounce the policies](https://quincyinst.org/2019/12/13/the-infinity-war/) that have led to [endless war](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/02/us/politics/trump-forever-war.html). To resolve the current crisis, the United States and its partners must fundamentally [shift their perspective and alter their approach](http://www.africafocus.org/usa-2020.php). Continuing on the present path will only result in greater mayhem.

US military in Africa is an unnecessary commitment that must end. Critics are wrong who say we are morally obligated to keep this commitment

Doug Bandow 2020 (JD from Stanford Univ. senior fellow at the Cato Institute, specializing in foreign policy and civil liberties. He worked as special assistant to President Ronald Reagan) America’s Africa Enigma: Why U.S. Troops Are Taking Unnecessary Risks 21 Feb 2020 <https://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/americas-africa-enigma-why-us-troops-are-taking-unnecessary-risks>

Judd Devermont, Africa director at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, complained that discussion of a possible withdrawal “is reinforcing a view in West Africa that the U.S. is not interested, that it does not see it as a strategic importance and that it is going to cut and run and abandon its African allies.” But such talk is the policy equivalent of emotional blackmail. The region is not strategically important to America. Ending an unnecessary commitment is not cutting and running. The United States has not promised eternal support for any African state.

DISAD RESPONSES

A/T “Terrorism” in general

Troops in Africa can’t solve terrorism because bad guys can operate anywhere. Turn: Troops attract terrorism

Doug Bandow 2020 (JD from Stanford Univ. senior fellow at the Cato Institute, specializing in foreign policy and civil liberties. He worked as special assistant to President Ronald Reagan) America’s Africa Enigma: Why U.S. Troops Are Taking Unnecessary Risks 21 Feb 2020 (brackets added) <https://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/americas-africa-enigma-why-us-troops-are-taking-unnecessary-risks>

[Delaware Sen. Chris] Coons argued, “I think we would be foolish to ignore a wide‐​open, lightly governed space that is as big as the continental United States and from which attacks might be launched against Western Europe and the United States.” However, terrorists can operate from almost anywhere on earth. They don’t need a lot of territory. Washington cannot occupy every empty space. Entangling the United States in endless wars in Africa is no bargain. For instance, last month an attack by al‐​Shabab on a Kenyan base in Manda Bay, manned by Americans, overcame the Kenyan guards, overran the facility, shot down an aircraft, destroyed several others, killed three Americans, and wounded two others. Washington sent in another one hundred soldiers for security. Townsend admitted that he feared another attack on the base.

A/T “West Africa”

US forces in West Africa are limited in what they can do against terrorism, and it’s not working. Attacks are increasing

US Defense Dept. Inspector General’s Report to Congress 2020. (directed by Glenn Fine, Principal Deputy Inspector General for the US Dept. of Defense) 21 Feb 2020 EAST AFRICA AND NORTH AND WEST AFRICA COUNTERTERRORISM OPERATIONS <https://media.defense.gov/2020/Feb/21/2002252793/-1/-1/1/LEAD%20IG%20EAST%20AFRICA%20AND%20NORTH%20AND%20WEST%20AFRICA%20COUNTERTERRORISM%20OPERATIONS.PDF> (USAFRICOM is the military organization responsible for operations in Africa. USAID is the US Agency for International Development, part of the State Department that handles US foreign aid. DOD OIG is the Dept of Defense Office of the Inspector General.) (brackets added)

