



The United States and Security in Africa: The Impact of the Military Management of the International System

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Abstract

The focus of this article is to examine the dynamics influencing the militarization of US-Africa relations and their impact on security and transformation in Africa. The article attempts to illuminate the ideological, economic and social forces that influence the conception and practice of the militarization of US policy towards Africa. It examines contemporary global context – global capitalist crisis, forward planning for perpetual war and confrontation with China – which influence the thinking of a section of the US foreign policy establishment that advocates the militarization of US-Africa relations through AFRICOM. The conclusion calls on Africans to hold the line against the militarization of foreign policy and forward planning for war; Africans must define security in their own humanist terms and must build their capacity to hold their own and protect Africans' security interests.

Résumé

Cet article a pour objectif d'examiner les dynamiques influant sur la militarisation des relations américano-africaines et leur impact sur la sécurité et la transformation en Afrique. Le texte tente d'éclairer les forces idéologiques, économiques et sociales qui influencent la conception et la pratique de la militarisation de la politique américaine à l'égard de l'Afrique. Il examine le contexte mondial contemporain – la crise capitaliste mondiale, la planification de la guerre perpétuelle et la confrontation avec la Chine – qui influencent la pensée d'une section de la politique étrangère américaine, établissement qui préconise la militarisation des relations américano-africaines (AFRICOM. La conclusion appelle les Africains à œuvrer contre cette militarisation et contre la planification anticipée de la guerre. Les Africains doivent définir la sécurité dans leurs propres termes humanistes et doivent renforcer leur capacité à tenir leur propre sécurité et à protéger les intérêts des Africains.

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Introduction

Nelson Mandela was arrested in a roadblock in South Africa in 1962. The fingering of Mandela, then disguised as a 'chauffeur', had been orchestrated by the operatives of the security services of the United States (US) in apartheid South Africa (BBC 2016). This involvement of the US security apparatus with the racist apartheid regime during the global fight against apartheid underscores the contradictions in the conception and goals of security in US–Africa relations. From the anti-colonial struggles to the present battles against neoliberal austerity and the so-called 'Global War on Terror' in Africa, the US notion of security in Africa is influenced by the interests of the financial oligarchs and corporate moguls (Johnson and Kwak 2011), supported by the foreign policy establishment and an infrastructure of researchers integrated into the United States Military Strategists Association (USMSA).¹

Africa, however, views security within the prioritization of reconstruction and a better quality of life for the people. This vision of security is summarized by the African Union (AU) vision statement: 'An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in global arena' (AU 2016). This aspiration was followed up by the determination of African leaders 'to achieve the goal of a conflict-free Africa, to make peace a reality for all our people and to rid the continent of wars, civil conflicts, human rights violations, humanitarian disasters and violent conflicts and to prevent genocide. We pledge not to bequeath the burden of conflicts to the next generation of Africans and undertake to end all wars by 2020'.

Since the evolution and maturity of specific conditions of capitalism in the US, security has been viewed through the prism of whiteness, profit maximization and preservation of global economic hegemony through perpetual warfare, dominance of US finance entities and massive investment in data management. This investment and projection of force grew vis-à-vis the diminution of post-World War II international institutions such as the Bretton Woods organizations. This article seeks to grasp the downgrading of organs in the international management of the global trade and commercial system, driving the increased military management of the international system. The main elements influencing the dominance of financial barons of Wall Street alongside discourses on privatization, which strengthen concentration and centralization of wealth in the top one per cent of US society, and the illicit international economy that supports ruling elements of the US, are identified.

The article will examine the opaque world of financial flows (illegitimate and legitimate) which manifests a model of capital accumulation where Africans were super-exploited via non-economic and brutal forms of surplus extraction through enslavement, genocidal wars and land seizures (e.g. settler colonialism) and the consequent insecurities generated by this white-supremacy model reflected in continuing exploitation and police killings inside the US. Thus #blacklivesmatter as a social movement is a common ground to defend African lives. The defence of black life in global Africa becomes as central aspect of security for Africans.

This article will implicate the dollar, the main currency of international trade, as a core cause of global insecurity. The denomination of looted wealth from poor countries in the US dollar is not accidental. Conscious efforts are made by US political and military leadership to sustain the dollar as the currency for world trade. Western military elements in a process of conflict and cooperation lead these efforts and the ruling elements countenance no challenge to their dominance irrespective of the systemic fragility in the global economy (Zuriff 2015; see also Rasmus 2015). Scholars such as Michael Hudson and Jack Rasmus have made deep and incisive critiques of finance but these scholars failed to grasp how this financial warfare affects Africa.² Current conceptions of security will therefore be critiqued with elaborations of the refined military–financial–information complex that ensures the maintenance of America’s empire status in preparation for the coming eras of the convergence of industrial machines, data and the Internet.

Africans have seen the real lessons of this destructive thrust of militarism from the support of the US for those who arrested and assassinated Patrice Lumumba, the sustenance for colonial overlords and the support for the disguised force of international capital that came in the form of the Bretton Woods Institutions. These instances of insecurity were augmented by the non-military forms of intervention in Africa to protect the intellectual property rights of US pharmaceuticals and agribusiness corporations at the moment of the massive deaths of Africans from the HIV/AIDS pandemic. More recently, the outbreak of Ebola and the insecurity generated by the loss of life demanded international cooperation for bio-defence while Europe used that moment to further demonize Africans. The Ebola experiences showed the dangers of biological products enabled by new viruses at the same moment when trade agreements are foisted on Africa that hinder capabilities to fully grasp the new threats and possibilities from emerging viruses.

African integration to promote peace and unification and harness the human and material resources runs counter to the exorbitant privilege of

the dollar as the international currency which the speculators of Wall Street depend on to leverage control over the planet. From the scholarship of Samir Amin and Jack Rasmus we do know that the global financial crisis of 2008 is not over and has simply morphed into new forms and is shifting in terms of its primary locus. Rasmus has grasped this intensification but is silent on how this fragility is affecting Africa, whereas Samir Amin is very clear on the linkages to militarism. In the official documents of the US Africa Command there is a large investment in military resources to 'interdict illicit activity' but the US specialists and think tanks are very selective on what is considered illicit.³ It was devolved to the former President of France to clearly state the imperatives behind NATO intervention in Libya in 2011 and the prolonged efforts by international capital to hinder the economic integration of Africa. The underdeveloped nature of African financial markets has meant that the kind of debt leverage that had been deployed to bring the people of Greece to their knees was not present, hence the need for continuous external military interventions.

