

# Security Assistance, Surrogate Armies, and the Pursuit of US Interests in Sub-Saharan Africa

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CREATING THE US Africa Command (AFRICOM) reflects a growing recognition of US strategic interests in Africa and of a need to influence more effectively the security environment to protect and promote these interests.<sup>1</sup> AFRICOM also symbolizes, perhaps unintentionally, a new level of US commitment and identifies the United States as a significant stakeholder in Africa. Still, the United States has no desire for a more direct military role in the region. Contrary to the fears of many, the new command does not imply a militarization of US policy, nor does it represent an insidious step toward a buildup of US troops on African soil. Establishing an unofficial metric, a Department of Defense (DoD) official stated recently that the United States could consider AFRICOM a success if it “keeps American troops out of Africa for the next 50 years.”<sup>2</sup> For the United States, security assistance fills this gap between strategic commitment and aversion to military intervention. Accordingly, “a large part of AFRICOM’s mandate will be to build the indigenous capacity of African defense forces,” and the command will “concentrate much of its energies and resources on training and assistance to professionalize local militaries so that they can better ensure stability and security on the continent.”<sup>3</sup> In the words of a senior US military officer assigned to AFRICOM, the United States seeks to enhance regional military forces because, “We don’t want to see our guys going in and getting whacked . . . We want Africans to go in.”<sup>4</sup>

AFRICOM’s focus on security assistance should lead one to consider whether such programs, as prescribed by current policy, are an effective hedge against more-direct US military involvement. Such a question is particularly relevant to the near future of US military strategy in Africa, given the US government’s avowed support of the African Standby Force

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(ASF), which is expected to be operational by 2010, as well as the recent extension of Section 1206 (nontraditional security assistance) funding authority to the DoD through fiscal year 2011. This article addresses the issue predominantly by exploring, within the context of Africa, the relationship between security assistance and surrogate force. It suggests that such a perspective, rooted in the broader concepts of agency theory, may add value beyond the more traditional logic of partner capacity building. It concludes that the efficacy of security assistance strategy derives largely from how it translates the donor-recipient relationship into a sponsor-surrogate relationship.

After expanding upon the linkage between security assistance and surrogate force, the article examines two case studies: the 2003 intervention of Nigeria and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Liberia and the 2006–2008 intervention of Ethiopia and the African Union (AU) in Somalia. These specific cases are germane for a number of reasons. First, they represent the two predominant strands of US security policy in Africa: peace-support operations (Liberia) and counterterrorism (Somalia). In each case, the intervention was preceded by a period of significant and focused US security assistance to key actors. Finally, in each situation, the United States was under a somewhat unique pressure to become involved militarily, yet sought other alternatives, primarily in the form of surrogate force. The associated analysis attempts to identify the nature and causes of divergence between donor expectations and preferences on one hand and recipient performance on the other. It then examines the viability of donor attempts to shape recipient behavior and thus achieve a desired security outcome.

## Security Assistance and Surrogate Force

Until the mid 1970s, US policy makers used the terms *military assistance* and *military aid* generically for all transfers of military weapons, equipment, and training to recipient governments. In 1976, Congress amended the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, introducing the label “security assistance” to include military assistance as well as other related programs. The legislation “shifted official terminology to usage of the term *security assistance* in preference to military assistance to include the political and economic aspects, as well as military aspects, of arms transfers.”<sup>5</sup> Today, the DoD defines security assistance as a group of programs, authorized by

law, by which the United States “provides defense articles, military training, and other defense related services, by grant, loan, credit, or cash sales in furtherance of national policies and objectives.”<sup>6</sup>

There is no official DoD definition for surrogate force, the second key concept. For many, the term *proxy* may be more familiar. Within the military realm, the terms *proxy* and *surrogate* are largely interchangeable. The use here of the latter reflects a desire to establish a degree of distance from the related, yet viscerally more contentious, concept of proxy war. Given the African experience, any allusion to proxy war will likely elicit recollections of how external powers, both in the colonial and Cold War eras, competed by initiating, escalating, and exploiting local conflicts.<sup>7</sup> Today, many who wish to denigrate a given foreign policy in Africa simply apply the label “proxy war” for dramatic effect.<sup>8</sup>

In his study of Soviet Third-World strategy during the Cold War, Alvin Rubenstein suggests:

In foreign policy, the term *surrogate* (literally one who fills the role of another) indicates a function in the relationship between two governments, in which government A, the surrogate, defers to the preferences of government B and acts on its behalf or in support of its policy in pursuance of shared though not necessarily identical goals and in circumstances that otherwise might require B to assume higher costs and/or risks.<sup>9</sup>

This definition provides a useful starting point but limits unnecessarily the concept to relationships between governments. Over the past several decades, the United States has demonstrated a proclivity for the use of both state and nonstate surrogates.<sup>10</sup> Despite this widespread application, US defense publications provide only tangential reference to the subject. In its definition of unconventional warfare, Joint Publication 1-02, *DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, includes operations “conducted through, with, or by indigenous or surrogate forces who are organized, trained, equipped, supported, and directed in varying degrees by an external source.”<sup>11</sup> Although vague, this latter source adds an important element to Rubenstein’s characterization by emphasizing the idea of a mutually beneficial relationship. The surrogate acts on behalf of government B, but in addition, government B supports and enables the surrogate.

For the purposes of this article, a surrogate force is defined as an organization that serves the needs or interests of a secondary actor—the sponsor—by employing military power in place of the sponsor’s own forces. Implicit within this definition is the requirement for the sponsor to fund, equip,

train, or otherwise support the surrogate. The sponsor also must exercise at least some form of control or influence over the surrogate. This control, however, is never absolute. In many cases, it is tentative at best. As Rubenstein explains, “Whereas surrogates may connote subordination and dependence, in practice they cover a range of relationships.”<sup>12</sup> From a definitional standpoint, there must be some congruence of interests between the surrogate and sponsor beyond financial considerations. This does not preclude differing or competing objectives, but the surrogate does not act solely for monetary gain or purely in response to coercion. Finally, one must recognize that the sponsor-surrogate relationship does not represent a formal agreement and thus differs distinctly from an alliance.

In his 1950s analysis of foreign aid, George Liska introduced a categorical distinction between creative and acquisitive assistance programs. Creative aid, even of a military variety, focuses on the socioeconomic development of a recipient without being tied to any specific strategic objective of the donor. It is “not primarily intended to acquire anything, at least not immediately; it is extended in the hope that it will favorably affect the economic and political development of the recipient country.” On the other hand, a donor will utilize acquisitive aid to “win a comparatively specific advantage” or to “acquire” an asset.<sup>13</sup> In further defining the nature of the latter, Liska postulates,

In the case of acquisitive aid the recipient’s performance substitutes directly for action by the donor. The donor either does not expect to act at all or would have to act “more” or “differently” if he could not anticipate the performance of the recipient. . . . The case is clearest where military and economic aid are intended to help the recipient maintain an army for local self-defense, so that the United States does not have to participate with troops or need involve only a correspondingly smaller number of troops.<sup>14</sup>

This passage highlights the basic linkage between security assistance and surrogate force. A similar perspective is pervasive to, although not necessarily articulated within, justification for US security assistance funding.

Proponents of US security assistance cite a number of program benefits.<sup>15</sup> Most justifications share the common theme of economy of force. Calling for a dramatic increase in security assistance funding during the Reagan years, Secretary of State Alexander Haig claimed, “As we strengthen these states, we strengthen ourselves . . . we can do so more effectively and frequently at less cost.”<sup>16</sup> In 1985, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger testified to Congress that security assistance serves to “ease the financial

and logistical burden of our global security interests.”<sup>17</sup> More specifically, the achievement of economy through security assistance stems from a reduction in the requirement for more financially and politically costly US military intervention. Continuing his testimony, Weinberger explained, “If effective, our programs help reduce the likelihood that US forces will be called upon to intervene on behalf of friendly or allied countries sharing common security interests.”<sup>18</sup> James Buckley, undersecretary of state for security assistance and technology during the same period, argued that the programs “bolster the military capabilities of our friends and allies, permitting them in some cases to undertake responsibilities which otherwise we ourselves might have to assume.”<sup>19</sup> More recently, and reflecting more specifically on the benefits of US security assistance to Africa, Cong. Ike Skelton explained,

In the Global War on Terror, we need all of the help we can find. Where nations are willing to pony up resources, especially in terms of available troops, then we should do all we can to make sure that they are as well trained and well equipped as we can make them. Clearly no one is better suited to patrol the ungoverned spaces in Africa than the Africans. . . . Not only will they be more effective than we could ever be, but it will also relieve at least some of the demand to deploy our own troops.<sup>20</sup>

Mirroring Liska’s logic, Weinberger, Buckley, and Skelton advocated security assistance as a means of enabling other actors to take the place of US forces. They were, essentially, espousing the linkage between security assistance and surrogate force.

