

# ANALYSIS OF UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS AFRICA

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**Abstract:** The indistinctness of Africa as a key strategic partner to the United States has been highlighted by the different foreign policy approaches that United States has subscribed to over the years. This paper therefore analyses the varied approaches that the United States has taken in the path of achieving its national interest while engaging with Africa over the years. Through the lenses of the different regimes, priorities of the United States have kept changing but of convergence are the matters pertaining to its national security and state interest. This paper therefore concludes that Africa is a stronger strategic partner to the United States than it is perceived. The strength and relevance of this continent is further cited from the lenses of the efforts that US has put in their foreign policies to place Africa in the global map arena.

**Keywords:** United States, Africa, foreign policies.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The perception of America as an invincible actor within the international framework has long been engraved on narratives and perceptions by different states. In fact, these views have in many ways influenced the formation and implementation of its foreign policy basing it on the perceived global standing and bequeathed responsibilities (Wittkopt, Jones, & Kegley, 2008). However, this narrative has often been challenged by other scholars such as Pickett (1992) who viewed America as a state that is continuously evolving to fit within the international framework and therefore disputing the invincible actor role. In so doing, the United States has reinvented itself in ways that ensures their national interests are met even within the confines of competing historical conceptions. A case in point is that, for forty years, America foreign policy has been revolving around containment of states within the Soviet Union. Though this concept was viewed as an isolationist concept, this strategy was by and large based on the premise of political realism and liberal internationalism that had informed the key logics of America's foreign policies.

Through the different US regimes these policies have continued to emphasize not only power but also international cooperation among states in a bid for America to spread its tentacles and design an overarching grand tactic against the backdrop of post-cold war conflict while forming a foundation on which domestic and global agreement could be built upon. Therefore, in pursuit of achieving their state interest and goals within the international framework, United States has employed vast strategies as highlighted in three grand categories namely dominion, isolation and containment (Wittkopt, Jones, & Kegley, 2008).

Over the years, United States have pursued dominion in a bid aimed at transforming the world into what America thinks it should look like, in this conduit it would impose its military power on other states to effect transformation and absorption of its interest within the globe structure. Likewise, through isolation it has aimed at maintaining a free hand that would keep it out from most of the conflicts and wars within the international framework, but its influence over other states can be well traced. Lastly through containment, they have not only hold the line of aggressors that threaten its regional or global interest but equally used deterrent and defensive military strategies in safeguarding its world hegemonic standing.

These pursuits have formed the very fabric that has catapulted America's ties with other states within the global framework. From these designations and strategies, the commitment of United States has become a full-fledged reflected in a series of political and economic initiatives within different states, Africa continent being one of them. These ambitious bids have paved way for a shift in policy focus, and in turn it has reflected the United States foreign affairs establishment and assimilation to African states though a perceived multicultural and social diversity (Kornegay, Landsberg, & McDonald, 2001).

## 2. TENETS OF US FOREIGN POLICY

Foreign policy choices are often presented as alternatives between two abstract categories: “idealism,” meaning that nations should be motivated by ideals to the exclusion of practical concerns and self-interest, and “realism,” meaning that nations are motivated primarily by the desire for more military and economic power or security rather than by principles. The concept of idealism rejects the practical reality of particular national interests in favor of a dogmatic moralism, while the concept of realism suggests a narrow, cynical view that completely excludes moral considerations in dealing with other nations.