African scholars and policymakers who have studied similar interventions during the last great depression and the explosion of fascism after the Italian invasion of Abyssinia have been vigilant in their call for African solidarity against new imperial military fronts such as the pressures from Europe and the US to engage the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. In the specific case of the US, a critical examination of militarized US relations with Africa, recently latched in the formation of AFRICOM, reveals that US security interests in African diverge from the security needs of African peoples. Instead, programmes including Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), AFRICOM, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), Power Africa, the Millennium Challenge Account (MCC), and associated 'humanitarian' projects broadly advance the interest of the top US capitalist class.

Informed students of international politics know that national interest does not always represent the underlying interest of ordinary people but those of the powerful and influential section of the society. Regarding the US, who constitutes that section of the society? Whose interests are served by the US security agenda in Africa? How are the peoples of African descent internationally affected by the attempts by the US security establishment to militarize relations with Africa? Since the establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, US based scholars have been aggressively seeking to define the terms of the discussions on security in Africa. *The Routledge Handbook of African Security*, and output of the Carnegie Council, the International Institute of Strategic Studies, think

tanks and scholars such as William Reno, Robert Rotberg, the journalist Nick Turse (2015) and others of the Afro-pessimism schools of thought have demonstrated clear efforts to steer away from the ravages of destruction wreaked on Africa during the suppression of the African independence project.

Very few writers on liberalism and militarism understand racism and white privilege as central components of Western capitalism (Allen 2012; Jensen 2005; Roediger 2007). Over a century ago, when W.E.B. DuBois wrote on the African roots of World War I he noted, 'We, then, who want peace, must remove the real causes of war... We must extend the democratic ideal to the yellow, brown and black peoples.' Since the writings of George Padmore, C.L.R. James, Kwame Nkrumah and W.E.B. Dubois on the anti-racism–peace nexus to this period of US economic uncertainty, the military's role in capitalist accumulation, racism and imperialism are clearly understood (Pieterse 1992; Rodney 1972).

This interconnection between imperialism, plunder, racism and primitive accumulation is the foundation to clearly understanding the US and security in Africa. The imperial dynamics influencing the militarization of US-Africa relation and their impact on Africa's security and transformation will therefore be examined. The article situates Africa within the context of the rapid transformation of African societies and illuminates the ideological, economic and social forces that shape militarization of US foreign policy within the contemporary global context – global capitalist crisis, plans for perpetual war and confrontation with China. The conclusion challenges Africans to resist the militarization of foreign policy and forward planning for war; define security in humanist terms and build capacity to protect their security interests.

The US Military, Imperialism and the Dollar

By 1900 the US had become the number one steel producer in the world and the rise of the US navy can be linked to the contracts for purchasing steel from the industrial barons at the turn of the twentieth century. During this period, Africans in the US were exploited under the system of sharecropping and lynching. After the US Civil War, major post-1870 economic crises induced worldwide imperial annexations and bank and industrial capital merged into finance capital. Indeed, the headlong rush of finance capital to fill all spaces on the planet impelled the imperialist partitioning of Africa. After the Napoleonic wars in 1815, Britain had emerged as the major industrial power and dominated the high seas while plundering Africa and Asia, looting African resources to sustain the British pound. During the

nineteenth century, the militarization of economic relations was manifest in the primary trade in guns and ammunition in Africa (Inikori 1982). Private armies of European chartered companies such as the Royal Niger Company, Imperial British East Africa Company, International Association of the Congo and British South Africa Company were internationally known for role of private military and dispossession of Africans from Africans' lands. Cecil Rhodes's mineral exploitation in South Africa as a classic example of global extraction of wealth is well known. Literature on the 'Gold Standard and the Origins of the Modern International Monetary System' offers insights into the evolution of contemporary currency regimes but scholars have written extensively on the British economy without even mentioning the rapacious relationships to African workers in places such as South Africa and elsewhere (Knafo 2006).⁴

By 1900, the US was a junior partner in the international system hence it did not occupy a central position in the 1884 partitioning of Africa at Berlin. The centrality of the armaments industry, in Eisenhowerian terms, 'the military industrial complex' however made this seduction possible after the capitalist depression and war. President Eisenhower recognized that the mutual interests of the military, business and political leaders were beyond democratic control. Today, this complex implicates every US Congressional district in the procurement of contracts for defence contractors.

In the aftermath of the US independence war, after establishing the continental army, the US Congress passed a resolution 'that the money unit of the United States be one dollar'. Until the twentieth century, US capital markets were underdeveloped and were not central to global capitalism. In the period after the 1907–13 financial crises, the US government established the US Federal Reserve and set about the technical conditions to support the emergence of the dollar as a major reserve currency. After 1944, the Bretton Woods meetings designated the US dollar as the principal reserve currency of the international capitalist system. During this period a 'Special Relationship' developed between Britain and the US to enhance financial, intelligence, cultural and economic partnership in the global system.

As the society that had escaped the war without actual hostilities being fought on its soil, by the end of World War II, the dominance of the US corporations that produced tanks, aircraft carriers and jets could be pursued via commercial operations and ideological controls associated with Cold War ideas of fighting communism. Britain and France had held on grudgingly to the vision of maintaining economic dominance via control over African resources but after the Suez debacle in 1956, when the pound sterling was devalued, the US dollar achieved world dominance and US corporations

could splendidly operate in the 'free world'. Britain, then, became a junior partner of US and financial markets in London became a base for financial outpost of US capitalists. At this time, US GDP represented 40 per cent of world GDP and extraordinary financial stability reigned in the country. However, the US became overstretched in its zeal to crush national liberation movements to the point where the US could not maintain the dollar/gold convertibility, one of the pillars of the Bretton Woods system. In 1971, the basis of post-World War II monetary system was removed when the US devalued the dollar.

