Africa and the War on Global Terrorism

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I wish to commend Chairman Royce, Congressman Payne, and other Members for focusing today on a critical challenge now before Washington: how to reorient U.S. policies to address global terrorist threats that link to Africa - at the same time that the United States strengthens its other key interests in Africa in promoting democracy, the rule of law, resolution of chronic and multiple wars, and integration into the global economy.

Africa today matters, for good and bad, far more to U.S. interests than it did pre-September 11. The outstanding policy question is what the Bush administration is prepared to do to meet this historic challenge - with what level of sustained political will and essential resources. Several affordable measures can be undertaken right away that can attract bipartisan support from Congress and support from serious African reformers. Under funded half-measures, on the other hand, will have little positive effect and only weaken U.S. credibility.

The terrorist threat in Africa

Fully one third of Africa's 700 million citizens are Muslim, and for the vast majority radical Islam has had minimal resonance. Africa is replete with enduring traditions of tolerance among Muslim and non-Muslim communities, while the U.S. has successfully developed close friendly relations with a range of African states with substantial Muslim populations. Nonetheless, most of Africa's Muslims, like their non-Muslim African brethren, are impoverished global have-nots who live in acute -- and worsening -- marginality that invites local sectarian and interethnic strife, despair and anti-Western resentment.

During the past decade, frustrated Muslims living under corrupt, malfunctioning governments across the Horn, West Africa's Sahel zone and areas of southern Africa have looked increasingly to Islamic agencies funded by Saudi and other Persian Gulf donors to provide education, health, social welfare, and security. This weakly understood phenomenon has often stabilized communities and enhanced the local legitimacy of Muslim social activism. At the same time, it has provided the means to mobilize anti-U.S. and anti-Western sentiment and has created havens for militant actors who endeavor to act in solidarity with Al Qaeda. From the outside, differentiating among legitimate social welfare action, rhetorical posturing, and support for international terrorism is a formidable challenge.

As the campaign against global terrorism unfolds, several flashpoints in Africa will merit special attention. First, Al Qaeda elements and sympathizers may seek refuge in central or northern Somalia, in league with Al-Itihaad, and with possible linkages to ethnic Somali communities in Kenya. That could invite a strong U.S. military response into Somalia and possibly new cross-border interventions by Ethiopia. Second, there is a risk of a violent anti-U.S. reaction in northern

Sudan that could derail the ongoing U.S.-Sudan dialogue on terrorism and prospects for renewed negotiations to achieve a just, comprehensive peace settlement to Sudan's internal war. Third, Al Qaeda's influence could expand in northern Nigeria, possibly contribute to a violent anti-U.S. reaction there, and potentially create a crisis of governance for President Obasanjo. A fourth threat, perhaps more modest than the others, is a terrorist assault upon U.S. interests and others in Cape Town and Durban that would test the mettle of President Mbeki and reshape the contour of U.S.-South African relations. Finally, Al Qaeda could seek to strengthen its underground linkages to West African illicit diamond trafficking, based on direct and indirect partnerships with Quaddafi, the RUF, Campaore and Taylor.

The most serious and complex challenges lie in the Horn of Africa.

Sudan

Sudan is one of seven countries on the State Department's list of state sponsors of terrorism and since 1989 has been a self-proclaimed Islamic republic. Twelve years hence, its Islamic revolution is exhausted and widely discredited, internally and externally. From 1991 until early 1996, Khartoum provided a home to Osama bin Laden; it may still provide a haven to members of the Al Qaeda network. Reportedly, Al Qaeda business linkages persist in the banking sector and export-import and agricultural commodity enterprises. Al Qaeda enjoys an unknown level of popular support within northern Sudanese society. The radical Islamist leader, Hassan Turabi, who sought for himself and the National Islamic Front government a leading international role on behalf of political Islam, has been detained for most of 2001, and demonstrations of support in northern Sudan on his behalf have been modest but persistent.

Since first moving against Turabi at the end of 2000, President Umar Al-Bashir has attempted to moderate his external image and rehabilitate his external linkages. Internally, he has persistently pursued a hard-line Islamist rhetoric against his opponents, shown no proof of willingness to pursue a negotiated peace settlement to Sudan's eighteen-year internal war, and persisted in aerial bombardments of civilian humanitarian sites in southern opposition areas and egregious human rights abuses.