Terminology often obscures this key relationship. US policy makers and defense personnel alike speak regularly in terms of “building partner capacity.” The dialogue surrounding the standup of AFRICOM certainly follows this trend. This is probably more palatable than the notion of developing surrogates, but the palatability comes with a downside. Bertil Dunér outlines the three dimensions of a surrogate relationship as compatibility of interests, material support, and power.<sup>21</sup> Of the three, power, or influence, exerted by the sponsor is most critical. For Dunér, whether or not a state has acted as a surrogate “can best be regarded as a question of whether it has been subjected to the exercise of power by some other state; whether it has been pressured to intervening.” A partner, on the other hand, receives material support yet is in no way pressured or influenced by the donor to intervene.<sup>22</sup> By analyzing, strategizing, and implementing security assistance in terms of a partnership instead of a sponsor-surrogate

relationship, one is perhaps more likely to marginalize the critical, albeit controversial, factor of donor influence and control.

Such marginalization may affect adversely the degree to which security assistance programs achieve US objectives. According to William Mott, “Throughout the Cold War, Americans persisted in the obsessive conviction that arms transfers . . . would provide pervasive US political influence on recipient policy” and create automatically “decisive leverage on recipient behavior.” Washington policy makers assumed a degree of US control inherent in the provision of security assistance and “expected strategic and diplomatic loyalty and even military service from US recipients.”<sup>23</sup> This assumption was, in many cases, flawed. Failing to address adequately the issue of donor influence, Washington “was never able to create the convergence of recipient aims to achieve US aims.”<sup>24</sup> Instead of shaping recipient behavior and use of military force as hoped, security assistance became “at best a precedent and argument for continued aid, and at worst a resource at the disposition of the recipient for domestic or external use regardless of the stated purpose for which given.”<sup>25</sup>

The key point here is that capacity building, in many circumstances, may not be enough. The United States cannot assume that the mere granting of security assistance—what Dunér categorizes as material support—will shape automatically recipient behavior or that the resultant capacity will necessarily be utilized in a manner that best supports US interests. Dunér is correct in referring to any such assumption as “a very shallow notion.”<sup>26</sup> Addressing security assistance from a mind-set of surrogate force development as opposed to partner capacity building highlights the critical need, particularly in the absence of formal alliances, for donor influence associated with donor material support.

This approach to security assistance lends itself readily to the broader theoretical framework of agency theory. As cited above, “In the case of acquisitive aid the recipient’s performance substitutes directly for action by the donor. The donor either does not expect to act at all or would have to act ‘more’ or ‘differently’ if he could not anticipate the performance of the recipient.” Agency theory, in turn, addresses the ubiquitous yet complex relationships in which one party, the agent, acts on behalf of another, the principal.<sup>27</sup> Thus, to the degree that security assistance falls within the acquisitive category, the core concepts of agency theory become more germane. The following analysis of US security assistance strategy in Africa



relies substantially on these concepts. Within this analysis, the sponsor and surrogate assume the roles, respectively, of principal and agent.<sup>28</sup>

There has been little shortage of instability and conflict in Africa over the past decade. In most cases, the United States has chosen to remain a concerned observer—just another member, albeit an influential one, of the amorphous international community. On rare occasion, certain facets of a conflict serve to drive the United States into a more active leadership role and pressure it to consider more seriously the application of military power. While relatively uncommon, it is in such situations that the concept of surrogate force is most relevant and the linkage to security assistance becomes most vital. The two cases presented below reside generally within this category. Each points to a degree of success in the utilization of surrogate force and to the value of US security assistance programs while at the same time illustrating readily the truism that agency is rarely, if ever, perfect.

### **Case I: Intervention of Nigeria and ECOWAS in Liberia, 2003**

The Liberian elections of 1997 brought rebel leader Charles Taylor to power and resulted in a short period of relative stability in the nation. Within a couple of years, however, a new bout of internal fighting emerged in response to the abuses of the Taylor regime. The resumed civil war in Liberia finally came under the international spotlight in early June 2003 as the insurgent group Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD), long confined to remote areas of the country, made a rapid advance upon Monrovia and tens of thousands of refugees streamed into the capital city.<sup>29</sup>

#### **The Impetus for US Involvement**

On 29 June, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan called for international peacekeepers to intervene in the conflict. In a letter to the Security Council, he expressed that “such a force should be led by a permanent member of the council.”<sup>30</sup> Arguing that the United States had a special relationship with Liberia, the secretary looked specifically to the Americans to fill a leadership role. France and Great Britain had recently deployed substantial peacekeeping forces to their former colonies of the Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone, respectively. Although Liberia was never a US colony, it was

the closest thing to it in Africa, and many advocates of US intervention, including the governments of France and Great Britain, suggested the United States should respond in a comparable manner.<sup>31</sup>

Similar arguments had surfaced in the early 1990s at the outset of the preceding Liberian conflict, yet the United States had declined to commit forces. In 2003, however, it faced additional considerations. One was the increased interest in subregional energy resources. At that time, analysts predicted that by 2020, the United States would import 25 percent of its crude oil from the Gulf of Guinea.<sup>32</sup> Other growing concerns included the pervasive weapons and drug trafficking as well as the perceived presence of international terrorist organizations. As Secretary of State Colin Powell explained, “We do have an interest in making sure that West Africa doesn’t simply come apart.”<sup>33</sup>

Despite the historical ties, international pressure, and at least some degree of national interest, feelings in the United States toward committing troops to Liberia remained mixed. A conservative Congress feared being drawn into a protracted African conflict and stretching the military too thin. The defense establishment was also reluctant “to get involved in a complex and violent dispute that does not involve compelling issues of national security for the United States, especially when American troops are already deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan.”<sup>34</sup> At a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen Richard Myers, expressed strong reservations about involvement in Liberia, warning lawmakers of the potential for a long and costly operation.<sup>35</sup> Vice-chairman Gen Peter Pace echoed those sentiments, pointing directly to the precedent of the US debacle in Somalia.<sup>36</sup> This view, however, was not universal within the US government. The State Department, led by Powell, pressed for a vigorous military response from the United States.<sup>37</sup> A small but vocal group of US lawmakers weighed in on the side of Powell. After a period of intense internal debate, the administration merely conceded in early July that it was “not ruling out” the deployment of American troops.<sup>38</sup>

### **Potential Surrogates**

While ostensibly weighing US military intervention, President Bush deployed a small team of military advisors to Western Africa to assess the situation and determine the ability and willingness of subregional actors to respond.<sup>39</sup> At a press conference, Bush explained that the team was



“assessing ECOWAS strength: how soon, how quick [*sic*], what kinds of troops, who they are.”<sup>40</sup> This focus on ECOWAS was not surprising. From a military perspective, it was by far the most developed and experienced subregional organization in Africa. Further, ECOWAS had intervened—absent UN mandate—in Liberia previously to maintain subregional stability. There was obviously some interest amongst its members in preventing the violence from spreading as it had in the 1990s.

In turning to ECOWAS, the United States was, in effect, turning to Nigeria. Nigeria was the subregional power and, according to Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Thomas Pickering, “the only country in the region capable of projecting military force.”<sup>41</sup> In testifying to Congress, Pickering also pointed out that an earlier ECOWAS military operation in Liberia had been Nigerian led, Nigerian dominated, and Nigerian financed. Without Nigeria, the force would have been “tiny and not functionally viable.”<sup>42</sup> The tepid attempt by ECOWAS to intervene militarily without Nigerian participation in the Ivory Coast (2002) further reinforced the perception. In 2003, it is unlikely the other countries within ECOWAS were either capable or willing to launch a robust peace support operation without Nigeria taking a dominant role.

This does not imply, however, that ECOWAS lacked relevance as an organization. Nigeria possessed the muscle, but ECOWAS provided the legitimacy. According to some analysts, Nigeria intervened in Sierra Leone (1997) “without consulting its partners or receiving prior authorization” and utilized the label “Nigerian-led ECOMOG peacekeeping force” out of necessity for good public relations.<sup>43</sup> While perhaps overly skeptical, this assessment does highlight the sensitivities related to unilateral action in the subregion. Nigeria was hesitant to act, or at least to appear as if acting, unilaterally. On a parallel note, the other members of ECOWAS were accepting of Nigerian leadership but protested what they perceived as Nigeria’s “penchant for a unilateral diplomatic style.”<sup>44</sup> Thus, while focusing primarily on Nigeria as a potential surrogate, it was important for the United States to discuss publicly any subregional intervention in terms of ECOWAS.