At this period of liberation and independence, Europe was recovering by seeking cooperation via the European Economic Community. The dollar devaluation in 1971 was thus a sign of economic weakness. France had kept its dominance in African colonies through a currency regime where African states still have no say on how they managed African foreign currency reserves. President de Gaulle rallied against the special status of the dollar in international trade in 1965. Valéry d'Estaing, the then finance minister of France in describing the international hegemony of the dollar coined the phrase 'exorbitant privilege'. During the Cold War several thousand US troops were deployed worldwide under the pretext of peacekeeping and fighting communism. The US deficit and debt in 1971 to 2008 undermined the confidence of their European allies in the dollar. From 1978 to 2002, France and Germany promoted an alternative currency, the Euro, but US military dominance in Europe circumscribed an independent projection of military force by European Union member states. After the USSR collapsed, the ideological management of US militarism received a sharp setback. Presently, the US is clearly willing to use military force to achieve political and economic goals (Sloan 1984). This deployment of military force to achieve economic and political goals is deemed the military management of the international system.

Finance as Warfare

One component of the systemic fragility of the global system since 2008 has been the intensification of fraudulent activities of international bankers and wizards of the Anglo-American financial system. As one way to garner super-profits, there has been the slowing of investment into the real economy, as a shift to financial securities investment diverts and distorts normal investment flows. One by-product of the distortion of normal financial flows has been the complicity of the so called 'regulatory' institutions such as the Bank of England and the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. In 2012, it was reported that eighteen giant banks at the heart of rigging of

the LIBOR⁵ rate had received slap-on-the-wrist fines. These giant banks in the US and the United Kingdom manipulated and fixed the rate ahead of time instead of using information based on marketplace occurrence. It was after international uproar that a few bankers were charged with fraud. It was later revealed from secret recordings that the Bank of England repeatedly pressured commercial banks to push their Libor rates down during the financial crisis.⁶

This fraudulent behavior (of fixing a rate that should be determined by market forces) is intricately aligned with the business model which has profitability as the baseline and strengthens the illicit global economy. The illicit economy is further strengthened by the explosion of shadow banking. This illicit economy had grown to over US\$ 3.5 trillion dollars, bigger than seven of the top ten economies in the world, so that by 2015 the World Economic Forum (WEF) was distancing itself from such economy (WEF 2015). Scholars studying this aspect of capitalist globalization find that markets in the illicit economy cannot be easily regulated or taxed. These global markets are variously described as illicit, illegal, informal, lack, gray, shadow, extra state, underground, and offshore. Ongoing processes in these markets are generally categorized as smuggling, trafficking, money laundering, tax evasion, and counterfeiting (Balaam and Dillman 2014: chapter 15).

Not even past investigations by the US Senate or new regulations such as the Dodd Frank legislation had been able to dent the appetite for corrupt practices by the members of the Wolfsberg group, consisting of the top thirteen bankers of the world. In 2001 a Senate Investigative Committee noted that, through corresponding accounts held for foreign banks, US banks have become conduits for 'dirty money' and 'facilitated illicit enterprises including drug trafficking and financial frauds'. In correspondent banking,⁷ one bank provides services another bank to transfer funds, exchange currencies or undertake other financial transactions. Foreign banks can establish correspondent accounts with banks authorised to operate in the US notwithstanding where the parent company is domiciled. Through these accounts 'owners and clients of poorly regulated, poorly managed, sometimes corrupt, foreign banks' with weak 'or no anti-money laundering controls direct access to the US financial system and the freedom' to transfer money within the US and around the globe.⁸

Given the denomination of the majority of daily illicit transactions in dollars, US financial institutions occupy centre stage in the global illicit economy. Before completing a bank transfer denominated in US dollars, correspondent banking transactions between banks makes New York a more

likely money transit point, if for a split second, to become dollarized before reaching the intended account. In these global financial transactions, any asset denominated in dollars, regardless of location, is a US asset in essence. The US military provides security for every US asset.

Dollars leaving Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea, South Africa and Democratic Republic of Congo must reach safe havens protected by international capitalists and their private armies. Illicit financial outflows from exploited spaces are ultimately stashed in US and UK banks, and tax havens like Switzerland, the British Virgin Islands or Singapore. Ongoing research suggests that about 45 per cent of illicit flows end up in offshore financial centres, and 55 per cent in countries such as the US. Mining and resource extraction figure prominently in the evasive tactics of international capital to the point where there is call for international collaboration to expose how tax havens can be used to exploit the natural wealth of Africa.

Although the US Treasury established the financial crimes and enforcement network (FINCEN) to track illicit transfer of criminal funds, the major spectacular intervention in Africa has been against the petty Hawala banking schemes of Somalia. FINCEN shows that legal means exist to stop money laundering and illicit capital flows. The banks involved in drug trafficking however, understands the resultant mild punishment that follows exposing money and laundering and rigging of commodity markets as operational costs. According to data from Boston Consulting Group, 'banks globally have paid \$321 billion in fines since 2008 for an abundance of regulatory failings from money laundering to market manipulation and terrorist financing' (Finch 2017). The US Africa Command is currently operating along five Lines of Efforts (LOE). The fourth line of effort is to 'interdict illicit activity'. This does not include the massive money laundering of drugs proceeds that is being undertaken by US banks (Vulliamy 2011). According the US Department of State, Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, Morocco was by 2017 *the world's largest producer and exporter of cannabis*,⁹ but the US Africa Command's mandate to interdict illicit activity does not cover Moroccan banks because Morocco is an ally of the conservative elements in the US.

Printing Money on Top of Money Laundering

Classic rendering of the role of finance has been overtaken by the ways in which

neither the banking system nor the stock market is funding tangible capital formation to increase production, employment and living standards. Credit is

created and lent out to bid up prices of existing real estate, stocks and bonds. Instead of raising equity capital to alleviate debt pressures, the stock market has become a vehicle for corporate raiding and leveraged buyouts on credit, replacing stock with high interest bonds (Hudson 2015: 9).