In West Africa, the U.S. military does not have direct action authority to conduct unilateral counterterrorism operations. Instead, the U.S. military provides security assistance to partner nations as they work to counter VEOs [violent extremist organizations] in the region. [**END QUOTE**] This includes support to the G5 Sahel Joint Force, an African-led and French-assisted force that consists of approximately 4,500 troops from Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger. The U.S. military also supports Multinational Joint Task Force, which is composed of troops from Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria. According to the USAFRICOM Posture Statement, USAFRICOM and USAID work with the Multinational Joint Task Force to deliver humanitarian support to West African nations. U.S. forces also conduct limited counterterrorism operations as a part of their support to partner nations in West Africa. Counterterrorism operations and related partner nation support in West Africa fall under Line of Effort in the USAFRICOM campaign plan. The Line of Effort includes three intermediate objectives related to supporting partners in countering VEOs, as listed in Table 4. The campaign plan lists several measures of success for each intermediate objective, including that partners are able to conduct operations against VEOs, deny them freedom of movement, and can collaborate to conduct counter-VEO operations. [**THEY GO ON LATER IN THE SAME CONTEXT TO SAY QUOTE**] According to USAFRICOM, security in West Africa continued to deteriorate during the quarter. VEOs attacked partner forces, inflicting many casualties. USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that “VEOs in West Africa are not degraded nor contained to the Sahel and Lake Chad region.” USAFRICOM also told the DoD OIG this quarter that it had switched from a “degrade” strategy to a one of “containment.”

Helping France against terrorism – doesn’t justify US forces in Africa. Not getting much out of it

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France also wants the United States to stick around Africa. “Any reduction would limit our effectiveness against terrorists,” said French defense minister Florence Parly. President Emmanuel Macron is worried that “If the Americans were to decide to withdraw from Africa, it would be bad news for us.” So what? The former colonial power remains deeply involved in Africa and has come to rely on Washington for aerial refueling, intelligence, and logistics in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger. Understandably, France would like to continue offloading as many tasks as possible—Macron’s government also lobbied to keep the United States entangled in Syria. However, Washington officials are skeptical of the value of French efforts. One anonymous American told NBC that “We’re spending hundreds of millions of dollars on a French force that has not been able to turn the tide. It’s not even a case of whack a mole. For all that we’re spending, we’re not getting much out of it.”

A/T “Somalia”

Al Shabab: US and other outside intervention isn’t the solution. It’s the root cause of Al Shabab!

Prof. Elizabeth Schmidt 2018 (*professor emeritus of history at Loyola Univ Maryland)* Foreign Intervention in Africa after the Cold War <https://www.ohioswallow.com/extras/9780896805040_OhioUniversityPress_OpenAccess.pdf>

The UN and US interventions that favored one warlord over another (1992–95), followed by Ethiopian incursions and support for diverse warlords (1996–2000), generated enormous hostility among the Somali population. The imposition of a corrupt transitional government by outside powers (2004), CIA backing of a new warlord coalition (February–June 2006), and a US-endorsed Ethiopian invasion and occupation (July 2006–January 2009) resulted in a backlash that intensified popular support for al-Shabaab (The Youth).

Foreign-backed interventions aren’t the answer to Al Shabab rebel movement. They’re the fuel that motivates it

Prof. Elizabeth Schmidt 2018 (*professor emeritus of history at Loyola Univ Maryland)* Foreign Intervention in Africa after the Cold War <https://www.ohioswallow.com/extras/9780896805040_OhioUniversityPress_OpenAccess.pdf>

By early 2007, al-Shabaab insurgents had gained control of much of southern Somalia, provoking another round of foreign military interventions. In February the UN Security Council used Chapter VIII powers to authorize the African Union Mission in Somalia, which eventually sent some 22,000 peacekeepers to restore order. The conflict continued, and the election of yet another foreign-backed government in 2012 did little to resolve it. The government had limited authority outside the capital and relied on AU forces for defense. Its operations were characterized by widespread corruption and monopolization of power. Al-Shabaab continued to exploit legitimate local grievances for its own ends.

