

Reading History Forward: The Lessons of “Constructive Engagement”

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United States policy toward South Africa and the sub-continent of southern Africa during the Reagan administration was labeled “constructive engagement.” It was part of Reagan’s Cold War strategy to contain and even roll back Soviet influence around the world. It, however, was guided by what should have been by then a well appreciated misunderstanding of “containment.” George Kennan’s original strategy of containment was grounded in a *realist* approach to foreign policy, blazed by thinkers and policy makers from Hans Morgenthau to Henry Kissinger, which argues that a countries’ primary security objective is to protect themselves from other states capable of posing a serious security threat. Post World War II Soviet Union certainly fit the bill. In practice, however, the Soviet threat was conflated with the communist threat, twisting Kennan’s original intent beyond recognition. It led to the Vietnam War, and other far-flung engagements that in retrospect had little to do with Soviet expansion. In the case of the Reagan administration, it led to an awkward courtship of apartheid South Africa.

The policy of “constructive engagement” followed the well-worn pattern of U.S. interests in Africa being defined by its global strategy. Unfortunately, this globalist framing obscured local or regional dynamics that may matter most.

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Thus, for instance, the joke that only the United States could get Vietnam and China to join hands. In the case of U.S.-Africa relations, forcing U.S. foreign policy into the dominant narrative of East-West relations only strengthened the Africa perception nurtured by colonial rule (albeit not U.S. colonial rule) that Africa only mattered in terms of great power rivalry. From the U.S. perspective it might be true, but the dominant narrative of East-West competition led to a misperception of African purposes. First, it again conflated communism (or socialism) with Soviet interest or penetration of Africa. Second, it allowed apartheid South Africa to play the communist bogymen card to attract U.S. support, placing the U.S. firmly on the wrong side of history.

The United States, of course, prevailed in the Cold War, and communism/socialism in Africa collapsed almost as rapidly as did the Soviet empire. But the legacy of globalist visions dominating regional optics continues. Although the United States finally did get on the right side of history in the eleventh hour by applying sanctions against apartheid South Africa (although reluctantly) and in more proactively helping it along the negotiated transition from apartheid rule to democracy, the bitter aftertaste of colonial rule and constructive engagement was strong. One of Nelson Mandela's first presidential visits was to Muammar Gaddafi of Libya.

Finally reading history forward, the legacy of constructive engagement is that globalist grand strategies need to make space for regionally defined strategies. If this were true during the Cold War framed by a bi-polar international system, it is even truer of an emerging multi-polar world. Yet, even after the Cold War and further encouraged by 9/11, U.S. Africa policy continued to be framed by globalist agendas that ignore regional nuances.

Mark Twain famously quipped that "history does not repeat itself, it just rhymes." From an African perspective, "constructive engagement" rhymed with European colonial rule over Africa. An acceptance of this American policy during the Reagan administration would be tantamount, in African eyes, to acceptance of the precepts and structures of colonialism. It does not end there; after the fall of the Soviet Union, the United States continued to frame its Africa policy in globalist terms. The difference was that rather than geopolitics driving policy, geo-economics was the driving force. Finally, in the post-9/11 world the U.S. is again using a globalist framing, this time the global war against terrorism (GWOT), as the master narrative.

Containment and Constructive Engagement

In the years following America's disengagement from Vietnam, the limitations and legitimacy of "containment" as the centerpiece of U.S. foreign policy were openly debated. The general acceptance it seemed to enjoy had been eroded by the drawn-out failure to stop the advance of communism in Southeast Asia. "Containment" implicitly accepted a bi-polar view of the world characterized by a zero-sum relationship between the West and the East. When George Kennan first outlined the theory of "containment" in 1947, he did not clearly distinguish between expansion by the Soviet Union itself and the international expansion of communism. The hegemony of Stalin's Russia within the communist movement resulted in communist expansion being equated with Soviet expansion, and thus "containment" was concerned with communism as an extension of Soviet influence.

The emergence of China and Yugoslavia in the late 1950s and early 1960s as autonomous communist states meant that containment of communism could no longer be strictly equated with containment of the Soviet Union. Furthermore, the world had moved from being bi-polar to loosely bi-polar. Nonetheless, reliance on "containment" opened the door it was designed to close—the spread of communist influence. The Vietnam War also reflected the tendency of America's post-World War II policy of "globalism" to eclipse a more specific analysis of regional aspirations of China and Vietnam under an East-West construct.