These are the guiding principles that the United States of America has put in place to guide their operations and interactions with other states and non-states. They showcase what preferable the regime of the day foresees as national public good and therefore through varied approaches they seek to greatly secure. These policies are broadly clustered in areas that address promotion and spread of democracy, Protecting national security and national autonomy, Human Rights, Support of western values, American Economic Interests, Non- entanglement with Europe, Insularity and Isolation

### **Promotion and spread of democracy:**

This is part of the American Creed and it sorts to have harmony and liberal intercourse with all nations and interest. The US will go against any totalitarian governments... (Fallis, 2006)notes that democratic self-determination for all peoples as a universal, God-given, and inalienable right hence need be observed by all. It is unquestionably the case that generations of American statesmen (and, more recently, stateswomen) have put both words and deeds behind promoting democracy and democratic institutions around the world, both as a tool of American influence and as an end in itself, perhaps most vocally in Woodrow Wilson’s Fourteen Points, John F. Kennedy’s Inaugural Address, and George W. Bush’s Second Inaugural Address (Mead, Jefferson, Polk, & Roosevelt, 2010). The U.S. political spectrum agrees that, in the long run, replacing tyrannies and oligarchies with democracies is likely to bring about a world with fewer wars, less terrorism, more commerce, and more American influence.

### **Protecting national security and national autonomy:**

National security has remained the United States primary concern over the years. Through this tenet it seeks to defend, secures its borders and safeguards its territorial integrity through control of access to key raw materials and commercial trading partners. The US has employed both defensive and offensive strategies in its bid to defend its citizen and in so doing it has hid its weaknesses from its enemies (Alden, 2016). For example, through the “Jacksonian” approach, the US pursues its interest by waiting until it is directly attacked or immediately threatened. If that threat is felt, then they respond with violence that lasts only so long as to make the point across to the aggressors and other who would have thought of interfering with its territorial integrity (Burke-white, 2004)

### **Human rights:**

The debate surrounding what democracy really means to every state is unending. In fact, other authors have alluded that democracy is an American view of the world in regards to what is universally accepted as vital rights of any individual. There are different strains of this thinking that sway on both right and left. These are pegged on different reasoning (though both of which had differing reasons for celebrating President Ford’s signing of the 1975 Helsinki Accords). Though this tenet is most popular among the liberals and progressives but it is often challenged by conservatives, the point of convergence for both groups is pegged on the grounds that the idea of a foreign policy should be driven by ideals, morals, and the protection of human rights at all times. Equally they conform to the fact that basic equality of all human beings should be demanded since all will be judged for failing to protect those rights, no matter who’s they are, where they may be, or the situation (Phamotse, 2017) .

Certainly, for the United States, respect for human rights is both an end goal and a tool of their foreign policy, just like democracy, which has at sometimes been more at the forefront of their priorities than others. Charles and Gahan (1901)highlights that though this tenet has had much support, it lacks a realistic assessment and historical backing through the regimes of President Carter much less presidents Obama or Wilson that shows human rights or morals have had an overriding value over other tenets.

**Support of western values:**

American values have enjoyed an overtime support from liberals, democrats as well as holders of egalitarian values. In their pursuit of upholding their values, the foreign policy has taken forms of capitalist, pluralistic and republican government (Kertzer, Powers, Rathbun, & Iyer, 2014). Sukhorolska (2016) highlights that apart from the state security interests, the economic interests of key groups within the state as well as the political values and principles have time and gain been given preferences. Therefore, through its numerous avenues the United States tries as much as possible to export its western civilization all around the world, which has further increased states, support across the globe.

**Economic interest:**

There's a long rhetorical tradition, mainly emanating from progressives and isolationists, who have often accused the United States of basing its foreign policy primarily around economic dynamic. These assertions range from the Nye Committees who alluded that the United States was lured into World War I due to its intention to make money from arms merchants and equally the "blood for oil" chants aimed at the Gulf War and the Iraq War (Esfahani, 2012). However according to Milner and Tingley (2010) there's nothing illegitimate about considering the prosperity of your own people as an important pillar of state development. Therefore, the decisions of the state to ambitiously pursue economic interest of its people is well within its foreign policy and that of domestic policies