### **Security Assistance Relationships**

In 2001, a DoS official testified to Congress that “in the coming year, we are going to be exploring with ECOWAS ways in which we can deepen our cooperation and offer more assistance to them as they try to develop

these multilateral capacities.”<sup>45</sup> By 2003, however, the United States still lacked the statutory basis to provide security assistance funding directly to ECOWAS. Accordingly, all US security assistance relationships in the sub-region were bilateral. Although the United States had such relationships with a number of ECOWAS countries, the bulk of security assistance from 2000 to 2003 flowed to Nigeria. The US security assistance relationship with Nigeria was thus the most relevant to the 2003 Liberian crisis.

In 1993, responding to Gen Sani Abacha’s establishment of a military dictatorship, the United States cut all security assistance to Nigeria. It initially banned Nigeria from participating in the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI) for the same reason. As Amb. Marshall McCallie, program director for ACRI, explained to Congress, “We can’t provide military assistance to countries that are governed by military governments, particularly those that have displaced civilian governments. . . . I look forward to the day when Nigeria has returned to democratic civilian rule and we are able to work together with them in peacekeeping.”<sup>46</sup>

The 1999 Nigerian elections, ostensibly representing a return to such rule, provided “a monumental opportunity for the United States on the African continent.” The US government viewed Nigeria not only as the key subregional power but also as the “possible linchpin for the entire continent.”<sup>47</sup> This vision included a significant role for Nigeria in the maintenance of subregional and regional security. At a 1999 congressional hearing on the future of US policy toward Nigeria, Senator Bill Frist explained, “We want Nigeria to remain engaged in regional conflict resolution and peacekeeping and perhaps expand these efforts further.”<sup>48</sup> Similarly, Undersecretary Pickering pointed to an “extremely important need” for Nigerian forces “to be available in the region to deal with conflict in the region.”<sup>49</sup>

The first practical connection of US security assistance to this “extremely important need” came in the form of Operation Focus Relief (OFR). Through a year 2000 arrangement brokered by the United States, three West African nations pledged troops to the faltering UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). Senegal and Ghana each promised one battalion, while Nigeria pledged five. US military advisors in the subregion, however, briefed US leadership that “the Nigerian army was broken and there would be no guarantee of victory in Sierra Leone by shoveling in ill-led, -trained, and -equipped troops.”<sup>50</sup> Accordingly, through OFR, the United States provided \$80 million over a five-month period to train and

equip seven battalions from the three countries.<sup>51</sup> Interestingly, only Nigeria deployed its OFR-trained units to Sierra Leone.<sup>52</sup> Accompanying these units into Sierra Leone was a small team of US Soldiers tasked to monitor performance.<sup>53</sup>

After the termination of OFR, the United States continued to provide substantial security assistance funding to Nigeria. In 2001, the DoS Bureau of African Affairs pointed to Nigeria as “the largest single focus in terms of bilateral military programs and capacity building on our part” and “the largest single recipient of US security assistance.”<sup>54</sup> Overall, from 2001 to 2003, Nigeria received the most US security assistance by far of any nation in Africa.<sup>55</sup> Although never involved in ACRI, Nigeria became one of the charter African Contingency Operations Training Assistance (ACOTA) participants in 2002. This surge in US funding correlated closely to the above-mentioned perception of Nigeria as a potential leader in regional and subregional peace operations. The FY-2000 *Congressional Presentation for Foreign Operations* listed the “continued participation of the Nigerian military in regional peacekeeping efforts” as the “key indicator of performance” of relevant security assistance programs.<sup>56</sup> Similarly, the FY-2003 *Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations (CBJ)* validated the increase in security assistance to Nigeria as a means to “improve Nigerian crisis response peacekeeping capabilities” and to “reinforce a positive role in regional peacekeeping.”<sup>57</sup> Thus, through the period of 2000 to 2003, there was a clear linkage between substantial US security assistance to Nigeria and the US expectation that Nigeria would assume a dominant role in subregional peace support efforts.

### **From Recipient to Surrogate**

With the situation in Liberia deteriorating, ECOWAS leaders met in early July and announced that they were tentatively willing to provide 3,000 troops to a peace support mission. As a caveat, however, they requested that the United States take the lead and contribute 2,000 of its own forces to the operation. President Obasanjo explained, “It isn’t Nigeria that set Liberia on fire, is it? Of course it is not. It is not the West Africans that set Liberia on fire. You know who did, and those who set Liberia on fire should also join in putting the fire out.”<sup>58</sup> Where the United States saw the past ECOWAS intervention in Liberia as a positive sign of future willingness, the organization’s members, particularly Nigeria, saw it as a negative experience not to be repeated. They had been there before,

and it had been protracted, expensive, and bloody. Driving the ECOWAS agenda, Nigerian leadership desired that the United States share the burden in 2003. This stemmed not only from a perception of US responsibility but also from a belief in US military effectiveness. The direct involvement of US combat troops would certainly guarantee rapid success.<sup>59</sup>

For the United States, this was not an expected or acceptable reaction from subregional actors. After toying with the idea of direct military intervention, the administration determined that it was, at most, willing to serve in a supporting role. In mid July, President Bush stated, “What I’m telling you is that we want to help ECOWAS. . . . I think everybody understands that any commitment we had would be limited in size and limited in tenure . . . our job would be to facilitate an ECOWAS presence.”<sup>60</sup> Within US policy-making circles, there was significant frustration over Nigeria’s hesitancy to respond, particularly given the extent of recent US security assistance.<sup>61</sup> Accordingly, the United States launched a heavy diplomatic effort in the subregion aimed primarily at Nigeria. The US-appointed UN special representative in Liberia, Jacques Klein, averred at a press briefing that “ECOWAS needed to move quickly” and, in general, he “attempted to bully ECOWAS into deploying a vanguard force of at least 1,000 troops immediately.”<sup>62</sup> US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Walter Kansteiner traveled to Africa to increase pressure on regional leaders.<sup>63</sup> Still, the Nigerian-dominated ECOWAS “seemed to be waiting for a signal from the United States that it was ready to help militarily, so there was something of a stalemate, everyone waiting for everyone else.”<sup>64</sup>

The impasse began to dissolve toward the end of July. On 25 July, the United States announced it was deploying a naval amphibious group with 2,300 Marines from the Mediterranean to the coast of Liberia, with an arrival date of 2 August, and further pledged \$10 million to support an ECOWAS mission.<sup>65</sup> Three days later, ECOWAS leaders formally committed to deploying forces to Liberia by 3 August. Nigeria was the first to agree to provide troops to the ECOWAS Mission in Liberia (ECOMIL), after which Ghana, Senegal, Mali, and Togo followed.<sup>66</sup> Once again, Nigeria would provide the bulk of military equipment and personnel. It is important to note that the United States remained vague concerning the mission of the inbound Marines. For the most part, it was a symbolic move, intended, in the words of a senior administration official, “to speed up action by the Economic Community of West African States.”<sup>67</sup>

Ostensibly, this symbolic military support, combined with US funding and diplomatic pressure, provided the necessary push for the intervention. The vanguard of Nigerian forces began arriving in Liberia the first week of August, and ECOMIL soon reached its prescribed strength of 3,600.<sup>68</sup> Having been within helicopter range for a week, US ships moved within sight of the Liberian capital of Monrovia on 11 August. They dispatched 20 Marines ashore to serve as liaisons to ECOMIL, but the rest remained on board. According to a senior Pentagon official, this action served to “show support for African peacekeepers without committing more American ground troops to the mission.”<sup>69</sup>

The ECOMIL operation continued until 1 October 2003, at which point most of its forces were “blue-hatted” and subsumed within a follow-on UN mission (UNMIL). Over the two months of its existence, ECOMIL was generally effective in securing and stabilizing Monrovia, overseeing the negotiated departure of Charles Taylor, and facilitating the flow of humanitarian aid. The US military, for its part, provided substantial logistical, intelligence, and communications support. US forces also conducted a robust information campaign, to include the widely broadcast “ECOMIL and You” radio program.<sup>70</sup> In assessing the contribution of the US military, one pundit suggests, “The real threat of American force, symbolized by the ships offshore, gave the West Africans important psychological support.”<sup>71</sup> Eventually, the United States did land approximately 200 Marines in Monrovia to help secure the international airport and to provide a quick reaction force in support of the African peacekeepers.<sup>72</sup> This force, however, returned to the ships after 10 days. The only other visible signs of direct US military involvement were the periodic flights of US fighter aircraft and attack helicopters on “show of force” missions. The US amphibious group departed the area by 30 September, just prior to the dissolution of ECOMIL and transition to UNMIL.