During the Reagan administration, "containment" experienced a renaissance; it rededicated America to the fight against the spread of communism as it ambitiously sought to roll back perceived Soviet advancements. Once again, Soviet influence was simply equated with the spread of communism. But in a multi-polar world, the reality was more complex, and Washington's implicit assumption of its simplicity increased Soviet opportunities in southern Africa. A Soviet analyst contrasting the African policies of Washington and Moscow stated, "The United States is repeating the same mistakes that we made 20 years ago. You are concentrating too much of the ideological surfaces and ignoring much more important things. You are losing influence and you have nobody to blame but yourselves."¹

During the Cold War, Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, and Zambia all espoused some form of socialism, emphatically rejecting capitalism. The leading nationalist movements in South Africa and Namibia, the A.N.C.

and S.W.A.P.O., respectively, rejected capitalism. Malawi and Botswana were alone among the sovereign nations of southern Africa in favoring capitalism over socialism. These alignments, however, did not imply the creation of or membership in a socialist bloc.

Robert C. Tucker's argument that the communist movements in Eastern Europe would not necessarily create mirror images of Soviet communism can be applied as well to the socialist movement in southern Africa. "The countries that came under communist rule varied significantly from Russia in their national political heritage. Hence a tendency toward diversity was bound to be latent."² Rather than resulting in a monolithic movement, the pursuit of socialism in southern Africa added to this diversity, contributing to polycentrism.

Why did socialism enjoy such widespread acceptance in Africa? The guiding spirit of capitalism is individualism. Although there was a certain dichotomy between the leadership and the people during the nationalist struggles in southern Africa, society was still grounded in a communal tradition. The leaders, although often in conflict with traditions themselves, needed the common denominator of African tradition to unite the people. At this time, except for a small coterie of the elite, individualism was foreign to the African way of life. "But until our vision is aligned to the African way of looking at things, until we have felt our individuality vanishing and our pulses beating to communal rhythm and communal fear ... we cannot understand Africa."³ In traditional Africa the individual does not exist alone, except corporally. He is simply a part of the whole."⁴

Initiation and puberty rites, still widely practiced today, are ritual introductions to the art of communal living. "Physical birth is not enough: the child must go through rites of incorporation so that it becomes fully integrated into the entire society."⁵ In Rev. Placide Temple's seminal study, *Bantu Philosophy*, he posits the view that Bantu behavior is centered in a single value he terms "vital force," which can be roughly equated to what in Western philosophy is called 'essence' of being. "Force is the nature of being, force is being, being is force."⁶ The "vital force," of the individual is at once sustained by and sustains the vital force of others. "The concept of separate beings, of substances which find themselves side by side, entirely independent of one another, is foreign to Bantu thought."⁷

The leaders of southern African nations promoting socialism often defend their desideratum of a nation built on socialist principles by referring to their cooperative past; competition is labeled a foreign concept. The leaders' power

and charisma are also implicitly consistent with the past. The political systems of southern Africa at the time of the European ascendancy were usually centralized, with a paramount chief or king as ruler (There were exceptions to this model, notably the decentralized Tonga of southern Zambia who had not developed or imported chieftomship rule). In the typology of Fortes and Evans-Pritchard, most of southern Africa would fall in the category of group A: “centralized authority where cleavage of wealth, privilege and status correspond to the distribution of power and authority.”⁸

However, the term “political” when applied to traditional Africa is an abstraction. There were no differentiation among the economic, religious, political, and social spheres; the chief embodied them all. “An African ruler is not to his people merely a person who can enforce his will on them. He is the axis of their political relations, the symbol of their unity and exclusiveness and the embodiment of their essential values.”⁹ The different spheres are not autonomous but bound together in the person of the king. The chief traditionally owned the land, which he held in trust for his people. For example, the title of the Lozi paramount in southwestern Zambia is “Litunga,” which is translated as “land.”

Although it would be an oversimplification to say traditional African society rejected capitalism, its collective ethos certainly made the embrace of socialism easier. The importance of strong charismatic leaders also resonated with traditional Africa.

Colonial Rule in Africa: The First Stanza

By 1885 the great powers of Europe had divided Africa among themselves. Decisions concerning overseas territories were made in Europe and were based on relations among the great powers. In order to forestall internecine conflict among the great powers, the 1885 Berlin Conference carved up almost the entire continent of Africa. Economic policy was reduced to extracting the wealth of the colonies for the enrichment of the Europeans. Little notice was paid to indigenous development in Africa.

Africa was not stagnant, but indigenous changes and developments were nullified by the exogenous force of colonialism. Basil Davidson has argued that 19th century Africa was undergoing changes in the forces of production which would have led to a change in the social structure and possibly to capitalism, but that colonialism interrupted the process. Agriculture was dominated by the Europeans who, in an effort to maximize their standard of living, destroyed the

nascent African bourgeois and stopped the growth of an African middle class. Ironically, the arrival of the Europeans, driven by the spirit of individualism, may have prevented the development of that same spirit in Africa.