**3. INTERLINK BETWEEN USA AND AFRICA**

The debate surrounding the relevance of Africa to United States has been ongoing for a long duration. Varied authors have discussed the prevailing relationship between these two states and the policies shift that have influenced the passive and ambitious reactions from both ends. In the past decades Africa was perceived as a less strategic ally and of low pecking order to the interest of the Americans. Schraeder (1995) highlights that the congress had shown an almost benign neglect of African issues through its subcommittee activities, which in some way could partly explain the prevalent assumption held in Washington that Europe had a special responsibility for Africa due to its colonial past relations. This debate was equally backed by Van de Walle (2009) who made an assessment of Africa being of limited importance to the United States. In his argument he went along with the prevailing shift of policies towards Africa, which have been characterized by features of strong bureaucratic influence and or politics as well as limited "incremental" changes of the policies. These debates have equally got rejoinders from different assessments that sight significance of Africa to United States. For instance, though academic literature maintains that Africa is of limited importance to national economy and security of America, other literatures especially through political dynamics offer signals that reinforce a contrary opinion that Africa is very important to the United States.

The inter-link of these two nations has evolved tremendously since most of African states got her independence. President Jimmy Carter branched from the typical anticommunist and containment policies and placed a greater emphasis on human rights (Schraender, 2001). The Carter administration grappled with the task of finding a balance between containing the threat of Soviet expansionism and the need to positively influence the resolution of crises in the region without overtly displaying of spilling over the effects of the cold war to region (Schraender, 2001). President Reagan on the other hand is seen to have been directly driven and influenced by the cold war beliefs and as a result reverted back the cold war beliefs of Truman. When George Bush (Snr) took over from Ronald Reagan, no significant change in policy approach to Africa was recorded. However, during Bill Clinton regime, his administration was most successful in setting in place policy frameworks towards fostering economic relations between the two regions. This was further supported by three presidencies of Bill Clinton George W. bush and Barrack Obama who viewed Africa as an interesting continent. Though their interest in Africa was enthused by the fact that in every seven out of ten fastest growing economies of the world were African states, most scholars questioned their ambitious involvement, but equally supported their initiated policies that enriched the relationship of United States and Africa. (Olsen, 2017).

These perceptions contravene previous views and assessment that different United States presidencies have had a benign neglect of African issues. If anything, the portfolio that Africa presents is more inviting to America and their interests in areas such as national security, global trade and untapped mineral resources (Keller, 2006). Africa on the other hand has reinvented itself by demystify the gatekeeper role of the European states which has become long absolute, in so doing they have highlighted that in this decade the United states have no reason to keep a safe distance in its operation with Africa continent due to its past colonial relations and perceived colonial legacy. Based on these the relations between US and Africa, Africa should not be judged narrowly or one sided as the goals of both states propagate and establish the importance of each in the varied platforms other than the perceived US national security and economic prosperity.

### **Theories explaining US foreign policy towards Africa:**

The United States interest in Africa is not any different from any other player within the global structure, in fact most of the players vie for the continents resources by demonizing other perceived competition within their pursuit. In this regard the relationship between United States and Africa is pegged on realism theory. The United States has not concealed its foreign policies that seek to serve its national interests such as strengthening democratic institutions, spurring economic growth, trade and investment, advancing peace and security and lastly promoting opportunity and development. The US even changed the terms of operations from disengagement to active engagement to achieve the core mandate of securing their citizens, interest and resources. The US has indeed concentrated its efforts in African countries that seem to be of strategic interest to them, by offering funds, training and even setting up regional control hubs such as the one established in Djibouti (Joint Task Force- Horn of Africa) covering Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, and the Gulf of Eden. The sum of this relationship is therefore not for mutual benefit but for the United States to attain its national interest while keeping its position as a global hegemony and deterring other upcoming hegemony that are interested in the African continent.

The foreign policy of America is the actions undertaken by the state through state machinery and its leadership in pursuing the states goals. Several scholars have attempted to explain the US the actions of United States with regard to how it conducts its relations with other states in terms of international relations theories and schools of thought. The main assumptions of realists and the Hobbesian school of thought and those scholars embracing realpolitik seem to focus on the fact that states seek to attain as many resources of as possible and the concept of relative gain. The other assumption being the anarchic nature of the international system or rather lack of a central authority above states. The other is the cardinal objective of military is to ensure survival.