In the era of deregulation and financialization, the US lawmakers removed the barriers between retail banking and investment banking and opened the floodgates for unlimited speculation and the creation of financial products from mortgage-backed securities to collateral debt obligations to synthetic derivatives.¹⁰

Michael Hudson underscored the predatory role of finance when he noted that, currently in the most general economic terms, finance and property ownership claims are not 'factors of production'. They are external to the production process. But they extract income from the 'real' economy. Hudson added that 'the financial sector is a rentier sector – external to the "real" economy of production and consumption, and therefore a form of overhead'.

Against this international politics backdrop, the bankers became a law unto themselves in creating new forms of profits linked to 'financial innovation' associated with the rigging of the Libor rate, the fixing of the prices of commodities, the involvement in offshore havens for laundering and recycling billions from drug trafficking, along with the manipulation of the International Swaps and Derivatives Association fix (ISDA), a benchmark number used around the world to calculate the prices of interest-rate swaps.¹¹ Above these manipulations, the Federal Reserve pumped more than US\$ 4 trillion into the international liquidity markets through Quantitative Easing (QE). This monetary policy increases money supply in efforts to promote increased lending and liquidity. After the 2008 crash, this policy aimed to boost the amount of money in circulation and increase willingness of banks to lend. The US Federal Reserve embarked on three rounds of QE. Theoretically, QE comprised large purchases of mainly longer-term government bonds and related assets. In reality, it was another expedient of the US government exploiting the exorbitant privilege of the dollar in the international marketplace and simply printing extra money.

Much of the scholarship on the printing of dollars miss the way in which the infusion of capital into emerging economies further enmeshes these societies into the instability of the system. Ultimately, the export of the oscillation of the US economy deepens social and political challenges in the world and reinforces the militarization of the international political economy. Michael Hudson outlined three ways in which flooding of dollars through debt leverage and QE supports the military: (1) the surplus dollars

pouring into the rest of the world for yet further financial speculation and corporate takeovers; (2) the fact that central banks are obliged to recycle these dollar inflows to buy US Treasury bonds to finance the federal US budget deficit; and most important (but most suppressed in the US media), (3) the military character of the US payments deficit and the domestic federal budget deficit. He continued, 'Strange as it may seem – and irrational as it would be in a more logical system of world diplomacy – the “dollar glut” is what finances America's global military build-up. It forces foreign central banks to bear the costs of America's expanding military empire – effective “taxation without representation”. Keeping international reserves in “dollars” means recycling their dollar inflows to buy U.S. Treasury bills – U.S. government debt issued largely to finance the military' (Hudson 2009).

Economically, the discourses of free markets and openness had served to secure the dominance of the banking and financial oligarchy while entangling those comprador elements from Africa who are enmeshed in the flow of resources from Africa. The discourses on openness had been accompanied by the buzz words of 'free markets', 'privatization', and globalization, but the crash of Wall Street in September 2008 revealed the hollowness of the ideas of the stable financial markets. In fact, the top planners of Wall Street now see managed crises as accruing to the benefit of Wall Street because after a very major blip, there is the increase in the purchase of US Treasury Bills because the US dollar is now seen as a safe haven in the midst of the volatility of the international capitalist system. John Bellamy Foster grasped this contradiction when he observed that:

the financialization of the capital accumulation process ... led to an enormous increase in the fragility of the entire capitalist world economy, which became dependent on the growth of the financial superstructure relative to its productive base, with the result that the system was increasingly prone to asset bubbles that periodically burst, threatening the stability of global capitalism as a whole – most recently in the Great Financial Crisis of 2007–2009. Given its financial ascendancy, the United States is uniquely able to externalize its economic crises on other economies, particularly those of the global South. To this day, whenever a crisis looms, capital flees to the greenback. This is exactly why the Crash of 2008 led to a mass inflow of foreign capital to the dollar, even though the crisis had begun on Wall Street (Bellamy Foster 2015).

The relationship between the financialization and the military is usually hailed as America's unique responsibility for 'global leadership' but in the more concise discussions of the think tanks of Washington there is a clear understanding of the centrality of the US military in holding together the global architecture of capitalism dominated by Wall Street. Leading

strategists for the US global projection of force have outlined two purposes of the current US military postures:

The first is to defend the homeland, American citizens, and U.S. interests abroad, and to protect allies with whom we have treaties or similar bonds of obligation. The second is to preserve the international order to which we helped give birth during and just after World War II, an order characterized, at least so far as the Free World was concerned, by free movement of information and goods, relative freedom of the movement of individuals, and open access to the great commons of mankind – the seas, space, and now cyber-space (Cohen 2015).

This analysis of the US Security Strategy hails the military as the only power able to ensure America's dominance and ensure the rest of the world economy depends on the US. This analysis also lauded the use of the military to deter adversaries and the rise of any other economic power.

Since the Cold War ended, this statement of the centrality of the military in protecting bureaucratic institutions to guarantee capital accumulation has become a motto. Most explicitly, the neoconservatives of the Project for a New American Century (PNAC) maintained in 2000 that the US faced no global rival yet but should aim to preserve its dominance well into the future as possible (Project for a New American Century 2000). Interestingly, this promulgation came in the same year when the EU had established its timetable for the Euro. Since the financial crisis there have been research platforms on whether the US and China can escape the Thucydides trap, viz. the collision between a rising power and a declining power.¹²

Increasingly, the discourses on war and intense military conflagration have moved from the think tanks to the main editorial pages. From these plans, Africa remains a casualty in so far as African bodies and resources are considered the booty to be reaped by whichever force becomes dominant after this transition period from the stagnant power to the rising power. The IMF and the World Bank had pushed Africa hard towards privatization and development of capital markets, yet the continent was not completely enmeshed in the formal international capital markets. Illicit production of minerals, illicit trade in resources and the laundering of illicit gains had become a central feature of the way Africa was integrated into the international system (War on Want 2006). US policy makers had noted the dominance of European capitalists in resource extraction from Africa in the 1990s. The Clinton Administration embarked on the Africa Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI) and the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) as two public initiatives to facilitate America's domination of Africa's political economy (Aning 2001). Although couched as ways to combat security

threats from Africa, recent experiences of the US in Africa in attempting to assassinate Africa's liberation process has made it extremely difficult for the US to gain traction in African societies. This explains overt operations as witnessed in the NATO intervention in Libya.