ISIS isn’t a substantial threat in Somalia

US Defense Dept. Inspector General’s Report to Congress 2020. (directed by Glenn Fine, Principal Deputy Inspector General for the US Dept. of Defense) 21 Feb 2020 EAST AFRICA AND NORTH AND WEST AFRICA COUNTERTERRORISM OPERATIONS <https://media.defense.gov/2020/Feb/21/2002252793/-1/-1/1/LEAD%20IG%20EAST%20AFRICA%20AND%20NORTH%20AND%20WEST%20AFRICA%20COUNTERTERRORISM%20OPERATIONS.PDF>

The DIA reported that there were no significant changes to ISIS-Somalia’s size, leadership, external support, or recruiting during the quarter. The DIA reported that as of December 2019, ISIS-Somalia consisted of 100 to 300 fighters and operated primarily in the remote mountains of the Bari area of the semiautonomous Puntland region, northeast of Mogadishu. Compared to al Shabaab, ISIS-Somalia is much less active operationally. USAFRICOM reported that ISIS-Somalia did not conduct operations outside of Somalia.

Dept of Defense Inspector General (DoDIG) study finds: US efforts in East Africa (Somalia / Al Shabab) aren’t effective. Threats increase even as military commitment increases

Nick Turse 2020 (journalist; fellow at The Nation Institute) 27 Feb 2020 “PENTAGON’S OWN MAP OF U.S. BASES IN AFRICA CONTRADICTS ITS CLAIM OF “LIGHT” FOOTPRINT” <https://theintercept.com/2020/02/27/africa-us-military-bases-africom/>

But a recent inspector general’s report, examining U.S. counterterrorism efforts in Africa, raises serious questions about the utility of billions of tax dollars spent on U.S. bases, operations, and assistance to local partners. Even after a decade-plus spent fighting militants in Somalia, “the threat posed by al Shabaab and ISIS-Somalia in East Africa remains ‘high,’ despite continued U.S. airstrikes and training of Somali security forces,” the Defense Intelligence Agency told the Defense Department’s Inspector General. The DoDIG further noted that al-Shabab not only “remains a potent threat” due to its “ability to conduct high-profile attacks, recruit fighters, and finance ongoing operations,” but that the group “appears to be a growing threat to U.S. personnel and interests in the region.”

A/T “Libya”

Civil war in Libya blocks effectiveness of US forces. Must wait for that civil war to end before we can do anything

US Defense Dept. Inspector General’s Report to Congress 2020. (directed by Glenn Fine, Principal Deputy Inspector General for the US Dept. of Defense) 21 Feb 2020 EAST AFRICA AND NORTH AND WEST AFRICA COUNTERTERRORISM OPERATIONS <https://media.defense.gov/2020/Feb/21/2002252793/-1/-1/1/LEAD%20IG%20EAST%20AFRICA%20AND%20NORTH%20AND%20WEST%20AFRICA%20COUNTERTERRORISM%20OPERATIONS.PDF> (USAFRICOM is the military organization responsible for operations in Africa. DOD OIG is the Dept of Defense Office of the Inspector General. “LNA” and “GNA” are warring factions fighting for control of Libya. GNA is the US-backed faction. LNA is supported by Russia and China.)

USAFRICOM told the DoD OIG that it maintains the ability to conduct counterterrorism operations in Libya, but that the ongoing civil conflict creates challenges, because neither the GNA forces nor the LNA forces are directly focused on counterterrorism operations. During this quarter, USAFRICOM continued to conduct its aerial counterterrorism operations in Libya from locations outside the country, but did not have any forces on the ground. A small number of U.S. troops withdrew from Libya in April 2019 due to what USAFRICOM characterized as an “unpredictable security environment” created by the LNA’s attempted military coup. USAFRICOM reported to the DoD OIG that one condition for returning ground forces to Libya is a ceasefire between the LNA and GNA that ensures that neither group accidentally targets U.S. forces.