This argument therefore presupposes that US foreign relations being influenced by its pursuit of self-interest or that it is driven on the basis of relative gain. This suggests the US foreign policy towards Africa is therefore on guided on the basis of exploitation of resources and the capacity that the continent has (Cameron, 2003). Hegemonic stability theorists believe that United States seeks to maintain relations with African states to maximize its power by exploiting weaker states to create a balance of power with other rising powers and states in Europe and Asia. A theory also supported by offensive realists. (Schweller, 1994). Mearsheimer (2008), embraces similar sentiments that the United States is the only state that has maintained its hegemonic position and that it adopts foreign policies that seek to solidify this position further.

The current US foreign policy under President Donald Trump seems to embrace some aspects that are mercantile in nature. Mercantilist theory mainly relied upon by economists and foreign relations experts poses that states embrace and pursue that are expected to maximize the trade benefits of a nation. It promotes the regulation of a state's economy whilst adopting protectionist policies with the aim of protecting the states finished goods and industries. Trumps condemnation of WTO and threats to pull out whilst imposing more taxation on imports with the aim of protecting industries such as steel are indicative of the protectionist policies. Whether this will affect African nations or have an impact on Africa is yet to be felt but economists are sure that his protectionist policies might have a global impact.

### **4. ANALYSIS OF US FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS AFRICA**

American foreign policy experts had for a longtime struggled in formulating a comprehensive and active U.S foreign policy towards Africa. This is majorly because the low economic levels in the region, absence of nuclear weapons in Africa among other factors. Africa's geostrategic importance was therefore limited. This was especially during the cold war period when humanitarian assistance to Africa was largely ignored during the cold war period or was considered as secondary. In 1980's during Reagans, Bush senior and further on during Clinton's administration there appeared to be a shift as congress was compelled to respond to humanitarian crisis in Africa and provide aid especially in Rwanda, Sierra Leone and Liberia.

The foreign policy of the United States is largely the preserve of the policy makers in Foreign service, the legislative houses and the white house. However, the policies towards Africa are largely as a result of bipartisan consensus. The foreign policy does not seem to be the identical and consistent for every state and seems to be distinctive with no constant pattern as shall be clarified. America's foreign policy towards Africa is not necessarily bound by traditional agreements in comparison to other regions but is strongly dependent on the circumstances mainly due to the fact that it is still viewed as a new continent among other factors.

Vera's, (2017) seems to believe that the US foreign policy towards Africa has fairly been the same under President Bush and Obama and that there might be a shift in policy under the new Trump Administration. Woodward, P. (2013) seems to embrace a different view believing that the US foreign policy has been different under both regimes. Similar sentiments have also been advanced by the likes of Kieh, (2014). Vera's, (2017) notion seems misplaced in both form and context and with regards to evidence that points towards the contrary. It is also an argument that has been adopted by several scholars in the study of international relations. Woodward, (2013) argues that the US presidents have played a limited role in US foreign policy but he doesn't seem to take cognizance of the several programs that the recent presidents have initiated.

The main attempt to ensure consistency with regard to Africa relations and US was in 2012 under the Obama administration. The American government launched its first framework to guide its relations with African states. This was the U.S strategy towards sub-Saharan Africa aimed at consolidating their policies in the African continent. On June 4<sup>th</sup> of 2015 a monumental action by the Senate was undertaken with regards to such. The Senate Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa held a meeting whose top agenda was America providing security aid and assistance to Africa. These actions clearly stress the need to by the United States to engage more with Africa as argued by (Olsen, 2017). This goes against the argument by Woodward that Africa has never been central to the U.S foreign policy and not critical as such. The actions by the United States therefore dismiss such arguments. Woodward also fails to give examples that effectively prove that the Africa is not as vital to the US as he claims. He therefore attempts to establish a theory without any relevant proof to support it.