The Weakness of the US Military and Security in Africa

I started this article with reference to the knowledge that the US was complicit in the arrest of Nelson Mandela and the sustenance of the apartheid system. When formal apartheid ended, the US military policymakers were politically and intellectually on the defensive given the marriage of the dominant organs of the US Military Strategists Association (USMSA) and the instruments of apartheid rule. All through the period of decolonization, the US government and military have supported colonial forces. From the collaboration with the British to maintain the Indian Ocean as a base for US militarism, the build-up in the Gulf of Guinea to support US oil majors while covering up the murder of Patrice Lumumba (Talbot 2015), the propping-up of Mobutu Sese Seko, the overthrow of Kwame Nkrumah, support for Jonas Savimbi and the destabilization of Southern Africa in favour of apartheid, the US support for insecurity and killings in Africa are being exposed. After the Rwandan genocide in 1994, US policymakers established the ACRI with the ostensive goal of supporting humanitarianism and ending genocide. The same government had lobbied the Security Council of the United Nations to withdraw troops from Rwanda in the midst of the fastest genocide in Africa (Barnett 1997).

The close alignment of the US with the forces of genocidal economics and plunder notwithstanding, the first few years after the defeat of the apartheid army at Cuito Cuanavale, the recursive traditions of military support for apartheid meant that the US waited until it embraced efforts to ensnare the new regime in South Africa in military relations. After the first democratically elected president was inaugurated, the US worked through foundations and NGOs under the USAID that had established the Office for Transition Initiatives (OTI) (Campbell 2014) to assist countries transitioning from authoritarianism to democracy. Over US\$ 1 billion was spent by US foundations, think tanks and top echelons to 'aid democracy' in South Africa (Stacey and Aksartova 2001; see also Hearn 2000).

Soon after apartheid, the US articulated ACRI but Nelson Mandela, among the first to oppose the placing of US troops in Africa, rebuffed this initiative and chided the US for its arrogance (Adebajo 2004). His opposition to US militarism manifested in ACRI was too sophisticated for the US. He had condemned the US President for the war against Iraq in 2003, for his lack of foresight, improper thinking, and desire to

‘plunge the world into holocaust’. Addressing an international group of women activists, Mandela asserted that the US was one ‘country that has committed unspeakable atrocities in the world.... They don’t care’ (CBS News 2003). These sentiments about US military objectives ensured that African leadership opposed US military operations on the continent and overt support for such operations were without fanfare.

In 2002, the US updated its ACRI plans to organize the African Contingency Operations Training Assistance (ACOTA). ACOTA promised offensive military weaponry, including rifles, machine guns and mortars for African troops. The Africa Regional Peacekeeping Program (ARPP) was established to equip, train and support troops from select African countries involved in peacekeeping operations. A Pan Sahel Anti-terrorism Initiative (renamed Trans Sahara Counter Terror Initiative) was also launched. The clear fact of these mutations was the US quest for greater control over African financial markets, natural resources from Africa, and dominance over Africa’s strategic importance. This US planning in Africa exposed operations like ACOTA and the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) before half a billion dollars could be spent to destabilize Africa (Keenan 2009). The launch of AFRICOM and US support for elements initially deemed as terrorists to destabilize Libya made this goal even clearer.

US, NATO and the Emplacement of the US Africa Command

Prior to the end of apartheid, the US had depended on the military forces of the former colonial powers to maintain ‘Western’ interests in Africa. After 1996 when the US launched ACRI explicitly to compete with Europe in Africa, the British and the French had discussions in St Malo to strengthen Western European defence (Chilcot 2016). France and Germany had quietly pressured Britain to become central to the European Common Foreign Security Policy (CFSP) but the financial crisis deepened the special relationship between US and Britain while France struggled to wean London away from Washington.

Urgent planning for AFRICOM was required especially after increased China–Africa trade manifested itself in the major China–Africa conference in Beijing in 2006. After shoring up a common Atlantic position on China, strategic planners in North America sought alignment with the Europeans to halt China’s influence in Africa. AFRICOM may have been conceived of before this period but was rolled out within this context. AFRICOM was established by the US Department of Defense in February 2007 as a US fifth regional operations base and separate command ‘to oversee military operations on the African continent’. Despite the clear motive

of using AFRICOM to pursue US strategic interests, US military public relations campaigns project the command as a force for humanitarianism, development and fighting terrorism in Africa.¹³

It is important for African scholars to penetrate the publicity of the US military and to grasp the real intent of this new command structure. AFRICOM has three prominent features: (1) emphasis on collection of various information on the African militaries and control of information systems used by the African military elites. This is aligned with the importance of information warfare, metadata and the linkages between financialization and militarism. (2) Intellectual intervention via the US AFRICOM Social Science Research Platform. (3) Privatization of militarism through integration of private military contractors.

Essentially, AFRICOM, with its limited personnel, contracts private military contractors while operating with the media to advance the militarization of Africa. The nature of warfare currently does not require heavy deployment of troops as were required in the era of the navy and big industrial armies with aircraft and attendant services. In this financialization and information warfare period, the military–information–financial complex could operate with small groups of specialized cyber warriors and private military companies.

African scholars and activists have actively exposed the duplicity of the US military in Africa to the point that only Liberia openly countenanced providing overt basing facilities for AFRICOM. Nearly all African states that had military cooperation (training) agreements and other bilateral relations recoiled from open acknowledgement and support for AFRICOM. Conscious of the baggage of US militarism, the Barack Obama Administration integrated the ‘development’ efforts of the US with the military goals in articulating development, defence and diplomacy. This conception of security ensnared US social scientists when the military established its social science network to gain more information on African societies (Campbell and Murrey 2014). The concept of ‘failed states’ thus assisted the psychological warfare against African peoples.

Africa is now renowned as a net creditor to the advanced capitalist countries via the integration of high net worth individuals and instruments of imperial capital. Promising better wealth and asset management, banks and financial institutions with sophisticated covers have ensnared these individuals. Individuals are guided through the private equity world in a gated life with private security apparatus. Evidence from the Tax Justice Network, the UN Economic Commission for Africa and the Global Financial Integrity (GFI) Network indicate that US\$ 1.1 trillion is stolen annually from dominated societies of the global South.