While the changes engendered by colonialism help to explain why Africa was not moving toward capitalism at the time of independence, they do not adequately explain the conscious decision to reject capitalism. The leaders of the nationalist movements in Africa were elites who had been educated mostly by Westerners. During the struggle for independence, these leaders often contended with and displaced traditional leaders. “Contact with the money economy combined with other influences, including secular education and Christian teaching, emphasized individualism in place of the communal basis of society.”¹⁰

Socialism, however, was born in Africa out of a deeply ingrained antipathy for colonialism and everything it stood for. The psychological scars left after more than a century of colonialism explain the cacophony of criticism of capitalism coming from Africa. Franz Fanon states, “So, comrades, let us not pay tribute to Europe by creating state institutions and societies which draw its inspiration from her.”¹¹ Fanon went on to argue that individualism should be the first legacy of colonialism to go, since it was the underlying ethos of the European system.

Individualism was not the only characteristic of colonialism. Paternalism, or “white man’s burden,” was another aspect of the colonial era. Africans were treated as children who needed the guidance and protection of a wise adult—the European. Because they were considered children, decisions were made for them by adults. However, each decision sought to keep the child from becoming an adult.

At independence, the greatest impetus for the rejection of capitalism was its association with colonialism. In contradiction, socialism was seen as the ideology of the oppressed which portended a path to development outside the ambit of capitalism. The apparent success of the Soviet Union’s socialist-engineered development, with its accompanying castigation of the imperialist system, made it a natural model for the newly independent nations. The Soviet Union in 1917 faced the task of forging a nation out of a polyglot ethnic and predominantly backward peasant country. The new nations of southern Africa, created by European powers without regard to tribal realities, faced a similar task. The nationalist movements in Africa would fall into what Robert C. Tucker has called “movement regimes,” in which an ideology is chosen by the

revolutionary movement regime to rally the masses. Movement regimes are, furthermore, characterized by a dominant individual.¹²

Like Russia, Africa had a heritage of strong personal rule. “Personality cults seem to be ingrained in African attitudes and feelings, and it is easier to transpose them to new institutions than to remove them.”¹³ As in Russia, an elite group with a concentrated leadership spearheaded the revolutionary movement. Africa faced the challenge of mobilizing the masses. In a world permeated by a religious ethos, socialism became the new religion. Leaders of newly independent African states chose some form of socialism to widen the base of popular support. “African Socialism has thus become both a reaction against Europe and a search for a unifying doctrine.”¹⁴

Post-Colonial Africa: The Second Stanza

Africa had always existed in the backwaters of American foreign policy and thus has been easily subsumed under the more important and more immediate East-West struggle. Hans Morgenthau in 1953 said, “The U.S. has in Africa no specific political or military interest. As in other parts of the world, American interests in Africa are a by-product, as it were, of the East-West struggle.”¹⁵ In the half century since this assessment was written, little changed.

Soon after independence nearly forty percent of all African states were governed by leaders of political parties formally dedicated to the establishment of socialism.¹⁶ But Socialism, Leninism, or Marxism had so many forms in Africa that it belied definition. As Gerald Bender observed, “it is impossible to differentiate systematically between Marxist-Leninist and other African states in regard to their policies for development or their political structures.”¹⁷ One factor that newly independent African states had in common whether socialist or not, was a strong desire to determine their own future. From the early socialist-minded leaders of West Africa to the like-minded leaders of southern Africa, alignment with the Soviet Union was no more desired than alignment with the ex-colonial powers. They had no wish to trade one master for another. The Fifth Pan-African Congress, famous for its socialist rhetoric, propagated a policy of non-alignment. The Dakar “Colloquium on Policies of Development and African Approaches to Socialism” in 1962 declared that: “Foreign solutions cannot be adopted and imposed over African reality.”¹⁸ Ghana’s Nkrumah, while promoting “scientific socialism,” was concerned with the influence of foreign socialism. Leopold Senghor, from Senegal, and Sekou Toure, from

Guiana, believed in some form of socialism and rejected capitalism. But they did not fall in line behind the Soviet Union; rather they would in fact more closely follow Mao.¹⁹ George Padmore, who considered himself and adopted African and became one of its leading early political philosophers and supporters of African Socialism, said: “Communism is regarded by most Africans as just another foreign ideology emanating from Europe....”²⁰ In “Ujamaa: The Basis of African Socialism” Julius Nyerere says, “Ujamaa rejects capitalism and doctrinaire socialism.”²¹ In fact, African socialism is more of a rallying cry than a determinant of future policy. “In particular, it would be unwarranted to assume that adoption of a socialist label suffices to predetermine the outcome”²²