Most US military and civilian leaders viewed the operation, “the first US military commitment to an African conflict since Somalia,” as a success.<sup>73</sup> The United States had achieved its short-term military objectives in Liberia with a minimal commitment of troops and without suffering a single casualty.<sup>74</sup> According to one US military participant, “The operation clearly demonstrated that a relatively small forward US military presence . . . could enable a locally provided regional force to achieve tremendous results.”<sup>75</sup> Although African troops carried out the mission, US policy makers were quick to take credit. In reference to US security

assistance programs, Assistant Secretary Kansteiner testified to Congress, “Quite frankly, without this US assistance, those intervention forces never would have been deployed to Liberia and never would have been able to be the peacekeepers that they, in fact, are.”<sup>76</sup>

### **An Agency Perspective**

Although largely successful, the US-backed ECOMIL intervention still raises a number of issues in terms of principal-agent relations. Evident from the start was a dissonance between US and Nigerian expectations. Nigerian leadership felt fully justified in requesting a substantial US military contribution as a condition for its own commitment. US policy makers, conversely, grew frustrated at Nigerian intransigence, arguing that the subregional power was failing to live up to its obligation. Once in Liberia, Nigerian military units, as well as those from other ECOMIL participants, performed fairly well.<sup>77</sup> Getting to that point, however, proved a difficult and contentious process involving heavy US diplomatic pressure, pledges of additional funding, and a symbolic deployment of US forces. From an agency perspective, the US deployment is especially problematic. Aside from a small minority, US leadership did not desire to commit its military to the situation yet felt compelled in response to international pressure and, more significantly, the insistence of subregional actors. There is some evidence here of what Mott conceptualizes as reverse leverage.<sup>78</sup> As one news report claimed, “The Nigerians know, however, that they have got the Americans over a barrel and will hold out for the best possible deal before going in.”<sup>79</sup>

The surge in US security assistance to Nigeria from 2000 to 2003 was closely tied to the US government’s expectation of Nigeria as a lead contributor to subregional and regional peace support operations. From the US point of view, Nigeria’s hesitancy to respond to the Liberian crisis and attempt to pressure the United States into committing its own forces represented a degree of “shirking,” defined within agency theory as not doing all that was contracted or not doing the task in a desirable way. Shirking often occurs when agent interests deviate from those of the principal. In the case of the Liberian crisis of 2003, however, US and Nigerian interests aligned relatively well. The diplomatic wrangling between the United States and Nigeria was not about the need for an intervention or whether Nigeria would play at least some part. The devil was in the details—the timing, conditions, roles, levels of involvement, and, of particular con-



cern, who would foot the bill. The gap between US expectation and Nigerian response derived primarily from risk implications and the existence of competing principals.

Beyond the factor of conflicting goals, shirking is also more likely in situations where there is significant outcome uncertainty and thus significant risk. It is therefore important to consider how the perceptions of risk vary within a principal-agent relationship. Nigeria's past involvement in Liberia was not necessarily an indicator of future risk tolerance. The earlier experience was not a pleasant or inexpensive one. The potential for a similar experience was enough to "trigger the risk implications of the theory" in a manner that the United States, perhaps, did not fully comprehend or appreciate.<sup>80</sup> Kathleen Eisenhardt discusses "the problem of risk sharing that arises when the principal and agent have different attitudes toward risk . . . the problem here is that the principal and the agent may prefer different actions because of different risk preferences."<sup>81</sup> From the Nigerian perspective, it was completely reasonable to prefer a substantial US military commitment as a means of risk mitigation.

Closely related to risk was the issue of competing principles. Interestingly, Nigerian lack of enthusiasm for the mission stemmed in part from the inculcation of democratic practices. In a democracy, the state military ultimately serves as an agent of the people. Where Nigerian dictators had been able to employ the military whenever and however they saw fit, the democratically elected leadership, accountable to Nigerian public opinion, found it increasingly difficult to justify and garner public support for the expenditure of troops and national treasure in external conflicts.<sup>82</sup>

This case highlights the key role of the dominant subregional actor. For the United States, it would have been meaningless to delegate to ECOWAS without Nigerian buy in. The bilateral relationship remained far more critical than any relationship the United States had with the broader subregional organization. As a senior Nigerian military officer recently explained, "If you want to work with ECOWAS, you can't go straight to ECOWAS . . . you need to come to us first."<sup>83</sup> As in previous operations, the ECOWAS framework was primarily useful in terms of legitimacy, necessary for both the internal and external audiences.

In the end, the United States achieved its strategic objectives in Liberia through the use of surrogate force. US security assistance played an important role in this success. The questions that linger pertain to the deployment of US troops, intended primarily to "speed up action" by ECOWAS.

This deployment had to be weighed against the genuine fear held by most US policy makers and senior defense officials of being drawn into a Liberian civil war. Admittedly, the symbolic US force remained small and generally confined to the safety of its ships, but the United States was playing a dangerous game, both with its troops and with its credibility. It was able to maintain its indirect support role, but one must ask what US forces would have done if the situation in Liberia had continued to deteriorate or if ECOMIL had been overwhelmed. The United States was fortunate that it never had to make this decision. As Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Theresa Whelan expressed to Congress, “The good news is they weren’t needed.”<sup>84</sup> While it is not especially useful to dwell on the hypothetical, the contention here is that the United States, while attempting to operate through surrogate force, found itself at risk of a level of military involvement neither intended nor wanted. It is such risk that the United States sought to avoid through its security assistance strategy. In order to mitigate the perceived risk implications of its surrogate and thus gain the benefits of employing surrogate force, the United States had to adjust its own perception of acceptable risk.

## **Case 2: Intervention of Ethiopia and the AU in Somalia, 2006–2008**

Somalia remained a failed state a decade after the infamous US-led UN operation (1992–93), ungoverned and plagued by endemic warfare. In 2004, under the guidance of the subregional Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) and the UN, a group of Somali delegates congressed in Kenya and formed the Transitional Federal Government (TFG). This attempt to finally end the pattern of conflict and chaos, however, quickly foundered. The new president was a divisive choice; “his close links to Ethiopia, his staunch anti-Islamist positions and his heavy-handed tactics against political opponents in his own clan earned him a reputation as a leader who tended to polarize rather than unite Somalis.”<sup>85</sup> From the start, this government possessed little power or legitimacy. According to Somalia expert Ken Menkhaus, “Placing [Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed] and a very pro-Ethiopian, anti-Islamist government in power was a godsend for Mogadishu’s struggling Islamist movement. . . . The threat of a Yusuf-led government was the ideal foil for hardline Islamists to mobilize their base of support.”<sup>86</sup>

By mid 2005, the TFG remained isolated in the provisional capital of Baidoa, while the newly organized Supreme Council of Islamic Courts (CIC) had emerged as “the strongest political and militia force in Mogadishu.”<sup>87</sup> In February 2006, with CIA backing, a group of nine clan militia leaders formed the Alliance for Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism to counter the Islamists.<sup>88</sup> After a four-month battle, the CIC emerged victorious, absorbing most of the Alliance militias into its ranks. Having gained complete control in Mogadishu, it soon extended its rule over much of the country. CIC chairman Sheikh Sharif Ahmed vowed that his group would continue fighting until it controlled all of Somalia.<sup>89</sup>