Sudan swiftly became a priority focus of U.S. investigators immediately after September 11. Sudanese President Umar Al-Bashir announced that Sudan had broken all its links to bin Laden, and would cooperate fully in identifying those responsible for the attacks. According to U.S. officials, Sudan responded cooperatively "across the board" to U.S. requests for specific information and actions, making an "implicit" offer of access to military bases and overflight rights, and providing names and locations of individuals in the Al Qaeda network, as well as access to Sudan's banking system.

Khartoum's newfound willingness to cooperate has drawn an overt acknowledgment from Secretary of State Colin Powell and other U.S. officials. Senior House Republicans, under pressure from the White House, have postponed indefinitely debate on the Sudan Peace Act, a bill that would have bolstered support to the southern rebels in Sudan and punished foreign companies doing business in the country. And, on September 28, the United States acquiesced to a UN Security Council decision to lift sanctions on Sudan, imposed in April 1996 after an assassination attempt on Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak.

Nonetheless, these developments represent only the opening phase of a new and urgent U.S.-Sudan dialogue on terrorism. The United States will almost certainly push for further measures, including expanded efforts to identify and renounce all remaining terrorist ties, a willingness to ship known terrorists abroad to face justice, and enduring cooperation in international intelligence and law enforcement efforts. Beyond terrorism, it will be critically important that Washington not ease pressure on Khartoum to improve its deplorable human rights record, enhance humanitarian

access, cease aerial bombardment of civilian sites, and return in earnest to the negotiating table to seek a just peace settlement to Sudan's war. There is a clear risk that Khartoum may conclude that cooperation on international terrorist issues has won it space on internal war issues, and that Washington will be distracted by other, more pressing matters in South Asia.

Somalia

Al-Itihaad, the radical Islamist movement assembled out of mujahhedin veterans, operates in the stateless space of central Somalia, in the midst of other Muslim charities that enjoy considerable popular legitimacy for the social welfare they have created. Supported by wealthy Saudi elements, Al-Itihaad has strong ties to ethnic Somalis inside Kenya (especially Eastleigh, near Nairobi, and within Kenya's coastal Muslim community) and is alleged to have been closely associated with violent Al Qaeda operations against U.S. personnel. In 1993, Bin Laden provided training support to the Somali warlord Mohamed Farah Aideed, whose forces on October 3, 1993 killed 18 American commandos. *The Washington Post* reported on November 4 that following the U.S. withdrawal from Somalia in 1994, "al Qaeda members continued to use Somalia as a regional base of operations, including preparations for the 1998 bombings of U.S. embassies in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania." Those attacks killed 12 Americans and 245 Africans and seriously injured over 4,000 persons (the vast majority Kenyan.)

In the early to mid-1990s, Al-Itihaad dominated the port of Merca and the inland center of Luuq. At its peak, it has been able to muster upwards of 3,000 armed fighters, has staged terrorist operations in Ethiopia and Kenya, and coordinated activities with terrorist entities operating out of Khartoum. Its power and personnel have declined significantly at each of the three points during the past five years when Ethiopian forces have intervened massively inside Somalia. At present, Al-Itihaad reportedly has a base of operations on Ras Kamboni Island in southern Somalia, which is used by Al Qaeda for transit of materials and personnel. According to official Ethiopian and other sources, Al-Itihaad has also made inroads into northeastern Somalia, in the semi-autonomous region Puntland, and through its port, Bosaso, has sent volunteers to support Al Qaeda operations in Afghanistan.

Al-Itihaad was named in September 2001 by the Bush administration as one of the 27 entities supporting Al Qaeda. On November 7, the Bush administration took action to shut down the Al Barakaat hawala financial network, whose operations are centered in Somalia and which is accused of funding Al Qaeda's activities.

Nigeria

Nigeria, where fifty percent of the 120 million citizens are Muslim, could see a deepening rift along ethno-religious lines. In the twelve self-proclaimed Islamic states of northern Nigeria, authority rests with governors linked to the northern military power base that plundered Nigeria under Sani Abacha and saw its influence collapse, much to its surprise, with Obasanjo's electoral triumph in 1999. These governors have successfully consolidated their position through an aggressive critique of Obasanjo's failure to curb corruption and decentralize authority, combined with his close alliance with the West. There is a great deal of favorable sentiment toward Al Qaeda in the north, and easy, unregulated flows of finance, people and commodities linked to external Islamic networks.