The newly independent countries of southern Africa, as elsewhere in Africa, favored non-alignment. “Globalism” or “containment,” with its emphasis on ideology, had in the past restricted the flexibility of the United States in dealing with these countries. The short-term objective of countering perceived advancements in Soviet influence obscured the planning of long-term policy in the region. Angola, which had figured prominently in U.S. southern African policy during the Reagan administration, is a good example of how “globalism” placed blinders on American policy. As in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War, a simplistic application of “containment” to Angola belied the complexity of the situation and ignored regional dynamics. While it may not have been true in the early Vietnam War era, there can be no doubt that China became an independent actor. In fact, China, much more than the Soviet Union, had been an acceptable friend to regional nations espousing socialism or communism in many southern African countries. “The aid is given in an unpatronizing and low-key style that wins widespread acceptance, and most African leaders find the Chinese most comfortable of the major powers to get along with.”²³

During the Angolan struggle against Portuguese rule, China supported the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (F.N.L.A.) and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (U.N.I.T.A), while the Soviet Union backed the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (M.P.L.A.). President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, weary of Soviet influence in the region and also supported U.N.I.T.A. The Pan-African Freedom Movement of East Central and Southern African (P.A.F.M.E.C.S.E.), led by Julius Nyerere, gave aid to U.N.I.T.A. The M.P.L.A., because of its strong Soviet support, was in the eyes of regional leaders the least attractive candidate to govern an independent Angola. The United States, looking to limit Soviet influence, decided to back the F.N.L.A. The Lisbon coup on April 25, 1974, brought an end to Portuguese

rule in Angola. The Organization of African Unity (O.A.U.) originally supported a coalition of all three factions, U.N.I.T.A., F.N.L.A., and M.P.L.A., to govern Angola. Washington, ever sensitive to Soviet influence, joined with South Africa in an attempt to preclude M.P.L.A. participation in a new government. The O.A.U. reacted by backing the M.P.L.A and accepting the Soviet-Cuban intervention in its support. Ironically, just a month prior to the Lisbon coup, Moscow had suspended support for the M.P.L.A., and it withheld its support for approximately seven months.

U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger was initially unaware of the complexity of external support for the Angolan parties at the time. While these complexities precluded simplistic Cold War breakdowns, he did not factor them into his Angolan policy.²⁴ The prevailing pattern in southern Africa had been for the liberation movements to shun Soviet offers of friendship in favor of Chinese overtures. “With the exception of the African National Congress of South Africa (A.N.C.-in-exile), all the major liberation movements appeared to have found it easier to work with the Chinese than the Russians. This preference was most notably evident with the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (F.R.E.L.I.M.O), the Zimbabwe African National Union (Z.A.N.U.) of Rhodesia, and S.W.A.P.O of Namibia.”²⁵

Ironically, Henry Kissinger, in an address given in 1976 in Lusaka at luncheon in his honor, stated, “Africa cannot want outsiders seeking to impose solutions or choosing among countries or movements. The U.S., for its part, does not seek any pro-American African bloc confronting a bloc supporting other powers.”²⁶ The Carter administration did adopt a more regional approach to foreign policy. However, during the Reagan era the pendulum swung back to the policy of “globalism.”

***Realpolitik* and “Constructive Engagement:” The Third Stanza**

The Reagan administration saw the apartheid South African government as an ally in the fight against communism.²⁷

In hearings before the U.S. Senate in 1985, expert testimony stated that, “The emphasis in U.S. foreign aid to Africa right now is strongly political. We are on record as intending to reward our proven friends, and the emphasis is well reflected in the 1986 budget.”²⁸ A second witness stated, “American bilateral aid is being linked to specific internal changes in the recipient African nations.

And finally, the U.S. is putting forth an African economic policy based primarily, I would suggest, not on need but on political ideology.”²⁹ U.S. relations with Zimbabwe reflected this reality. Aid to Harare was cut off during Reagan’s tenure, sending the signal that, “[Zimbabwe] cannot count on the U.S. for help unless it toes the ideological line.”³⁰ Prime Minister Mugabe had been following a policy of self-interest within a framework of nonalignment, but Zimbabwe’s votes in the U.N. on such issues as Grenada, K.A.L., and Israel were perceived in Washington as anti-American. Zimbabwe was, in fact, voting within a southern African context, not an East-West context. Frank G. Wisner, Assistant Secretary for American Affairs, stated during Congressional Hearing in 1984, “On the other side of the ledger, however, we note that although the Zimbabweans have taken positions different from our own on many issues, comparisons of their votes with the Soviet position reveal a substantial degree of non-alignment.”³¹ A stark contrast to the then moderate rule of Robert Mugabe was the autocratic and corrupt rule of Mobutu Sese Seko in Zaire. During Reagan’s first term, Ambassador Kirkpatrick and Vice President Bush visited Zaire; they returned calling for more aid for the embattled pro-Western leader.