### **The Impetus for US Involvement**

For the US government, the triumph and subsequent rise to national power of the CIC “was the exact opposite result it had intended in encouraging the formation of the Alliance” and “an important setback in the US war on terrorism.”<sup>90</sup> It feared the CIC would provide a safe haven and support for al-Qaeda terrorists along the lines of the Taliban in Afghanistan. DoD spokesperson Sean McCormack explained shortly after the Alliance defeat, “We do have real concerns about the presence of foreign terrorists in Somalia, and that informs an important aspect of our policy with regard to Somalia.”<sup>91</sup> Similarly, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Dr. Jendayi Elizabeth Frazer, expressed displeasure that al-Qaeda was operating with “great comfort” in areas controlled by the CIC.<sup>92</sup> The United States noted particularly the sanctuary provided a small number of individuals linked to the 1998 bombings of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, as well as those responsible for the 2002 attacks against an Israeli resort and Israeli aircraft in Mombasa.<sup>93</sup> The implications of any US response toward the situation, however, extended beyond Somalia and the presence of a few key al-Qaeda operatives. Frazer testified to Congress, “Somalia’s continued exploitation by terrorist elements threatens the stability of the entire Horn of Africa region. We will therefore take strong measures to deny terrorists safe haven in Somalia.”<sup>94</sup> US policy makers were cognizant of the fact that “there are Islamic extremist elements in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, and Eritrea, all watching what is happening in Somalia and how the United States reacts.”<sup>95</sup> Of even broader concern was the increasing presence of foreign jihadists “who want to turn Somalia into the third front of holy war, after Iraq and Afghanistan.”<sup>96</sup>

In 2003, within the context of the Liberian crisis, the United States seriously considered a substantial troop commitment to Africa. Given the nature of the Somalia conflict as well as previous experience in the country, the United States had no such debate in 2006. Still, the situation in Somalia was of utmost concern, demanding a US response. Within the context of the global war on terrorism (GWOT), the United States could ill afford the emergence of another extremist Islamic state serving as a base for foreign jihadists and with explicit ties to al-Qaeda. Having failed to gain effective surrogates internal to Somalia and with its diplomatic efforts stalled, the United States looked to subregional and regional actors as potential suppliers of military force.

### Potential Surrogates

After the CIA-backed operation backfired, the DoS reasserted control of Somalia policy. Assistant Secretary Frazer made the conflict a top priority and began working to build support for a plan to bolster the TFG with troops from other African nations. By 2006, the AU had some experience in the security realm, having deployed troops under regional auspices to Burundi (2003), Sudan (2004), and the Democratic Republic of Congo (2005). With the TFG in jeopardy, the United States sponsored and drafted a UN Security Council resolution calling for an AU mission to Somalia. The request was not for a peacekeeping mission but a “protection and training” mission.<sup>97</sup> Resolution 1725, adopted unanimously by the council on 6 December 2006, specifically tasked an African force to maintain and monitor security in Baidoa, to protect members of the TFG and key state infrastructure, and to train TFG military forces and thus enable the Somali government to provide for its own security.<sup>98</sup>

Following the framework prescribed within the 2002 *Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union*, the mandate for an 8,000-strong intervention force was directed to the sub-regional IGAD. A key limitation to the proposed IGAD Mission in Somalia (IGASOM), however, was the caveat that no states bordering Somalia could participate.<sup>99</sup> This political necessity served to exclude Djibouti, Kenya, and, most importantly, Ethiopia. Of the three remaining IGAD members, only Uganda was a viable option to provide troops.<sup>100</sup> Sudan had its own internal issues to deal with and was also sympathetic to the CIC.<sup>101</sup> Eritrea was actively supporting the CIC and was more likely to play the role of spoiler. Uganda did step up and volunteered to participate.

Its proposed contribution of approximately 2,000 troops, however, would not have been adequate given the complexities and dangers associated with the mission. The CIC indicated that it would view any IGASOM deployment as a hostile foreign invasion and vowed to attack any external force.<sup>102</sup> With marginal backing and little chance of success, IGASOM failed to materialize.

Ethiopia, excluded from the AU mandate, was probably the only country in the entire region with the military capability and political will to lead a robust operation into Somalia to counter the CIC. In 2006, Ethiopia wielded sub-Saharan Africa's largest and most seasoned standing army.<sup>103</sup> That summer, Prime Minister Zenawi ostensibly asserted to US officials that Ethiopia could crush the CIC in one to two weeks.<sup>104</sup> Further, as a matter of precedent, Ethiopia had twice sent troops into Somalia to destroy terrorist training camps during the 1990s.<sup>105</sup> Most importantly, Ethiopia saw the rise of the CIC and potential elimination of the TFG as a serious threat to its own national interest. Zenawi's dislike of the CIC derived from a number of factors, to include the Islamists' call for jihad against Ethiopia, close links with Ethiopia's rival Eritrea, support of armed insurgencies within Ethiopia, and irredentist claims made on disputed territory.<sup>106</sup>

### **Security Assistance Relationships**

The United States began providing security assistance directly to the AU in 2005. This included primarily international military education and training (IMET) funding to prepare individuals to staff AU headquarters and to manage peacekeeping and humanitarian operations.<sup>107</sup> The bulk of US military capacity-building efforts in Africa, however, remained bilateral. According to a US military liaison with the AU, this was partly because "it is easy, it is what ambassadors are comfortable with . . . it is harder to do anything multilateral." The officer also pointed out that the structure of the nascent AU security mechanism precluded extensive multilateral efforts. He explained, "We can't go faster than the Africans themselves."<sup>108</sup> For a number of reasons, the United States continued to focus its security assistance bilaterally with a small number of key strategic partners in the region. Similar to Nigeria in the period of 2000 to 2003, Ethiopia emerged as a key strategic partner and as the lead African recipient of US security assistance through the period of 2003 to 2006. In general,

the United States came to view Ethiopia as “the linchpin to stability in the Horn of Africa and the Global War on Terrorism.”<sup>109</sup>

US security assistance to Ethiopia after the Cold War had remained both insignificant and sporadic until 2002. Of major impediment were the various sanctions related to Ethiopia’s ongoing conflict with neighboring Eritrea. Even nonlethal ACRI training planned for Ethiopia in the second half of 1998 was cancelled because of cross-border hostilities.<sup>110</sup> On 12 December 2000, Ethiopia and Eritrea signed a formal cease-fire agreement. The concomitant repeal of the UN Security Council arms embargo opened the door for increased US support. According to the FY-2002 *CBJ*, the United States was “especially interested in renewing our military-to-military ties to Ethiopia” following the conflict.<sup>111</sup> To facilitate this renewal, the United States allocated \$3.6 million in security assistance for 2002.<sup>112</sup> As rationale, the *CBJ* offered, “Within East Africa, Ethiopia has the potential to emerge as a major peacekeeping contributor.” Further, it stated that the United States “will encourage Ethiopia to participate in regional peacekeeping initiatives and in the African Crisis Response Initiative.”<sup>113</sup>

The following year, US security assistance to Ethiopia increased to \$4.9 million in foreign military financing (FMF) and IMET.<sup>114</sup> Ethiopia also began participating in ACOTA in 2003 and thus received additional funds, equipment, and training through the peacekeeping operations (PKO) account. While continuing to highlight the potential role of the Ethiopian military in regional peacekeeping, the FY-2003 *CBJ* reflects a significant shift in emphasis to counterterrorism. For the first time, the annual document listed Ethiopia as “an African front-line state in the war on terrorism,” and, consequently, specified the FMF “to provide Ethiopia with equipment to advance its counterterrorism abilities.”<sup>115</sup> Further, the United States specifically targeted Ethiopia in the \$100 million EACTI.<sup>116</sup> Interestingly, from the start, the United States viewed Ethiopia’s counterterrorism contribution from at least a subregional perspective. In particular, it looked to Ethiopia to conduct “efforts to apprehend terrorists in Ethiopia *and beyond*” (emphasis added).<sup>117</sup> The FY-2003 *CBJ* explained further that Ethiopia had “in the past sent its troops into neighboring Somalia to destroy terrorist camps. Should a country in the region be found harboring or assisting terrorists, Ethiopia would become an important partner in the war on terrorism.”<sup>118</sup>



The year 2004 saw little change in US security assistance to Ethiopia. In 2005, however, the funding nearly doubled, making Ethiopia the top recipient of US security assistance in Africa.<sup>119</sup> Where previous budget documents suggested merely that Ethiopia “has the potential to emerge” as a major peacekeeping contributor, the FY-2005 *CBJ* established that Ethiopia “is emerging” in such a role.<sup>120</sup> This recognition was, at least in part, a reflection of Ethiopia’s contribution to the AU’s first independent peacekeeping operation (Burundi, 2003).<sup>121</sup> Citing other progress, the document claimed, “Ethiopia has provided outstanding cooperation in the war on terrorism.”<sup>122</sup> Although traditional security assistance to Ethiopia declined marginally in the 2006 budget, the United States more than made up for the drop with over \$21 million in emergency GWOT funding.<sup>123</sup> The FY-2006 *CBJ* provides an important, albeit nuanced, indication of how the United States perceived the role of security assistance to Ethiopia. Expanding upon the previous capacity-building emphasis, the 2006 document states, “The US will use . . . military assistance funding to increase Ethiopia’s capacity *and willingness* to participate in external military missions” (emphasis added).<sup>124</sup>