South Africa

Al Qaeda cells exist in Cape Town and Durban. Al Qaeda has been affiliated with two Cape Town movements, People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (Pagad) and its associate, Qibla. Pagad launched a bombing campaign in Cape Town in 1998 that included American targets. Both Pagad and Qibla are on the official U.S. list of terrorist organizations. Though only an estimated two

percent of South Africa's population is Muslim, that figure is growing, as proselytizing efforts reach beyond the Asian population to the mixed race and black African communities. The South African government has been too ill-informed, and ill equipped, to bring effective controls upon radical Islam within its borders.

Libya and illicit diamonds

Libya's Quaddafi has a history of terrorist activities in Africa that has been in remission in recent years, at the same time that he has launched an expansive campaign to win political allegiances across Africa. More recently, however, credible reports have surfaced that Quaddafi is linked to illicit diamond trafficking out of Sierra Leone that directly benefits Al Qaeda, along with Liberian President Charles Taylor, the outlawed Sierra Leone insurgency, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF), and the President of Burkina Faso, Blaise Campaore.

Africa's apprehensive friends and skeptics

Though in the immediate aftermath of September 11, many African leaders expressed heartfelt sympathies and condolences, the reaction in many African states was strikingly muted and ambivalent. Some feared that the inexorable American military campaign might harm Muslim civilians (and outrage domestic constituencies), invite further attacks on U.S. facilities in Africa that would wound and kill many Africans, and, reminiscent of the Gulf War a decade earlier, set back the continent economically, and trigger cuts in international development assistance.

The toned-down reaction also reflected a skepticism of America, if not outright anti-Americanism in some corners, that follows from America's swift disengagement in 1993-1994 from Somalia and passivity in early 1994 in the face of the Rwanda genocide; a perception of U.S. detachment from Africa's profound needs (many in Africa continue to argue that the Bush administration is woefully indifferent to Africa, contrary indications notwithstanding); and the United States' perceived bias in favor of Israel in the Middle East crisis. As U.S. military action commenced in early October, virulent anti-U.S. sentiment surfaced in select hotspots -- including Muslim cleric leaders in coastal Kenya, religious leaders and official media in Khartoum, and rioters in Kano in northern Nigeria who played upon pre-existing, acute sectarian tensions, and whose violence quickly left more than 120 dead and threatened to spread to several major urban centers.

A notable exception to Africa's muted response was the reaction of a small set of powerful African leaders with comparatively strong, established ties to the United States. Nigerian President Olesegun Obasanjo swiftly backed U.S. and British operations against Al Qaeda and the Taliban regime. South Africa, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Angola, among others, soon followed, with frequent emphasis on the need for hard evidence and targeted retaliation. Interestingly, though, when Wade hosted a summit in Dakar in mid-October, the results fell far short of his original ambitions and reaffirmed Africa's fundamental hesitation to identify too overtly with the United States' anti-terrorism campaign. Only ten African heads of state appeared (of whom the majority did not represent regional powers). Instead of endorsing a major new pact on terrorism, participants temporized -- issuing a declaration calling for a meeting of the Organization of Africa Unity (soon to be transformed into the African Union) to monitor developments and evaluate implementation of the existing African Convention against Terrorism. That desultory initiative was adopted in 1999 following the bombings of the U.S. embassies in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi, signed by 36 of Africa's 53 states, and subsequently ratified by only three.

Wade and others' hope for a fresh African pact that expressly aided the U.S. campaign was prompted in part by fear that the emerging war in Afghanistan would lay waste to their New African Initiative (NAI), adopted by the Organization of African Unity and praised by the G8 summit in Italy in July 2001. The NAI seeks a "new global partnership" to end Africa's marginal position in the world economy, spur trade and reduce poverty. African political and economic

reforms would be reciprocated by increased external developmental and financial flows from the West, along with expanded debt relief and trade and investment opportunities.