The American policy of predicating its African policy on East-West concerns was analogous to the great powers’ policy during the colonial era, when Africa was a mere pawn in the competition among those nations. Southern African nations were sensitive to their apparent status, from their point of view, as instruments in an exogenous rivalry between East and West. In late 1987 Robert Mugabe wrote that Zimbabwe had been blacklisted by Reagan’s administration as a result of its preoccupation with Soviet influence.³² Julius Nyerere stated “... America has continued to look at African affairs largely through anti-Communist spectacles and to disregard Africa’s different concerns and priorities.”³³

The Reagan administration’s policy of “constructive engagement” was anchored in its preoccupation with Soviet influence. In fact, “constructive engagement” had a precursor in the Nixon administration’s adopted policy for Ian Smith’s Rhodesia, which was known as the “Tar Baby Option.” This was a policy that openly favored southern Africa’s white minority governments, which included the illegal Rhodesian regime of Ian Smith.³⁴ America’s close identity of interest with South Africa was anathema to many to regional leaders. Zimbabwe’s Minister of Information Nathan Shamuyarira opened the Pan-African News Agency (P.A.N.A.) in May 1986 with an attack on the United States, saying that America supports South African destabilizing of neighboring states.³⁵ Washington was often blamed for the rebel group, R.E.N.A.M.O. (or M.N.R.),

fighting in Mozambique. In June 1986, Nyerere questioned Washington's allowing the M.N.R. to open an office there. He argued that if they were a communist group, they would not have been allowed to do so.³⁶ When South Africa raided Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Botswana in May, 1986, Kenneth Kaunda went so far as to claim that America's raid on Libya paved the way for South Africa's attack.³⁷ According to the Commonwealth's Eminent Persons Group (EGP), that visited southern Africa in 1987, the members of the South African Development Coordinating Conference (S.A.D.C.C.), Zambia, Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Lesotho, Swaziland, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe, have lost an estimated ten billion dollars from 1980-1984 as a result of South Africa's destabilization.³⁸

U.S. officials labeled the A.N.C. and other resistant fighters terrorist.³⁹ The American position on terrorism as applied to southern Africa came across as a thinly veiled excuse not to support the A.N.C. or S.W.A.P.O. After Oliver Tambo met with Secretary of State Shultz he voiced consternation at Washington's inconsistency in aiding the Contras and U.N.I.T.A. while denouncing terrorism.⁴⁰ Robert Mugabe succinctly summed up African opinion: "It is hypocritical to say you people of South Africa are terrorists for taking up arms to fight oppression. How are they expected to free themselves? The reason for hypocrisy is U.S. ties with S.A. in imagined alliance against Communism."⁴¹

The point of contention between Washington and southern African states most openly debated was the issue of economic sanctions against the Pretoria regime. Washington argued that sanctions were not effective and that they would harm those they were meant to help. Ambassador Herman Nickel, stated to Chester Crocker, "Is it unconscionable to stunt the growth of the South African economy?"⁴² The United States even organized the U.S. Corporate Council on South Africa to coordinate business efforts to resist divestment in South Africa.⁴³ Regional leaders had a different perspective. Robert Mugabe expressed the sentiments of the region when he said that aid was not an acceptable substitute for economic sanctions against South Africa.⁴⁴ In May 1987, the situation was exacerbated by the Pressler Amendment, which stipulated that aid to Front Line would be banned unless they stopped aiding the liberation movements using violence in southern Africa.⁴⁵ The reaction of S.W.A.P.O. President Sam Nujoma typified the African response. "U.S. imperialism has always supported the enemies of the African people."⁴⁶

Ironically, the argument most often used against the effectiveness of economic sanctions was their failure from 1965 until 1981 to work in Rhodesia. Nevertheless, a policy almost identical to the failed "Tar Baby Option" was

promoted. Africans questioned why economic sanctions were used against Poland and Nicaragua if they have no utility. African leaders repeatedly stated that freedom requires sacrifices and they were more than willing to make them.

While economic sanctions were denounced in Washington, economic coercion of another sort was applied across southern Africa. The jeremiad of “neocolonialism” carried across the Atlantic to America throughout the Cold War. As often as not, African leaders were diverting attention away from their own failures. However, during the Reagan administration economic coercion was ostentatiously administered. Not only was foreign aid used as a political weapon, but the immediate problems of balance of payments and debt relief in Africa were exploited as well.

Washington used its weighted vote in the International Monetary Fund (I.M.F.) to force changes within the economics of many southern African nations. The I.M.F. under its structural adjustment programs demanded economic “liberalization” of local economics. Whether or not economic liberalization was effective, it is nevertheless perceived as an intrusion in the given country’s prerogative to map its own course.