By 2006, the robust security assistance relationship with Ethiopia centered on the US perception of Ethiopia as a key contributor to subregional counterterrorism efforts. Again, US documents make reference to an expectation that Ethiopia would intervene, at least in some cases, against a neighboring country harboring or assisting terrorists. According to some analysts, by the summer of 2006, the United States began discussing with Ethiopia the possibility of such an intervention into Somalia.<sup>125</sup>

### **From Recipient to Surrogate**

While working to garner support for an AU mission to Somalia, the US government also attempted to engage with moderates within the CIC. By mid December 2006, however, with the failure of IGASOM to materialize and CIC intransigence on the safe haven issue as a backdrop, the United States “ominously shifted tone on Somalia.”<sup>126</sup> At a press conference on 14 December, Assistant Secretary Frazer denigrated the CIC as “extremists to the core” and as being “controlled by al-Qaeda.”<sup>127</sup> Many observers perceived these statements as a precursor to an Ethiopian invasion. On 24 December, after months of military buildup, Ethiopia did invade, launching a large-scale offensive into Somalia. The result was a rout. The Ethiopian attack “produced not only a decisive victory in initial battles in

the open countryside but also an unexpected collapse of the UIC back in Mogadishu . . . there, hardliners were confronted with widespread defections by clan militias, businesspeople, and moderate Islamists.”<sup>128</sup> Most of the remaining CIC (or UIC) leadership, as well a large number of foreign fighters, fled south toward the Kenyan border. Preceded and protected by the Ethiopian army, the TFG soon filled the void in Mogadishu.

The degree of US encouragement and support for the Ethiopian intervention remains an area of significant debate and contention. While Ethiopian leadership openly acknowledges US prompting, the US government has remained more tight-lipped. Still, a number of credible government sources have alluded to a significant US role. Referring to the operation, a senior US military officer in the subregion at the time claims, “It was absolutely encouraged by the United States. . . . The US certainly applied soft power behind the scenes.”<sup>129</sup> A high-level DoS official working for Assistant Secretary Frazer contends unambiguously, “The US directly and indirectly supported the Ethiopian invasion of Somalia,” and that this support was necessary because “the AU did not have the capacity.”<sup>130</sup> A number of pundits point to US Central Command (CENTCOM) commander Gen John Abizaid’s trip to Ethiopia shortly before the invasion, ostensibly a routine visit, as a strong indicator of prior coordination or as representing “the final handshake.”<sup>131</sup> Former US ambassador to Ethiopia David Shinn contends, “At a minimum . . . the United States gave a green light to Ethiopia.”<sup>132</sup>

The question of US prompting or consent prior to the invasion, while interesting, may be somewhat irrelevant. As Menkhaus suggests, “Ethiopia’s offensive would likely have occurred with or without US tacit approval.”<sup>133</sup> Nonetheless, the United States at least endorsed the intervention after the fact and then cooperated militarily with Ethiopian forces in Somalia, many of which the United States had trained and equipped through its security assistance programs.<sup>134</sup> The apparently successful use of US special operations forces, intelligence assets, and limited precision air strikes, combined with a large-scale intervention by a subregional power, was quickly dubbed “the Somali Model.” According to one report, “Military operations in Somalia by American commandos, and the use of the Ethiopian Army as a surrogate force to root out operatives for al-Qaeda in the country, are a blueprint that Pentagon strategists say they hope to use more frequently in counterterrorism missions around the globe.”<sup>135</sup>

Ethiopia's decision to withdraw its forces less than a month after the invasion, however, served to "cast some doubt on the viability of such a model."<sup>136</sup> Shortly after entering Somalia and demolishing the organized CIC, Ethiopian troops became the target of "a complex insurgency by a loose combination of Islamists, warlords, armed criminals, and clan-based militia."<sup>137</sup> Prime Minister Zenawi had no desire to wage a protracted and costly counterinsurgency campaign. Within a matter of weeks, he announced that Ethiopia had achieved its objectives and that it intended to redeploy its troops. Ostensibly, Ethiopia had sought "not to install a viable government, but to prevent Somalia's Islamists from trying to form one" and perhaps, as one polemicist suggests, "to win the favor of the United States for loyal service in the war on terror."<sup>138</sup> Ethiopia's "exit strategy" was the anticipated replacement by an AU force.<sup>139</sup> With the CIC no longer a substantial threat, such a force was, in theory, more viable than in early December 2006. Once again, though, it proved largely untenable in practice.

The TFG was dependent upon Ethiopian troops for regime survival. With Ethiopia threatening to depart, the United States and the AU, fearing a security vacuum, scrambled to assemble a regional force as replacement. Assistant Secretary Frazer cited the deployment of such a force as "a crucial component of our strategy in Somalia."<sup>140</sup> On 19 January 2006, the AU Peace and Security Council bypassed the subregional organization and established the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). A month later, the UN Security Council passed the US-sponsored Resolution 1744, providing a mandate to AMISOM and thus overriding the precedent Resolution 1725 (December 2006). The new resolution authorized the deployment of AMISOM to provide support and protection for the TFG, facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance, and create conditions conducive to long-term stabilization, reconstruction, and development.<sup>141</sup>

The response from AU members was underwhelming. While a few African countries pledged troops, most remained ambivalent at best. Top AU diplomats pleaded with member countries. Likewise, Frazer conducted "full court press" diplomacy to garner regional support.<sup>142</sup> In the end, these efforts were largely in vain. AMISOM deployed in March 2007 with a mere 1,700 Ugandan troops.<sup>143</sup> Only tiny Burundi later joined the mission. Interestingly, Uganda, had received substantial US security assistance, although not to the level of Ethiopia, since 2004.<sup>144</sup> Further, military units from both Uganda and Burundi received substantial US train-

ing, equipment, and logistical support specifically for AMISOM. Still, the total contribution of Uganda and Burundi, as could be expected, was well below the mandate requirement.<sup>145</sup> The force could do little more than safeguard key infrastructure such as the Mogadishu air and sea ports.<sup>146</sup>

US influence over Ethiopia may have been largely irrelevant prior to the 2006 offensive, but this was not the case as the operation dragged on. Faced with a tepid AU response, the United States pressured Ethiopia to remain in country.<sup>147</sup> Succumbing to US overtures, Zenawi kept his troops in Somalia for over two years, far longer than he wished.<sup>148</sup> Nonetheless, by late 2008, Zenawi finally became “fed up” with the lack of regional and international support as well as with the heavy economic cost, heavy casualties, and incessant appeals at home for a troop withdrawal.<sup>149</sup> In February 2009, the remaining Ethiopian soldiers departed Somalia, leaving behind a feeble AMISOM of approximately 3,400 Ugandans and Burundians.

### **An Agency Perspective**

It is true, as one analyst suggests, that the United States “reaped some short-term counterterrorism benefits from its successful, if ephemeral, proxy incursion.”<sup>150</sup> The operation prevented the consolidation of an extreme Islamist government and provided the United States better opportunities to target international terrorists operating within Somalia. Many questions persist, however, as to the broader implications of the episode. Given the ineffective subregional and regional responses, the United States found it necessary to rely upon Ethiopia unilaterally as its primary surrogate. While Ethiopia was the most willing and capable actor as well as the predominant recipient of US security assistance in the subregion, geopolitical dynamics made such reliance highly problematic. Not surprisingly, the Ethiopian intervention and subsequent occupation were particularly ill received and probably did more to inflame than to mitigate the violence endemic to Somalia.