The Road Ahead

Post-September 11, Africa matters to U.S. interests in significant new ways, both good and bad. There is now greater recognition in the United States that Africa's institutional weaknesses, autocratic governance and economic marginality pose a serious threat to U.S. security interests. In the near to medium term, these vexing factors are only expected to worsen; in the midst of a global economic downturn aggravated by the aftermath of September 11, the World Bank predicts the worst impact will be felt in Africa. Africa's exceptional circumstances give rise to porous borders, places to hide, opportunity for bribery, and a ready, aggrieved audience, all of which could significantly benefit the next emergent, terrorist network seeking advantage in Africa. Openings already exist in Sudan, Somalia, northern Nigeria and South Africa - which must be addressed systematically. Other openings could appear in several other African settings and quickly merit priority attention.

At the same time, an important subset of Africa's leaders appears genuinely ready to work with the United States in the battle against international terrorism. Their commitment is linked - in a direct and timely way -- to their quest to reverse Africa's decline through new reciprocal partnerships with Western powers. If managed carefully and aggressively, so that credible new U.S. commitments are put in place, *and* if African partners show tangible progress in economic and political reform, including respect for human rights, the United States may realize real gains in the next five years, and consolidate ties with an enduring, core African coalition. Where this opportunity is mishandled, the United States could easily find itself in intimate alliances - reminiscent of the Cold War - with unsavory, and ultimately unreliable partners.

Two additional factors enter the equation, post- September 11.

There is greater recognition that Africa matters to the United States as an important and growing source of non-Gulf oil: currently the central/west African basin accounts for 17% of U.S. oil imports and over 80% of American trade and investment in Africa. Plans exist for an estimated $40 billion in new U.S. private investment in the energy sector in Africa in the next few years, when production and imports in and from this region are expected to rise steadily. This factor has its most powerful impact on U.S. bilateral ties with Nigeria and Angola; in these two instances, future debate over U.S. policy will continue to center on the best means to curb corruption, promote tolerance, broaden developmental benefits from oil, respect human rights, and resolve longstanding internal armed conflicts. The challenge will be balancing U.S. policy on the difficult internal reforms required of Nigeria and Angola with short term goals of securing new oil flows and expressions of political allegiance.

Second, U.S. diplomatic and intelligence capacities in Africa have been steadily depleted over the past decade, and indeed have been further degraded since September 11, as substantial personnel and resources have been diverted. Diplomatic personnel dedicated to Africa were slashed by 15 percent in the mid-1990s, at the same time that intelligence personnel were cut back over a third, and fully a dozen aid missions were shuttered. These developments predictably translate into a weakened grasp of quickly evolving trends on the ground (the U.S. currently has at best weak insight into northern Sudan, northern Nigeria, and central and southern Somalia), and create acute vulnerabilities that can be brutally exploited - as was seen in the August 1998 bombings of the U.S. embassies in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi. As the U.S.-led war against terrorism unfolds, U.S. citizens and embassies, along with innocent Africans, could easily be the targets of new violence.

Looking ahead, six actions will be critical to an effective U.S. counter terrorism policy in and with Africa.

1) Bring existing priority initiatives to scale.

A top priority should be to demonstrate U.S. resolve in bringing multiple enhanced benefits to those states that are both reliable anti-terrorist partners and credible economic and political reformers. That will mean protecting existing programs from abrupt depletions to support non-African programs - 'raiding' that has already begun within the Bush administration. That will mean overt, strong U.S. diplomatic leadership to support the New Africa Initiative. It will also mean deepening and broadening the trade and investment opportunities of the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA); increasing debt relief and facilities through the IMF and World Bank; steadily enlarging U.S. commitments to battle HIV/AIDS, so that they surpass $1 billion within a year, and otherwise doubling bilateral assistance in support of economic growth, conflict reconciliation and rule of law. It means elaborating a serious energy strategy for Africa that focuses upon building management capacity, transparency and accountability, power generation and regional integration of energy grids. It is less important, post-September 11, that the United States embarks on wholly new initiatives than that it protect and bring to scale existing policy priorities that require substantially higher commitments to be effective, and to earn credibility and leverage in Africa.

2) Reach beyond official contacts to Africa's citizens.