The distribution here between economic and political is false. The I.M.F. often aggressively asserts its power to require sovereign governments to make economic adjustments, and by doing so at least indirectly dictates social and political objectives.⁴⁷

In October 1986, Kenneth Kaunda voiced the opinion most southern African shared, “We think it is unfair to attach conditions that are going to defeat the political philosophy of Zambia.”⁴⁸ Two months later, when the government raised the price of the staple food “mealie meal” in compliance with I.M.F. guidelines, there were riots in the Copperbelt Province of Zambia. The government retracted the price hike and blamed the I.M.F. for the unrest. In April 1987, Zambia announced it would do without I.M.F. aid rather than comply with its preconditions. The I.M.F. was accused of causing starvation in the country⁴⁹ and of campaigning against Zambia in Asia and Europe.⁵⁰ Julius Nyerere’s experience with the I.M.F. led him to explain:

The I.M.F. always lays down conditions for using any of its facilities. We therefore expected that there would be certain conditions imposed should we desire to use the I.M.F. Extended Fund Facility. But we expected these conditions to be non-ideological, as related to ensuring that money lent to us is not wasted, by political leaders or bureaucrats, used to build private villas at home or abroad, or deposited in private bank accounts.⁵¹

Dr. Arnold Sibanda, Research Fellow at Zimbabwe's Institute of Development Studies, labeled the I.M.F. imperialist, "bent on integrating our economies into the Western capitalist system."⁵²

Although parts of southern Africa accepted some degree of economic liberalization, these concessions were often being attributed to a strong instinct for survival, not to the heartfelt acceptance of a foreign economic model. Each truly independent state of southern Africa, with the exception of Malawi and Botswana, whether labeled "Afromarxist" (like Zambia and Tanzania), or "Afro-communist" (like Angola and Mozambique), and including the A.N.C. in South Africa and S.W.A.P.O. in Namibia, vocally rejected the capitalist model. South Africa was, therefore, the U.S. bridgehead against the spread of communism in the sub-continent.

The South African government, knowing that U.S. support was contingent upon the communist threat, persisted in painting the A.N.C. red. There were undoubtedly strong ties between the A.N.C. and the South African Communist Party (S.A.C.P.). The lowest estimate of S.A.C.P. members on the A.N.C. Executive Committee was thirteen.⁵³ The South African government claimed it was more than fifty percent. The A.N.C.'s "Freedom Charter," published in 1955, did call for the nationalization of major industries. The A.N.C.'s alliance with the S.A.C.P. was natural. In Nelson Mandela's words:

For many decades communists were the only political group which was prepared to eat with us, talk with us, live with us and work with us ... the African for the attainment of political rights and a stake in society. Because of this there are many Africans who, today, tend to equate freedom with communism.⁵⁴

The communist threat to South Africa, however, came from within its own borders and not from an external patron.

It is not in fact external communist influence that presents the most serious threat to South Africa's future economy so much as it is home-grown anger of the young black "comrades" in the township. They know little about Marx or Marxism, but they do know a lot about police brutality and they blame capitalism for playing with it.⁵⁵

The longer the struggle lasted in South Africa, the more polarized the politics would become. S.W.A.P.O. also had a strong socialist inclination. Although it was accepted by the U.N. as the legitimate representative of the Namibian people, because of its ideological tilt South Africa supported the conservative alternative, the Democratic Turnhall Alliance.

There was no intrinsic reason why African socialism had to be anti-American. Washington's persistent "either you are with us or against us" attitude poisoned relations with much of Africa. Its foreign policy appeared as the ghost of a colonial past.

The contrast between the hero's reception given Senator Robert Kennedy in the late 1960s and the coolness to Senator Edward Kennedy last year [1986], where he was "hooted" off some platforms, speaks not to differences in the senators, but to the new anti-Americanism engendered by the Reagan administration's gift of comfort to Pretoria....⁵⁶

Meanwhile, during the Cold War the socialist bloc managed to avoid the pitfalls the West fell into. In 1962, Zbigniew Brzezinski weighed the relative advantages of the two blocs in Africa. "In short, the Communist states were not only economically weaker than the West; they were politically and ideologically inexperienced in African ways, linguistically and culturally alien, and often even unable to grasp the importance of tribal loyalties in Africa."⁵⁷ Ironically, most of these factors worked against the West. Africa had to work within a system it considered exploitive, while the lack of contact with Soviet culture left them ambivalent. Brzezinski did credit the East with advantages: neocolonialism hostility toward a former ruler, the U.S.S.R. as a model for rapid development.