In 2006, US and Ethiopian leadership perceived the CIC as a serious threat, and it is probable that the United States at least encouraged Ethiopia to intervene. There was probably little need for heavy diplomatic pressure; it was likely just a matter of giving the green light. In any case, the Ethiopians certainly did not appear to exhibit any shirking behavior in terms of the initial decision to invade, and the decision to depart in 2008 can hardly be considered shirking. The Ethiopians remained in Somalia

far longer than they had desired and far longer than should have been expected. As David Shinn argued to Congress, “Ethiopia appears from the beginning to have planned a brief campaign because of the high cost of the operation and the fact that a long Ethiopian presence in Somalia would further incite Somali nationalism against Ethiopia.”<sup>151</sup>

Ethiopia did not display shirking behavior in terms of “not doing all that was contracted.” Shirking, however, also encompasses “not doing the task in a desirable way.” This was Ethiopia’s primary shortcoming as a US surrogate. While Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) waged a hearts-and-minds campaign in the subregion, the Ethiopian army waged a brutal counterinsurgency campaign in the streets of Mogadishu where soft power held little sway. Not restrained by concerns of collateral damage and civilian casualties (unlike the United States in Iraq), the Ethiopians leveled entire city blocks. Further, the US surrogate accumulated a dubious human rights record. Amnesty International has presented credible evidence of extensive torture and deliberate killings of civilians by Ethiopian troops.<sup>152</sup> Whether well founded or not, there was little question within the subregion of US complicity. Already poor, the image and potential credibility of America declined even further. Ken Menkhaus contends, “There’s a level of anti-Americanism in Somalia today like nothing I’ve seen over the past 20 years. Somalis are furious with us for backing the Ethiopian intervention and occupation, provoking this huge humanitarian crisis.”<sup>153</sup>

Beyond shirking, another concern within this episode was the likelihood of opportunistic behavior by Ethiopia. Ethiopia’s apparent enthusiasm for the initial invasion did not necessarily reflect a complete convergence of interests between the United States and its surrogate. For Ethiopia, Somalia was not just about Somalia. It was not even about the broader war on terrorism. Ethiopia and Eritrea, despite the 2000 cease-fire, continued to battle through Somali surrogates. The desire to gain the advantage in this proxy conflict was certainly at play in 2006. To the degree that it relied on US assistance and support in facilitating this separate agenda, Ethiopia exhibited opportunism, described within agency theory as taking advantage of the perquisites of the principal-agent relationship to achieve benefits unrelated to the relationship. Further, some analysts suggest that Ethiopia played the international terrorism card in the Horn of Africa to its own advantage. They argue that Ethiopia exaggerated the terrorist threat and linkages to al-Qaeda to gain additional US assistance against

local competitors. According to one expert, “The new game in Somalia is to call your enemy a terrorist in the hope that America will destroy him for you.”<sup>154</sup> In a sense, Ethiopia may have tried to oversell its own value as an agent to the United States.

While numerous critics place responsibility upon Ethiopia and its sponsor (the United States) for Somalia’s further descent into chaos, the broader African security community shares a portion of the blame. A significant consequence of the AU failing to fulfill its mandate in Somalia was the extended Ethiopian occupation. A key observation from this case is that the AU, as an institution, may be ambitious and well intentioned in exercising its regional security prerogative, but the enthusiasm does not extend necessarily to member states under no obligation to contribute troops or resources to any given mission. From an agency perspective, the failure of Ghana and Nigeria to respond is of particular interest. Both received substantial US security assistance funding in 2005 and 2006. Both, at the urging of the United States, pledged troops to AMISOM and in return were promised additional US training and equipment tailored specifically for the operation.<sup>155</sup> The United States also agreed to provide logistical support.<sup>156</sup> Still, despite significant US diplomatic pressure, neither country ever deployed its forces to Somalia, each offering a continuous litany of reasons for the delay. When asked to explain this lack of response despite previous pledges, a senior US military official in the region opined that Somalia “scared the . . . out of them” and that they had no direct interests related to the mission. In other words, “Why would Ghana care about Somalia?”<sup>157</sup>

Despite short-term gains, the efficacy of US efforts to achieve strategic objectives in Somalia through surrogate force remains questionable at best. The suboptimal outcome derived not only from US delegation to Ethiopia but also from delegation to the AU. In the aftermath, Somalia remained a violent and ungoverned sanctuary for terrorists, Islamic extremists, criminals, and even pirates. The credibility, image, and subregional hearts-and-minds campaign of the United States suffered. US support for a unilateral Ethiopian intervention also raised concerns throughout the rest of Africa. Shortly after the invasion, the United States announced the creation of AFRICOM. This unfortunate timing led to widespread suspicion in Africa concerning the role of the new command.<sup>158</sup> Finally, US relations with Ethiopia were strained. To some degree, the Ethiopians felt the United States failed to live up to its end of the contract. Ostensibly



acting on behalf of the United States, they expected an even greater level of US backing and grated at accusations of Ethiopian atrocities emanating from the US Congress. In the telling words of an Ethiopian government official, “We went in to do your bidding. You should have provided more support. You have flogged this horse long enough.”<sup>159</sup>

## **Discussion and Conclusions**

These two cases illustrate US attempts to translate donor-recipient relationships into effective sponsor-surrogate relationships as a means of shaping the African security environment and pursuing US objectives. While certainly limited in scope, these examples offer a few tentative conclusions as to the broader efficacy of such efforts.

### **Donor Expectations and Control Mechanisms**

Aware of the sensitivities associated with “acting for,” US officials are quick to point out that recipient governments in Africa retain sovereign decision-making authority over the employment of their own military forces. Nonetheless, the United States retains specific expectations tied to its security assistance programs and attempts to impart these as tacit obligations upon recipient governments. The surge in US security assistance to Nigeria from 2000 to 2003 stemmed from the US government’s expectations of Nigeria as a lead contributor to subregional and regional peace support operations. From 2003 to 2006, the United States justified its substantial security assistance funding to Ethiopia in terms of Ethiopia’s potential leadership role in both peace support and counterterrorism. Many other donor-recipient relationships throughout this general time frame, although lesser in scope, were based on similar US aims. It is not surprising that in both 2003 and 2006, the United States turned to its recipients when assessing the need to apply military force. In each case, it found it necessary to employ control mechanisms, with varying degrees of success, in attempting to align recipient behavior with donor preferences.

While screening serves as an indirect or passive control mechanism, it is a critical one nonetheless. Some agents are more likely to perform in a manner acceptable to the principal than others. The principal must determine desirable attributes and then be able to identify those attributes in potential agents. The latter is not always straightforward, as agents tend to hide information that would preclude the transfer of benefits.<sup>160</sup> All

states receiving US security assistance through programs such as ACRI and ACOTA must express a general interest and willingness to participate in external peace-support operations.<sup>161</sup> Some recipients, however, “gladly take the training” and never deploy.<sup>162</sup> Some, as perhaps was the case with Ethiopia, may try to exaggerate or inflate their own value as agents, thus distorting the screening process.

From 2000 to 2006, US security assistance strategy, with its concomitant screening mechanisms, was reflective of a broader “anchor state” approach to Africa. The 2002 *National Security Strategy* established that “countries with major impact on their neighborhood such as South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, and Ethiopia are anchors for regional engagement and require focused attention.”<sup>163</sup> In focusing security assistance efforts on Nigeria (2000–2003) and Ethiopia (2003–2006), the United States was seeking to establish principal-agent relationships with the dominant actors within the respective subregions. Nigeria and Ethiopia already possessed robust military capabilities—at least relative to the rest of Africa—and each had shown a past willingness to intervene militarily in neighboring countries, whether for peacekeeping or other purposes. These factors, ostensibly indicators that the United States would achieve “the most bang for its buck” or “the best return on its investment,” served as strategic screening criteria.<sup>164</sup>

These case studies highlight the tension between strategic and what can be considered “statutory” screening criteria. US statutes, as codified primarily within the amended Foreign Assistance Act, prohibit security assistance for a number of reasons, including unaddressed human rights abuses or the presence of a government brought to power by military coup. These restrictions derive largely from US values and political sensitivities but are also important in that such recipients are ostensibly more likely to shirk in terms of “not doing the task in a desirable way.” The United States reinstated security assistance to Nigeria after the 1999 Nigerian democratic elections and then cut it again in late 2003 (reinstated in 2005) due to implications of human rights abuses by the Nigerian military. With the substantial increases in security assistance to Ethiopia starting in 2002, critics argued that the United States was not holding the Ethiopians to the same standard. Many US policy makers, however, viewed Ethiopian support as critical to the GWOT and appeared willing to overlook certain indiscretions or legalistic restraints to achieve strategic ends. The resultant tension was evident in congressional debates. While it may be necessary at times to favor strategic over statutory criteria, such a compromise is not

without cost. Dissonance between donor rhetoric and practice, as well as the application of varying standards to different recipients, can skew recipient perceptions of donor expectations and preferences.