Lessons from Libya

Elsewhere I have elaborated on the imperatives for and beneficiaries of the NATO intervention in Libya in 2011 (Campbell 2013). The example of Libya demonstrated the full extent to which the US collaborated to destroy a stable society where the leadership had sought to use its resources for integrating Africa and laying the foundations for the transformation of Africa. Under President Gaddafi, the Libyan leadership scrupulously used its vast reserves to build the country's social infrastructure while the Libyan Investment Authority (LIA) challenged the Gulf monarchs on their own turf. Prior to the NATO intervention, Wall Street speculators, allied with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), struggled with the Libyan leadership over control of the Bahrain-based Arab Banking Corporation. The Libyans wanted to break the integration of the 'Arab Banking Group to Western banking interests', a shift opposed by the Kuwait Investment Authority, the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority and other shareholders.

Though highly experienced in duping high-net-worth individuals and hiding wealth in offshore accounts, banks could not replicate this duplicity in Libya as observed in other African countries. Gaddafi had accumulated an estimated '143 tons of gold and similar amount in silver' to challenge the dominance of the French franc (CFA) in Africa. The Hillary Clinton–Nicolas Sarkozy email correspondence has exposed the exact reason for the NATO intervention (Hoff 2016).

Initially, the Pentagon was hesitant about deploying US military resources for regime change in Libya but France and Britain, along with representatives of Wall Street, pressured for US involvement. President Obama subsequently admitted that the Libyan intervention as a biggest mistake of his presidency (Atlantic 2016; see also Goldberg 2016). This admission of error exposed a lack of understanding of the interrelationships between finance, the dark markets of petro-dollars and the military system that the US government was involved in for managing the international system.

The March 2011 email correspondence between the then US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, and French President, Nicolas Sarkozy, highlighted the reasons for the NATO intervention:

- a desire to gain a greater share of Libya oil production,
- increase French influence in North Africa,
- improve his internal political situation in France,
- provide the French military with an opportunity to reassert its position in the world,

- address the concern of his advisors over Qaddafi's long term plans to supplant France as the dominant power in Francophone Africa. (Campbell 2016)

The participation of the US following these justifications corroborate the understanding that extra-economic force and coercion are applied by capitalist centres to counter their decreasing profits.

Repercussions of the Insecurity in Libya for Africa

The Sahel region of Africa and the neighbouring societies are yet to recover from the spill-over effects of the insecurity generated by NATO's intervention in Libya. After the intervention, France and Britain had rushed to Libya with the French President, the leader of the raid, demanding the bulk of oil concessions. Specifically, while in Libya Sarkozy 'admonished' Libyans to reserve 35 per cent of the oil industry for French firms, particularly TOTAL. Clearly diminishing the role of Italian firms, the jockeying between British, French and US military and rival imperial powers supporting differing militia occurred vis-à-vis a mea culpa to distance themselves from the destruction of Libya. After Obama blamed David Cameron for Libya's instability, a British Parliamentary Committee concluded in September 2016 that the NATO war in Libya was underpinned by several lies.¹⁴

In this scathing Report, the British House of Commons stated that 'The possibility that militant extremist groups would attempt to benefit from the rebellion should not have been the preserve of hindsight. Libyan connections with transnational militant extremist groups were known before 2011, because many Libyans had participated in the Iraq insurgency and in Afghanistan with al-Qaeda'.

Libya as a Metaphor for the Western Concept of Security in Africa

Despite the findings of the British Parliamentary Report, the exposure of the true reasons for the Libyan intervention and admission that the UK acted on lies without understanding the evidence, many reports continuously emphasise Libya's immense wealth that guarantees Western jockeying for dominance in that African society (ICG 2015). While continuously describing Libya as a 'failed state' Western scholars have obscured the intensified struggles in Libya that have been manifest in three governments. Britain, France, Italy and the US support different sides and their allies, including Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Egypt, fuel differing armed factions of the 1,700 militias.

An examination of the court case between the Libyan Investment Authority and Goldman Sachs points to how the 2014 war in Libya ended as being advantageous to Goldman Sachs in the London Court case.¹⁵ That judgment saved Goldman US \$1.2 billion. Only the more savvy African scholars and policymakers grasped the enormity of what was at stake in this judgment. This was another example of how US Wall Street banks are integrated into a global system that is managed militarily. Currently in Libya the Treasury supports one faction that controls the Central Bank while the 'intelligence' apparatus has linkages to the faction in the East (Benghazi) that wanted to print its own currency and operate independently of the Central Bank in Tripoli. The 'internationally recognized government' forces loyal to Beyda seized a branch of the Libyan Central Bank in Benghazi, however the gold reserves are held in Tripoli.

The Chairman of the Central Bank of Libya, holding over US\$ 100 billion in foreign cash reserves and investments, sought assistance from the US Treasury when Benghazi-based contending factions attempting to print their own currency. The diplomacy of the UN Security Council could not dictate who would control the Libyan reserves while Egypt and Qatar supported rival factions. In 2016, the UN sought to back the faction organized in the so-called Government of National Unity (GNA) while Egypt and Russia backed the Hifter faction in the East. The 'internationally recognized faction' of Libyan society has since called on the UN Security Council to lift the arms embargo against Libya, so that Libyans can defend themselves against ISIS. This claim must be scrutinized by the real international community, the billions of world citizens suffering from the repression, exploitation, militarism and plunder of the imperial project of Western capitalism.

Private Military Contractors, Wall Street and the International System

After the USSR fell, one ideological push for the New World Order was privatization to unleash 'potential'. This neoliberal push included the privatization of security so that financial houses and corporations had private security apparatuses independent of governments. The war making machinery and information/intelligence machinery was privatized, deregulated and commoditized in congruence with neoliberal tenets. Private military companies (PMCs) increased and performed many duties, including surveillance and intelligence gathering, traditionally reserved for sovereign armies. After the US declared the Global War on Terror and US invasion in Iraq, PMC activities ballooned (Singer 2008). By 2008 there were 'at least 190,000, and as many as 196,000, contractor personnel in Iraq, compared to fewer than 170,000 military personnel' (Schooner 2008: 79).