AFRICOM admits: US forces in Libya aren’t accomplishing much against terrorism there

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Al Qaeda isn’t much of a threat in Libya

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AQIM remained a diminished threat in North Africa as it prioritizes support efforts to al Qaeda affiliates in West Africa. USAFRICOM and the DIA reported that AQIM did not conduct any attacks this quarter in North Africa. AQIM also suffered a setback on October 20, 2019, when Tunisian security forces killed a senior leader of AQIM’s branch in that country. The DIA estimated that AQIM had as many as 500 fighters in North Africa as of the end of the quarter

Turkey and European countries can solve (if military intervention / aid really are needed)

EU and Turkey are solving in Somalia

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The European Union Training Mission in Somalia (EUTM) seeks to strengthen the SNA. EUTM partners with Somali authorities to build a professional national military that is accountable to the Somali government. This support is part of the EU’s comprehensive engagement in Somalia, which seeks to support stabilization and respond to Somali needs. USAFRICOM reported that this quarter, the EUTM graduated one SNA company from its training program and began training another. The Turkish Army graduated one battalion and began training another battalion.

Turkey is supporting our guys in Libya

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On January 5, 2020, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced the deployment of an unspecified number of Turkish troops to Libya following a request for military assistance from the GNA. The request was in response to a rising LNA threat that is backed by the Russian mercenaries and other nations foreign to Libya

A/T “China / hegemony”

Unlikely China would replace reduced US influence in Africa

Dr. William Minter 2018 (senior research fellow at Africa Action; studied at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria in 1961-62; taught in Tanzania and Mozambique at the secondary school of the Mozambique Liberation Front in 1966-68 and 1974-76. Ph.D. in sociology and a certificate in African studies from Univ of Wisconsin at Madison) foreword to Foreign Intervention in Africa after the Cold War by Prof. Elizabeth Schmidt <https://www.ohioswallow.com/extras/9780896805040_OhioUniversityPress_OpenAccess.pdf>

If, as expected, the Trump presidency leads to a loss of US influence on the world stage, what regional or global powers will gain influence on policies related to intervention in Africa? Most analyses of global economic or geostrategic changes anticipate rising influence on the part of China and other regional or midlevel powers, as well as reduced international capacity for a Europe facing its own internal divisions. But it is not at all clear what these macro-level power balances imply for multilateral or bilateral interventions in Africa. A scenario in which a rival alternative power or coalition replaces the United States as the most prominent party in defining global agendas, including intervention in Africa, seems improbable. Instead, there will likely be even more uncertainty about which outside actors will be involved and the extent to which there will be coordination or conflict among them.

China is no threat to the United States, and we can’t afford to build enough military capability to dominate them

Doug Bandow 2020 (JD from Stanford Univ. senior fellow at the Cato Institute, specializing in foreign policy and civil liberties. He worked as special assistant to President Ronald Reagan) America’s Africa Enigma: Why U.S. Troops Are Taking Unnecessary Risks 21 Feb 2020 <https://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/americas-africa-enigma-why-us-troops-are-taking-unnecessary-risks>

China appears more threatening but not to the United States. Beijing will not be launching a naval armada to conquer Hawaii and invade the West Coast. The bilateral contest is over American military superiority along China’s coast. It is a convenient capability to possess but not essential. Maintaining that dominance will become ever more expensive to maintain: it will always be cheaper for the Chinese military to sink a U.S. carrier than for the United States to build and protect one.

US military presence in Africa won’t counter Chinese influence because China’s involvement is economic, not military

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Beijing’s most important calling card is the economic calling card, which it often flexes via its Belt and Road initiative funding. Katherine Zimmerman, a resident fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, has argued that “African partners know full well that they are getting a bad deal when working with China, but oftentimes China’s timelines and its blind eye toward human rights and other issues outweigh what the U.S. can offer.” The presence of American soldiers won’t change that.