The relationship between South Africa and the United States engendered by America's preoccupation with ideology alienated much of southern Africa. "Yet by identifying itself in practice with the apartheid regime and its satellites, America is liable to bring about the very things it most fears—the growth of Communist influence and the damage to its own economic interest."⁵⁸ This quote from Nyerere could be used as a preface to a collection of Oliver Tambo's speeches published in 1987. In 1969 the A.N.C. leader called the Soviet Union the pillar of the anti-imperialist movement.⁵⁹ In 1971 he praised the gains of the world socialist movement and congratulated the great and heroic people of Vietnam on their victory against the United States.⁶⁰ In 1985 he called the socialist countries his allies and the United States the leader of the forces of reaction.⁶¹

Soviet gains did not merely come from passively gleaning the benefits of Africa's reaction to the West. In 1983 Chester Chester stated that ninety percent of aid to S.W.A.P.O. and the A.N.C. came from Moscow.⁶² From 1979-1983, \$180 million or seventy percent of Zambia's arms imports came from Moscow.⁶³ For years after Zimbabwe gained its independence largely because they supported Robert Mugabe's rival during the independence struggle, relations with Moscow were chilly. In the spring of 1986, Mugabe, nonetheless, visited the Soviet Union for the first time. Shortly after he returned to Zimbabwe, his Defense Minister traveled to Moscow. An editorial in the *New York Times* just before Mugabe's trip titled "How to Assist Moscow in Africa," posited the view that Zimbabwe may turn to the U.S.S.R. because of the strain of supplying its 10,000 troops in Mozambique who are fighting the M.N.R.⁶⁴

U.S. interests in southern Africa were not exclusively framed by the geopolitical competition with the Soviets. Even at the time, some wondered why the United States was on the wrong side of history. "But the United States should give political, moral, and material assistance to the majority who will sooner or later take their rightful place in the governance of the country and whose relations with the U.S. will be strongly influenced by the links that are established during the period of the struggle."⁶⁵

Southern Africa had immense wealth and potential. U.S. interests, therefore, went beyond balancing the Soviet Union. "The point is that whatever they call themselves, most African countries will continue to exhibit enough diversity in their own domestic politics and foreign relations to allow them to maintain economic and political ties with the U.S."⁶⁶ David Rockefeller, after visiting Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Angola in 1982, stated that they were open

to private investment and remarked, “I really am convinced that socialism for most of the African leaders I talked with meant a very specialized thing and had little to do with Marxism.”⁶⁷

While the United States had been waging war by proxy for eight years in Angola it was reported in 1986 that it was nevertheless that country’s largest trading partner. The list of American companies doing business with Angola included: Bechtel, Boeing, Conoco, GE, IMB, and Texaco. In 1981, during testimony before the House of Representatives Subcommittee on African Affairs, Robert Price tried to dispel the fallacy that so-called Marxist regimes were incompatible with U.S. business by pointing out that Gulf Corporation, operating in Angola that was a self-proclaimed Marxist regime, had a larger equity share in their Angolan operation than the equity share that American mining interests had in their operation in Zambia, which was considered moderate.⁶⁸ In the mid-1960s, a CEO of an American mining company argued, in “The Role of Foreign Private Capital in Africa,” that there was no conflict between African investment and private (foreign) investment. The name tag of an economic system, he concluded, is just that—a name tag. What is critical, he argued, is for companies to work within a given political system.⁶⁹

Globalism in the Post-Cold War Era: The Fourth Stanza

In the immediate decade after the end of the Cold War, Africa was of little strategic importance to the United States. This only meant that the logic of geo-economics replaced geopolitics as the driver. Geo-economics in U.S. foreign policy focuses on the promotion of an international order through the creation of an international legal and financial order, some would say a system that creates an integrated world market that promotes American interests.⁷⁰ The creation of the International Financial Institutions (IFIs), in particular the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and the GATT, in the immediate years following the end of World War II are classic examples of Hamiltonianism. From this perspective, economic stability is considered the lynchpin of security.

The IFIs continued to be an important proxy for U.S. interests in Sub-Saharan Africa. African private debt at thirty-five percent of its total in the 1980s was relatively small, and Africa, therefore, was particularly susceptible to IFI influence. More importantly, President William Clinton’s treasury secretary, Robert Rubin, listed a renewed U.S. commitment to using the IFIs as instruments to develop the third world as a priority of Clinton’s second term.

The Clinton administration complemented IFI pressure with its sponsored legislation titled *A Comprehensive Trade and Development Policy for the Countries of Africa*. The Executive Summary noted that as of 1996 twenty-three Sub-Saharan African countries had reform programs in effect with the IMF, and thirty participated in World Bank-led Special Programs of assistance. The *Executive Summary* adds, “If obstacles that hinder investment are removed, benefits will accrue to both the U.S. investors and the African nations.”⁷¹ The core of this Clinton initiative was *The African Growth and Opportunity Act* (AGOA). The U.S. Department of Commerce described it:

The Act offers tangible incentives for African countries to continue their efforts to open their economies and build free markets. President Bush signed amendments to AGOA, also known as AGOA II, into law on August 6, 2002 as Sec. 3108 of the Trade Act of 2002. AGOA II substantially expands preferential access for imports from beneficiary Sub-Saharan African countries.