By 2010, inside the US alone, ‘1,931 private companies work on programs related to counterterrorism, Homeland Security and intelligence’ (Priest and Arkin 2010). Blackwater (renamed Xe), Booz Allen Hamilton, General Dynamics, G4S, Lockheed Martin, Halliburton, KBR, MPRI, Vinell, Dyncorp, Raytheon, and Northrup Grumman are but a few of the many PMCs that have benefitted from this privatization of militarism. Operating on a business model that profits from conflict and war, PMC activities contribute to insecurity in Africa. Future research on the financing of peace and security networks in Africa would illuminate the integration between peace and security institutions and the International Peace Operations Association (IPOA), which represents security firms. With the appearance of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, there has been intensified work by European research centres to control the narrative about peace and security operations in Africa.¹⁶

With their ownership of PMCs, Wall Street finance capital interests have a huge stake in the business of war and militarism and play a dominant role in the new US military–financial–information complex. The top private military companies are subsidiaries of some Fortune 500 companies and their shares are traded on Wall Street. With the primary obligation to maximize shareholder profits, PMC would neither end wars, nor promote the kind of genuine security needed in Africa and elsewhere. Such undertakings would put them out of business.

US-Africa Policy, China’s Rise and the Emerging Multipolar Order

The rise of China and India as global power players also furthers understanding about threats to Africa’s security and reconstruction inherent in militarized US–Africa relations and the military management of the international system. The accelerated 2007 global financial crisis exposed the economic weakness of the US while the devaluation of the dollar under QE since 2010 has experienced counter-competitive devaluations reminiscent of the British devaluation of Sterling in 1931.¹⁷ In *Finance as Warfare*, Hudson had traced the militaristic angle of the international financial system and the implications for new open warfare between global players. In 2008 financial assets were valued at 360 per cent of global GDP. Since then the divergence has increased. US capitalists have engineered fictitious capital to maintain the country’s hegemony and dominate the international economic system. In collaboration with US banks, the blockchain protocol has been refined to help the US delink its currency from real production relations.

The free market ideology requires US banks and financial houses to compete in the ‘market place’. However, with the recovery of the European

capitalists and the rise of new powerful economies in Asia, US capitalism could not compete in the market place. In Africa, after 1990, the US explicitly sought to dominate the military spaces in Africa. Within the current context of global competition, the US Treasury seeks complete control. In Libya, where real resources exist, the country was destroyed despite the contradictions of supporting targeted terrorists. As Libya has shown, during ever-greater capital expansion within global economic stagnation, extra-economic and military means prevail. The highest expression of this process is war – the mechanical means to eliminate economic and financial rivals. In confirming this mechanic approach, many spokespersons for the US establishment declared that AFRICOM aims to halt the rise of China in Africa.

The US borrows money from China via the US Treasury and ensnares the Chinese in a system where Chinese foreign reserves are devalued. Yet US Congressional Committees and think tanks are disseminating massive information on depicting China's rise as a danger across the world. In Africa, as elsewhere, China has alternative economic cooperation arrangements outside the dollar. This reality challenges the US stranglehold over Africa. China's implementation of Resource for Infrastructure (R4I) arrangements with over twenty-five African states is another escape route from the stranglehold of the devalued dollar. Delaware's Senator Christopher Coons noted in 2011 that,

If there is one message I wish to convey in this hearing, it is that the long-term American objective of promoting open societies in Africa – countries that embrace transparency and democracy, respect the environment, and protect human rights – is being challenged by China's approach to Africa. By offering an alternative "non-intrusive" source of investment and development, China offers African regimes economic opportunity at the expense of government reform and in a manner that often does not directly benefit the average African citizen.¹⁸

This kind of anti-Chinese sentiment is reproduced inside Africa by the intense work of US missionaries, NGOs and social scientists seeking to divert Africans from the examination of the role of finance capital and illicit financial flows (IFFs) from Africa.

The question is whether Africa can resist the militarization agenda of American neoconservatives who are prepared to fight China in attempts to maintain US hegemony. Forward planning by the US includes unhindered access to Africa's strategic resources.

According to Stephen Burgess, an intellectual at the US Air War College 'the principal sustainability challenge in Southern Africa for the United States and its allies is uncertain access to strategic minerals, especially

platinum group metals (PGMs), chromium and manganese, as well as rare earth minerals, cobalt and uranium' (2010).

Under the Thucydides mantra, the US is increasingly building the information for outright military confrontation with China (Campbell 2016). Military strategists have made security calculations including for long air and sea battles against China and war with Russia to maintain American hegemony. In fact, AFRICOM aims to advance this strategic interest. With this clear understanding, Africa must resist every militarization; prevent their leaders from creating openings for foreign intervention, and forge an alternative framework for security and reconstruction. African intellectuals must deepen their position on the Libyan intervention with research on IFFs and pressures to strengthen the UN Stolen Assets Recovery Program.

Conclusion – Africa can and should hold the line

In this article I have argued that the conception of security in Africa by those who have militarized US–Africa relations is meant to serve the interests of a section of US society, not those of Africans. The interests of that section of the US society are in conflict with the wellbeing of African peoples as much as they contradict the welfare of the larger section of the US population who oppose the domination and control of every aspect of life by the one per cent: the henchmen of the military–financial–information complex. Regional alliances and new political and diplomatic initiatives are changing the international system. These seismic shifts are most evident in a new multipolar world, exemplified by the efforts of China to build up its own international financing platform with the Asia Investment Infrastructure Bank (AIIB). Earlier, the Chinese had worked hard to create the BRICS Development Bank in the context of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) cooperation mechanism, which consciously seeks to chart a new path for the entire non-aligned regions. These projections about international politics however miss a more forceful call by the pan-African movement for the full unification of Africa.

The attempt by a section of the US foreign policy establishment to intensify the militarization of US–Africa policy through AFRICOM and neoliberal private military companies is to ensure that Africa is secured for US hegemonic assertion and access to strategic resources and global political capital – for the preservation of the US empire. This goal, which is part of US planning for global hegemony, contradicts Africa's security agenda for reconstruction and transformation.