A/T “Russia / hegemony”

No substantial threat from Russia in Africa. Unlikely their efforts are going to result in expanded influence or power

Paul Stronski 2019 (senior fellow in Russia and Eurasia Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace) 16 Oct 2019 “Late to the Party: Russia’s Return to Africa” <https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/10/16/late-to-party-russia-s-return-to-africa-pub-80056>

Advocates for a more forceful Western policy response point to high-visibility Russian military and security cooperation in the Central African Republic and the wide-ranging travels of Russian political consultants and disinformation specialists as confirmation that Russia, like China, represents a major challenge in Africa. Yet is that really the case? Are Russian inroads and capabilities meaningful or somewhat negligible? Hard information is difficult to come by, but any honest accounting of Russian successes will invariably point to a mere handful of client states with limited strategic significance that are isolated from the West and garner little attention from the international community. It remains unclear whether Russia’s investments in Africa over the past decade are paying off in terms of creating a real power base in Africa, let alone putting it on a footing that will expand its influence in the years to come.

Russia’s attempts to expand influence in Africa are severely constrained and can’t match other big powers

Paul Stronski 2019 (senior fellow in Russia and Eurasia Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace) 16 Oct 2019 “Late to the Party: Russia’s Return to Africa” <https://carnegieendowment.org/2019/10/16/late-to-party-russia-s-return-to-africa-pub-80056>

It is hard to overstate the structural constraints imposed on Russian ambitions in Africa by basic geoeconomic and geopolitical realities. Russia has arrived at the party quite late. It offers remarkably little that African states actually need. Its moves are far outmatched by those of China, the United States, Japan, and the European Union, whose aid and investments in Africa count in the many tens of billions of dollars. China, India, the United States, and Germany remain by far sub-Saharan Africa’s top trading partners. According to the World Bank, sub-Saharan Africa’s exports to Russia were worth about $0.6 billion in 2017, while its imports from Russia amounted to about $2.5 billion. This puts the total sub-Saharan-Russian trade turnover at about $3 billion, which pales in comparison to the region’s trade with China and the United States, worth $56 billion and $27 billion respectively. Russia is not a major source of economic development assistance to Africa.

Russia can’t contend for global control, can’t even dominate its own continent

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Russia barely qualifies as a threat. Its nuclear weapons are enough to deter America but insufficient to contend for global control, as did the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Moscow is powerful enough to beat up on its smaller neighbors, such as Georgia and Ukraine, and intervene in small regional firefights, such as Syria, but not able to dominate a continent, either Asia or Europe.

Military competition in Africa against China or Russia is a no-win. We won’t gain anything from it

Doug Bandow 2020 (JD from Stanford Univ. senior fellow at the Cato Institute, specializing in foreign policy and civil liberties. He worked as special assistant to President Ronald Reagan) America’s Africa Enigma: Why U.S. Troops Are Taking Unnecessary Risks 21 Feb 2020 <https://www.cato.org/publications/commentary/americas-africa-enigma-why-us-troops-are-taking-unnecessary-risks>

Moscow and Beijing have expanded their operations in Africa, but the Cold War should have taught the United States that military competition in Africa tended to be no‐​win. A few soldiers or special operations forces members won’t turn African states into protectorates or win populations’ hearts and minds. Even money doesn’t guarantee friendship.

A/T “Humanitarian aid blocked”

Turn: Poor countries are harmed by aid. It would do more good if it were refunded to taxpayers, who could spend it and increase trade with poor countries

Jonathan Lea 2020 (British attorney with over 13 years of experience at both large international firms and smaller practices; for the last five years he’s worked on a self-employed basis with a network of other independent lawyers focused on serving the needs of entrepreneur-led businesses and startups around the UK and further afield) originally written 19 May 2015 **updated** 6 Apr 2020, “Why foreign aid is harmful,” <https://www.jonathanlea.net/2015/why-foreign-aid-is-harmful/>

The popular understanding of international assistance programs is that these programs deliver immediate needed disaster relief, or enhance the well-being of people through economic development. Arguably, that happens to some, marginal, extent. However, my view is that “we should trade, not give aid” and that the money appropriated for Western governments’ foreign aid budgets should be put back into the pocket of the Western taxpayer, thus leaving less developed countries free from the pernicious effect of foreign aid and allowing more capital to be accumulated by those in the West who produce goods and services and who are better able to enter into mutually beneficial trading relationships with the Third World.

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