The U.S. needs a smart public diplomacy that systematically builds ties with Muslim communities, and more generally, with civic organizations, opposition leaders, religious authorities and human rights advocates. At a popular and non-governmental level, Washington should expect that its heightened counter-terrorist actions U.S. will frequently be met in Africa with intense skepticism, if not outright hostility: that it is anti-Islam in its motivations; that it relies on close ties with autocratic regimes; and that it will not be sustained. Special efforts should be made in northern Sudan, Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania, northern Nigeria, and South Africa.

3) Define a feasible, integrated Horn of Africa strategy.

A related, second priority will be to elaborate a Horn of Africa strategy that consolidates recent gains in bilateral terrorism cooperation with Khartoum; effectively contains and reduces Al-Itihaad's influence in central and southern Somalia; clarifies strategy vis-à-vis the Somaliland government in northern Somalia and the fledgling Transitional National Government in Mogadishu; and spells out how the United States will pursue - versus compromise - its enduring interests in democracy, respect for human rights, economic reform and just peace settlements to the region's internal wars.

The latter considerations will be especially important in the U.S. strategy to end Sudan's eighteen-year war and U.S. relations with regional partners such as Kenya and Ethiopia. As Ethiopia and Kenya inevitably turn to the United States for new forms of security cooperation to address threats in Somalia (and perhaps also assist with ending Sudan's war), the United States should have a medium-term strategy ready at hand. Washington should not desist, for example, from pressing aggressively for curbs on Kenyan governmental corruption and for an orderly and transparent national electoral transition into the post-Moi future. Nor should it shy away from engaging Addis Ababa on full implementation of the Algiers peace accord (ending Ethiopia's interstate war with Eritrea), and genuine democratic and economic liberalization. At all points, Washington will need discipline and caution, in dealing with the threat of instability in Asmara and Addis Ababa, breakdown of the Algiers Accord, and realism in judging what Kenya and Ethiopia are capable of delivering in their dangerous neighborhoods.

A key element to the U.S. Horn strategy will be accelerating administration efforts, led by former Senator John Danforth, to bring the Saudis, Egypt, Kenya and key Europeans behind a concerted multilateral effort to achieve a just, negotiated peace settlement to Sudan's internal war. The United States should also expedite the restaffing of the U.S. Embassy in Khartoum (suspended since early 1996).

4) Bring antiterrorism into the bilateral dialogue with South Africa and Nigeria.

Corruption and sectarian violence in Nigeria, along with uncontrolled movement of people, goods and finances into the north, remain complex, volatile issues. The same can be said for Pagad and Qibla -- two anti-government, anti-Western organizations in South Africa. These are subjects which U.S. diplomacy will have to approach gingerly and flexibly, and where new forms of outreach and leverage will be essential. As in the case of the Horn of Africa, a challenge will be to integrate this new dimension of U.S. foreign policy with pre-existing priorities.

5) Upgrade U.S. human and institutional capacities.

A fourth priority is bolstering U.S. human capital and resources -- strengthening significantly U.S. intelligence, diplomatic and foreign assistance personnel in the Horn and West Africa, the latter with special reference to northern Nigeria. Much more effort will be needed also to understand Quaddafi's expansive policies in Africa. Overall, this effort will require a multi-year strategy to recruit and train additional career personnel.

6) Define a feasible U.S. security assistance strategy for counter-terrorism.

Fifth, the Bush administration should accelerate its review of U.S. security assistance to Africa -- for example, the Africa Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI), and Operation Focused Relief -- to reconfigure these programs to strengthen military counter-terrorist capacities in Kenya, Ethiopia, Nigeria and South Africa. It should step up support to regional arms control initiatives and the international campaign to tighten illicit diamond flows (the 'Kimberley process') and secure new, substantial non-military assistance to strengthen border controls, law enforcement and financial controls. Substantial increases in flexible Economic Support Funds (ESF) will be essential: $300 million per year.

Conclusion

These proposed measures can all be undertaken at an affordable cost, if there is sufficient political will at a high level. All can muster bipartisan support from Congress, if the administration extends itself in a concerted fashion. All can win support in Africa where support matters, if U.S. policies meaningfully and powerfully answer the needs of serious African reformers, and if they are accompanied by systematic, early consultations. If attempted on the cheap, these measures will be a formula for policy failure and erosion of U.S. credibility.