Faced with the dynamic changes underway in Africa, the US administration has sought to retreat from the overt militarization of US

relations with Africa. In his 2013 tour, President Obama announced the launch of Africa Power Plan to strengthen the electrical grid system in Africa and to expand the delivery of electricity to the most rural areas. Companies such as General Electric seek to use Power Africa as a front to prepare US companies to be in driver's seat for the coming era of the Internet of things (Winig 2016). Globally, there is new awareness of Africa's increasing geo-strategic importance and this awareness continuously affects US plans for the military management of this transition period. Social and political upheavals across Africa expose the institutional framework for diplomatic relations in Africa and the present zig-zags of Egypt has exposed how quickly plans for security arrangements over decades can become unravelled. Africa must resist this planning for perpetual warfare, disguised as security, and define security in its own terms – provision of education, health care, infrastructure, water, agriculture, environmental sustainability, people-centred leadership, independence and self-assertion of Africa in world politics.

Notes

1. The hierarchical nature of the intellectual fronts for research on security in Africa can be grasped from the writings of centres like the Rand Corporation, the Brookings Institute, Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), the Center for International and Strategic Studies (CSIS) and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. For an appreciation of these institutional interfaces with research on Peace and Security see Sarkesian, Williams and Cimbala (2013); Abelson (2009, 2013).
2. Samir Amin has filled this gap with his work on the linkages to militarism. See Amin (2004). See also Amin (2014).
3. United States Africa Command 2017 Posture Statement, file:///C:/Users/USER-1.U-I/AppData/Local/Temp/AFRICOM%202017%20Posture%20Statement.pdf.
4. For an alternative view, see Magubane (1979).
5. The London Inter-Bank Offered Rate (LIBOR) is the global benchmark interest rate used to set a range of financial deals worth trillions of dollars. This rate helps to decide the price of other transactions. It is also a measure of trust in the financial system and reflects the confidence banks have in each others' financial health.
6. 'BBC to air recording that implicates Bank of England in Libor scandal', <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2017/apr/10/libor-scandal-bbc-recording-implicates-bank-england>.
7. Generally, correspondent banking is 'an arrangement under which one bank (correspondent) holds deposits owned by other banks (respondents) and provides payment and other services to those respondent banks'.
8. US Senate Hearings, 'Correspondent Banking: A Gateway for Money Laundering'.

9. In March 2017 the US State Department reported that Morocco was 'the world's largest producer and exporter of cannabis', According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Morocco's total cannabis production for the 2015–16 growing season was an estimated 700 metric tonnes, which, potentially equivalent to as much as 23 per cent of Morocco's US\$ 100 billion GDP once processed into hashish, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/268025.pdf>. See also <https://www.state.gov/j/inl/rls/nrcrpt/2015/vol1/238996.htm>.
10. According to Rana Farooq, who wrote in *Time* magazine on the urgency for saving capitalism, 'To get a sense of the size of this shift, consider that the financial sector now represents around 7% of the U.S. economy, up from about 4% in 1980. Despite currently taking around 25% of all corporate profits, it creates a mere 4% of all jobs'. See Rana Farooq, 2016, *Makers and Takers: The Rise of Finance and the Fall of American Business*, New York: Crown Business.
11. ISDAFIX was developed in 1998 as a cooperative effort of ISDA with Reuters (now Thomson Reuters) and InterCapital Brokers (now ICAP). It is supposed to be based on voluntary quotations by certain banks that indicate the rate at which they would buy or sell a reference swap with a nominal value of US\$ 50 million. ISDAFIX fixes are determined for four currencies (Euros, British pounds, Swiss francs, US dollars) each in different maturities.
12. See the Study of the Rand Corporation, *War with China: Thinking Through the Unthinkable*, Washington DC, 2016, http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1140.html; and Graham Allison, 'The Thucydides Trap: Are the U.S. and China Headed for War?', *Atlantic*, 24 September 2016, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/09/united-states-china-war-thucydides-trap/406756/>.
13. Much has been written about the motive behind the planning of AFRICOM and its potential threat to Africa's reconstruction. See, for example, Campbell (2008); see also Jensen (2008). One of the most prolific writers on the US Africa Command inside the Congressional Research Service has been Lauren Ploch (2011).
14. House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, 2016, 'Libya: Examination of intervention and collapse and the UK's future policy options', Report issued in London, 14 September, <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmfaff/119/119.pdf>.
15. Libyan Investment Authority Vs. Goldman Sachs, See the Judgment before Mrs. Justice Rose, 14 October 2016, <https://www.judiciary.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/lia-v-goldman.pdf>.
16. The effort at intellectual dominance comes up against the concrete experiences of external military operations such as the NATO intervention in Libya or the French military intervention in Mali. European centres for research and scholarship seek to shape the academic direction of work on the AU so that there are numerous centres within the European Union for empirical studies on the AU, the capabilities of the African Standby force, the Regional Organizations and

mechanisms, international cooperation and the AU along with the relationship between the AU and the UN. See for example, Vines (2003). One of the most comprehensive literature reviews of the peace and Security architecture of the AU is produced by the German International Cooperation Association, GTZ (see <https://www.civcap.info/home/african-civilian-capacity-afcap/literature-on-african-peace-security-architecture-apsa-peacekeeping-peacebuilding.html>). However, the new energetic diplomacy of certain parts of Africa manifested in the removal of Jean Ping as the head of the AU Commission render so much of the research output by Peace and Security think tanks as outdated before they get into the policy making environment.

17. Devaluation of the pound Sterling in 1931 had far reaching implications 'not merely for Britain but for the international monetary system as a whole'. Britain had occupied a pivotal position in the world economy and the pound Sterling had been one of the key currencies around which the international monetary system was organized. The devaluation of 1931, World War II, and the devaluations of 1949 had set in motion a realignment of relations between the dollar and the pound. Already, by 1920 the dollar had surpassed the pound.
18. Senator Christopher Coons, Opening Statement, Chairing Senate Foreign Relations African Affairs Subcommittee hearing entitled, 'China's Role in Africa: Implications for U.S. Policy', as prepared for delivery on 1 November 2011.

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