Olsen, (2017) believes that the United States presidents have played a limited role in US foreign policy towards Africa. He argues that the presidents of US have played a critical role in shaping the U.S foreign policies in other regions but when it comes to Africa they have not been able to be dominant and their input has played a limited role. He focuses on other groups who have reaffirmed themselves as critical actors, these are and not limited to evangelicals and Christian fundamentalists. He however fails to link or provide a nexus of how the Christian fundamentalists affect the US foreign policy towards Africa. The focus of such has also been embraced as a one of the main proponents of engagement between humanitarian aid from the west to African countries (Huliaras, 2009). He focuses on the undue influence and external pressures exerted on the president.

While analyzing the US foreign policy towards Africa then one cannot ignore the role of a leader as a crucial determinant of the US foreign policy towards Africa. The White house therefore seems to take the lion's share in shaping or determining the policy that the US will adopt towards Africa. This is evidenced by attempts of each president establishing a different framework as opposed to the practices that the US adopts in other regions which seem to establish a common pattern.

Several US presidents have during their tenures established different initiatives in Africa. If one was to juxtapose the initiatives between the Clinton regime, Bush regime and Obama regime then role of a leader as a foreign policy determinant is evident. In 2010 Obama was instrumental in fostering relations in Africa and launched the Youth African leader's initiative (YALI). The main aim of this programme was to provide education opportunities to young African students as well as improve networking. The second major initiative during the Obama regime was the Power Africa Programme or initiative, which was aimed at doubling access to electricity in the sub-Saharan Africa region (Olsen, 2017).

Obamas foreign policy towards Africa seemed to focus more on trade and investment. This is apparent if one was to take a holistic approach of analysis of the US strategy towards sub Saharan Africa policy document that was launched during Obamas regime. The shift in foreign policy during Obamas era might have been influenced by several economic factors and realities such as the global financial crisis (Banjo, 2010). It might be argued that the fact that he was a former member of the Senate foreign relations committee made him understand African relations better than his successor. Foreign policy experts considered him to be more knowledgeable in matters foreign policy. Obama seemed to be more engaged with African issues (Walle, 2010). He had initially supported efforts to end the war in Darfur, passed legislation and embraced policies ensuring or promoting peace in DRC as well as ensuring peaceful elections. While he was a member of the committee they adopted a strategy for stabilizing Somalia.

As most of Obamas policies were geared towards trade and development, President Bush policies seemed to be directed more towards humanitarian assistance for the Sub-Saharan region. Bush was able to meet 25 heads of state during his first two years in office. This is almost a half of the heads of state in the entire continent. This was by far off the greatest level

of engagement by a leader from the western world in Africa. President Bush was able to push for the HIV/AIDS fund and initiatives to combat tuberculosis and malaria in Africa. The US during Bush regime was able to provide huge humanitarian assistance during the South Sudan conflict. Bush administration shifted its focus on counterterrorism in regions especially in East Africa after the bombing of the US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam in 1998. These events had exposed the United States to a challenge that they had anticipated in this region. This led to the intensification of military assistance to African States.

Military activity increased as the combined joint taskforce for horn of Africa was formed in 2002 as US troops were deployed in Kenya, Djibouti and Yemen as a way of providing military technical assistance. In 2008 foreign aid in the region substantially increased with Kenya and South Africa getting the lion's share as recipients with each getting over half a billion dollars. The events of 911 and global terrorism was therefore a major organizing principle for US foreign policy towards Africa during this period (Walle, 2010).