AGOA provides reforming African countries with the most liberal access to the U.S. market available to any country or region with which the United States does not have a Free Trade Agreement. It supports U.S. business by encouraging reform of Africa’s economic and commercial regimes, which will build stronger markets and more effective partners for U.S. firms.⁷²

The driving force behind AGOA was American business, and in particular the Corporate Council on Africa (CCA), originally founded to support the Reagan administration anti-sanctions position. In its own words:

CCA is involved with AGOA at every level, from our AGOA Steering Committee to our involvement in the past two AGOA Forums, to the State Department’s flagship AGOA grant—the AGOA Professional Development Program.⁷³

Most importantly, the CCA not only strongly supported AGOA, but CCA Chairs the AGOA Steering Committee, a body appointed by the White House with open meetings once a month to discuss key AGOA related trade issues.

AGOA, finally, had conditionalities similar to those that had been imposed on Africa by the IFIs.⁷⁴ Congresswoman Maxine Walter's summarized: "This new bill shows little regard for the importance of leaving the ownership of Africa in the hands of Africa."⁷⁵

Globalism in the Post 9/11 World

In the post-9/11 world, the United States went back to a geopolitical footing.⁷⁶ Two issues rose to the fore: oil and terrorism.

The Washington Post on 19 September 2002 stated: "Africa, the neglected step-child of American diplomacy, is rising in strategic importance to Washington policy makers, and one word sums up the reason—oil." Colin Powell visited oil exporters Angola and Gabon. In September 2002, Gabon became eligible for assistance under the *African Growth and Opportunity Act* (AGOA) (signed into law as Title I of the U.S. Trade and Development Act on 18 May 2000). This followed the lifting of the long-standing sanctions against The Gambia six months prior, which had restricted the country from benefiting from any bilateral assistance from the United States. Nigeria's oil remains important. According to a Fellow of the American Institute of Advanced Strategic and Political Studies, Dr. Paul Michael Wihbey, the United States is hoping to double its oil imports from Nigeria from 900,000 barrels per day to around 1.8 million barrels daily in the next five years.⁷⁷ By the end of the century, Africa is expected to supply as much as 25 percent of U.S. oil imports.

The second globalist framing was to fold U.S.-Africa relations into the GWOT. In a Hearing before the House of Representatives Subcommittee on Africa entitled, "Africa and the War on Terrorism," Edward R. Royce, Chairman of the Subcommittee stated:

The Bush Administration has recognized Africa's centrality to the war on terrorism. National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, while speaking on October 30 to over 100 African ministers gathered in Washington for the African Growth and Opportunity Act Forum, said this, "Africa's history and geography give it a pivotal role in the war on ter-

rorism. Nevertheless, some Africans have expressed concerns that U.S. attention and resources devoted to Africa will be shorted in favor of the Middle East and South Asia. This should not be the case under any circumstances. Africa is critical to our war on terrorism.”⁷⁸

The most tangible evidence of the U.S. commitment to fight the GWOT in Africa was the establishment of the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOF), with its headquarters in Djibouti. While global terrorism did spread to Africa, it is not certain that Africa see the threat in the same light as does the United States. They [Africa] nonetheless have expressed some doubts and questions. For example, how is U.S. assistance to African regimes being utilized to “combat global terror”? What, in fact, is the nexus between American aid to incumbent regimes and the security of both states and societies in the region? Does the U.S. policy shift from emphasis on democratization and development (1992-2000) to focus on the securitization of strategic resources such as “oil” to enhance the capacity of anti-terrorist forces (2001-2005), which could relapse into Cold War priorities of ensuring the stability of and security of allied regimes?⁷⁹

While President Obama has tacked to a policy with more of an humanitarian bent, he too has had a strong focus on Africa’s role in the GWOT.⁸⁰

Conclusion

There is an almost inherent tension between globalist and regionalist’s views concerning U.S. foreign policy. The former, tend to fit the world into a dominant narrative—from the anti-communism of the Cold war—to the GWOT in the wake of 9/11.⁸¹ The latter like to point out that different regions of the world have distinctive histories, political-cultures, and institutions that need to be taken into account. As with the study of relativity and quantum mechanics, both have something to offer. As with physics, a unified theory that can explain how all the regions of the world interact to form the whole, has proven beyond our reach. Master narratives should be complemented by more nuanced understandings of countries and regions of the world.

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