Trump's foreign policy was not clearly articulated during his campaign with many experts labeling it as unpredictable and inconsistent. President Trump is considered to have little or no experience on foreign policy matters. Baron, (2018) believes that Trump's policy towards Africa will not be active with limited with much disdain for America because of Trump's utterances about the continent. Baron, (2018) argues that the world seems to be furious with Trump about his "shit hole" comments and reference to African countries reflects his outright dismissal to Africa and that this will be met with outrage. Trump's regime has seen the purging of several senior officials who are people of color from senior positions. Trump as an individual and actor in international relations deems to base his decisions on his psychological nature, which seems to have an impact on his demeanor and the decisions that he makes.

His failure and that of preceding presidents to confront its racial history is viewed as having a major impact on his foreign policy specifically white supremacy which might have an impact on decisions relating to policy framework and aid on the African continent. The United States has many individuals of African ancestry residing in the state. It is imperative that such ideas are therefore explored with utmost magnanimity regarding possible aid solutions offered by the US internationally.

## 5. MANIFESTATIONS OF THE US FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS AFRICA

Despite the perception that US foreign policy is skewed, bureaucratic and ambiguous, it cannot go unnoticed that the US has had a significant impact of several facets in Africa ranging from trade, conflict resolution to democracy in the region. Usually, US political leaders bring their ideologies, idiosyncrasies, and worldview to their conception of US national security as they seek to influence the world environment to their nation's advantage (Ohaegbulam, 2015). While some programs this has helped them gain public support, in others it has been interpreted as bullying and imposition of its wishes. The effort put by the US into recognition of Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgender rights into the basic human rights and setting this as conditions for funds disbursement in some African states is a glaring example of the US imposing its ideas in the region. This is not to imply that LGBT rights should be ignored, however they should also not be set as conditions for receiving aid or financial support.

The relationship between the two regions cannot be described as a partnership. The US takes a dominant role and decides on which projects to channel its funds without necessarily seeking the input of the region's leaders on what projects should be prioritized. This relationship is more of aid not trade as will be illustrated further in the sections below. That being said, although the nature of projects are not entirely decided upon in consultation with the regional leaders, some have played a significant role in improving the economic growth and social welfare in African countries.

### **Humanitarian Aid:**

The first key manifestation of impact of the US foreign policy in Africa is humanitarian aid. Over the years Africa, has received a significant portion of US humanitarian aid funds than any other region. Through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the Global Health Initiative the US has managed to contribute infrastructure and information towards the management of HIV and AIDs in Southern Sahara. HIV and AIDs is a major global health issue with an estimated 36.7 million people living with HIV according to (UN AIDS, 2017) 25.8 million cases of this total are in Africa. African civil societies and authorities have been struggling to address this health but lack of resources and health infrastructure hindered their efforts to provide essential prevention and management services. They got some reprieve when the US started channeling funds through governments and nongovernmental organizations to fight the

epidemic. However, the Trump administration has recently announced that they are looking to drastically cut the budgets of a number of federal agencies, with a particular focus on the State Department in order to pursue \$54bn worth of defense budget increases (Friedman, 2017)

#### **Development assistance:**

The second most visible manifestation of the US foreign policy in Africa is development assistance. The USAID has implemented project in Africa which have benefited 47 countries (Banjo, 2010). Following the contentious election and the violence that broke out in the aftermath, USAID released funds towards the realization of a peace agreement between the two leading political alliances; this eventually led to the formation of a coalition government and marked an end to the senseless tribal killings witnessed in the Kenya. The programme also aims to bolster fragile states which are plagued with never-ending civil wars towards economic stability. Although the US military intervention in 1992 Somalia was not a success, the US has continued to offer support and funds towards achieving stability in the country. USAID has also played a significant role in strengthen regional and sub-regional organizations in West Africa and the East and Central Africa regions.

The US has also been on the fore front of promoting trade between Africa and the US through programs within AGOA. (Olsen, 2017). AGOA programme intends to reinforce efforts democratic governance and economic progress in African states in the South Sahara region. It also aims to increase the manufacturing capacities in Africa economies, which would contribute significantly, to job creation resulting in poverty reduction and greater industrialization. AGOA has had success in creating jobs and building stronger commercial ties between the U.S. and Africa. Since its implementation commenced in 2000, exports under AGOA have increased more by than 500 percent, from \$8.15 billion in 2001 to \$72 billion in 2011. However, under Trump administration the amount as declined to 25 billion in 2017. (AGOA, 2017) About 90 percent of these exports have been oil, which underscores Africa's growing strategic importance to the U.S. Agencies such as the Export-Import Bank, the U.S. Trade Representative, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Africa Bureau at the State Department also contribute positively to reinforcing commercial ties the U.S. and Africa. Currently 40 states in Southern Sahara are eligible to benefit from this programme. The determinants of eligibility are for states to have or be making progress towards, a market-based economy, respect for the rule of law and human rights, eliminate trade barriers, design economic policies aimed at the reduction of poverty, set in place systems to combat corruption and protect workers' rights; States should also not be engaged in activities that undermine U.S. national security.

The other project that has contributed towards the economic development in Africa is The Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), which was established in 2004. This project provides aid to African countries on competitive, performance-based selection process. This initiative has benefited countries such as Benin, Ghana Burkina Faso, Lesotho, Madagascar, Senegal, Cape Verde Morocco, Namibia, Mozambique, Mali and Tanzania

#### **Military cooperation and conflict resolution:**

Military cooperation takes the largest share of America's involvement in Africa in terms of financial, technical and technological assistance and funding (Banjo, 2010). Direct military spending by the US towards international peacekeeping missions portrays this. Clinton administrations supported the Nigerian led Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) peace operations in Liberia in 1991, despite media criticism. Washington gave some \$29 million support to the ECOMOG peacekeeping operations and channeled some \$200 million through aid agencies (Africa Confidential, 1993). Fast forward to 2007, the United States Africa command (AFRICOM) as a unified combatant command has been their key instrument for military diplomacy (Ploch, 2009). The headquarters are located in Germany with only the Combined Joint Task Force – Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) stationed in Djibouti. AFRICOM has through the various projects running across Africa managed to support ongoing peacekeeping operations by offering training for military officers, intelligence gathering, technical and logistical support (Friedman, 2017). This partnership has assisted local forces to contain or manage extremist groups such as the Boko Haram and Al Shabab.

Initial African reaction to the establishment of AFRICOM was a bit negative though "... there is a lack of concerted and unified response from the continent (Ploch, 2009). Attempts to establish one under the Africa peace and Security Architecture has been faced with challenges such as limited economic resources, infrastructure, management of intelligence and limited technical and combative skills. Critics such as (Coning, 2017) complain that the establishment of

US military poses a significant threat to the continent's independence and sovereignty whereas its proponents argue that "... one must look further than AFRICOM, and directly at the solution it provides to rapid response potential, skill and resource acquisition during times of conflict for the region (Ohaegbulam, 2015). Since its formation it has had significant success in increasing maritime security in the East African coast promotion of peace through its corporation with the AU in North Africa, East and Central Africa. Irrespective of arguments for and against it, AFRICOM is working towards strengthening its presence and the future will show what its implications mean for Africa's peace, stability and democracy (Coning, 2017).

## 6. CONCLUSION

The United States in its approach has always given the impression that their intention is not only to resolve issues surrounding African continent but also gain an overarching power and influence over these states. However, the continued perception that Africa is not particularly important to the US is becoming a distant truth due to the literature reviewed in this article that has established an almost significant policy shift and more ambitious levels of involvement with Africa over the different regimes. It is worth noting that the uniqueness of African continent be it resource based or its geo-political structure make it a vital player that cannot be ignored within the ever-evolving global ecosystem. In fact, the multiple interests that Africa has commanded within the past decades (both from the East and West) signify its relevance and a persuasion of global hegemony to pay more attention to the continent and not treat it as an explorative continent.

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