There was certainly strong justification for screening recipients in terms of the broader anchor-state strategy. Extant military capacity and geopolitical influence of a surrogate is potentially of great benefit to a sponsor. Nonetheless, relying mainly on subregional powers in Africa is not without its drawbacks. States such as Nigeria and Ethiopia are entwined intimately in subregional power politics. This is not to suggest a lack of involvement by lesser states, but dominant players are, anecdotally, more likely to have broader agendas and, consequently, additional motives that may be hidden from the sponsor. By aligning mainly with a subregional power, a sponsor may be drawn into subregional politics unwittingly, losing credibility as an unbiased external actor or “honest broker” in the resolution of African conflict.<sup>165</sup> Reliance on a few dominant states also increases the potential for reverse leverage within the donor-recipient relationship. There were hints of this in 2003 when the Nigerians knew they had “the Americans over a barrel.”

The application of incentives and diplomatic pressure was evident in both case studies. The United States clearly utilized diplomatic pressure to shape recipient behavior in the case of Nigeria in 2003. The same was true in the case of Ethiopia, even if not for the initial invasion, at least for the continued occupation of Somalia. In trying to garner regional support for AMISOM, the United States looked specifically to and applied pressure on key recipients such as Uganda, Ghana, and Nigeria. The case of Uganda provides an example of the United States successfully incentivizing recipient behavior through the provision of additional assistance linked to a specific mission. Similar incentives, however, proved inadequate with Nigeria and Ghana in the context of AMISOM. While these all represent attempts by the donor to control recipient behavior, it remains difficult to assess the precise degree, nature, and effects of any of these efforts. This is not surprising. As Dunér contends, “When it comes to a proxy relation . . . both parties usually try to conceal the true nature of their relationship. . . . Few governments like to acknowledge that they have threatened or brought pressure to bear on another; even fewer like to admit that they have acted against their will.”<sup>166</sup>

## Agency Cost Calculus

A simplistic yet meaningful conclusion one can draw from the case studies is that the effectiveness of donor control mechanisms and, consequently, the viability of donor influence is highly dependent upon context. Three important contextual factors identified within agency theory and illustrated by the case studies include the level of congruence between donor and recipient interests, the relative perception of risk, and the existence of competing principal-agent relationships. It is the interplay between such contextual factors and efforts by the donor to control recipient behavior that dictates the agency costs associated with any given donor-recipient relationship.<sup>167</sup>

In the case of AMISOM as a whole, those outside the subregion had little direct interest in Somalia. Given the lack of perceived state interests and significant risk implications associated with the “less-than-ideal security situation,” the paucity of regional enthusiasm should not have been surprising.<sup>168</sup> In many recipient states that declined to participate, internal domestic pressure competing with external US pressure proved to be significant. After Nigeria pledged troops to AMISOM, the internal domestic outcry against participation was intense, leading the government to reconsider. Malawi’s defense minister “reportedly promised troops only to have the president rescind the announcement.”<sup>169</sup> In such a context—with a lack of converging interests, significant risk implications, and competing (primarily internal) relationships—the amount of donor control required to effectively shape recipient behavior likely exceeds that actually provided by donor control mechanisms.

The United States had a strong donor-recipient relationship and alignment of interests with both Nigeria in 2003 and Ethiopia in 2006. The same was true with Uganda within the context of AMISOM. All three states responded as US surrogates. Nigeria appeared to possess a greater initial risk aversion, even going into a more benign environment. The United States was able to mitigate this primarily through a symbolic deployment of US forces. The key in this case was adjusting the level of shared risk within the relationship. As discussed above, the Nigerian government’s perception of risk derived, in part, from democratic accountability. The governments of Ethiopia and Uganda, more questionable in terms of democratic practices, perhaps lacked similar concerns.<sup>170</sup> Although it is impossible to suggest any correlation here, this remains an interesting observation nonetheless. Nigeria was obviously less amenable

to intervening in Somalia. The risk was probably greater and, as discussed above, the convergence of interests no longer existed.

From the case studies, it is apparent that the United States takes two broad approaches to developing surrogate forces in Africa. The first derives from the perceived strategic potential of a key actor. It consists of a longer-term security assistance relationship not tied directly to any specific intervention. This was the approach taken with Nigeria from 2001 to 2003, Ethiopia from 2003 to 2006, and Uganda in the years leading up to its participation in AMISOM. The second can be characterized as a “fire brigade” approach. This is more ad hoc and involves a short-term use of security assistance to generate support for a specific intervention and preparing willing participants just prior to deployment. This was the case with Nigeria in 2000 (Operation Focus Relief) and Burundi in 2007–2008. When the need for intervention arises, the two approaches often become blurred. Uganda, already a significant recipient, was provided additional US training and equipment for participation in AMISOM.

Given the uncertainties tied to contextual factors in Africa and the limits of US control mechanisms, the latter approach may appear relatively attractive. Why invest long term without any guarantee of return? Why not just wait until the need arises and then tailor security assistance to provide only the willing actors with what is necessary for a specific intervention? This would ostensibly eliminate some of the uncertainty inherent in screening and mitigate agency loss from shirking behavior. The United States, in fact, has moved in this direction over the past few years. ACOTA, in particular, has been utilized repeatedly for such “just in time” security assistance.

Significant benefits remain associated with the longer-term strategic approach. There is necessarily a balance between the two, but US capacity-building efforts “in whole have been too schizophrenic . . . hindered by a failure to sustain efforts over time.”<sup>171</sup> Liska speaks of consistency as a key to shaping recipient performance without having to resort to explicit sanctions. Eisenhardt proffers the value of the long-term relationship in terms of gaining a deeper understanding of agent interests and motivations.<sup>172</sup> Such understanding is vital. As Mott suggests, for security assistance to be effective, “a donor must fathom the recipient’s polity, economy, and culture and cause the recipient to adopt desired policies, military strategies, or other behaviors.”<sup>173</sup>

When donor and recipient interests do not completely align and risk implications are significant, the longer-term relationship may be an important determinant of recipient behavior. Ethiopia and Uganda, the two most willing contributors in the second case study, each had its own national objectives related to Somalia. Nonetheless, the performance of each exceeded that dictated purely by immediate state interests. Each faced significant risks and suffered numerous casualties, yet remained involved militarily far longer than desired or originally intended (Ethiopia wanted to depart after a few weeks; Uganda expected to leave within six months). The political leadership of both Ethiopia and Uganda, although perhaps not initially as sensitive as that of Nigeria, eventually felt the pressure of internal dissent. The Ugandan government, in particular, faced an increasingly angry public that complained about the siphoning of military resources from the country's own internal struggle with the Lord's Resistance Army.<sup>174</sup> Still, each state responded to US appeals, in part because they valued and sought to foster a broader security relationship with the United States. Critics of Ethiopian and Ugandan military actions in Somalia denigrate these states for intervening to gain favor with the United States. From the US perspective, having recipients that substantially value and are willing to accept significant risk to maintain a longer-term relationship is not necessarily a bad thing.

At the core of the agency cost calculus is ultimately the perceived value of employing surrogate force versus committing one's own forces. The key benefit of developing and then operating through a surrogate is ostensibly the avoidance of sponsor military involvement. This obviation, however, is rarely complete, and the need to supplement the surrogate with the sponsor's own military forces must be factored into the equation. Such a commitment may be necessary in terms of a political, operational, psychological, or deterrent effect. For the sponsor, limited military participation may also be useful in terms of monitoring surrogate performance.

The United States found it necessary, or at least of sufficient utility, to supplement its surrogates militarily in both case studies. In Liberia, the impetus and impact were largely political and psychological. US military liaisons attached to ECOMIL units also provided, among other benefits, a monitoring function. The most significant cost of the US military deployment was an increased risk of more extensive military involvement. In Somalia, the impetus can best be categorized as operational or in terms of enhancing military effectiveness of the surrogate. This was particularly



true regarding the use of US military assets for intelligence sharing and limited air strikes. Associated costs stemmed from the damage to the US image and credibility within the region and beyond from being perceived as inextricably linked to the unilateral Ethiopian invasion. Overall, the role of the sponsor's own military forces will vary greatly, but in most situations where the sponsor's interests truly are at stake, there will be a role. The sponsor must be realistic in addressing this facet of employing surrogate force.

## **Final Thoughts and Recommendations**

### **Revisiting the Linkage between Security Assistance and Surrogate Force**

This article attempts to address the question Is security assistance to Africa, as prescribed by current US policy, an effective hedge against more direct US military involvement in the region? It does so by considering the linkage between security assistance and surrogate force, a surrogate force being defined as an organization that serves the needs or interests of a secondary actor, the sponsor, by employing military power in place of the sponsor's own forces.

One should not take from this discussion that Africa's problems or threats to US strategic interests in Africa are best dealt with through military means. In most cases, military force, even if employed by a surrogate, is not the answer but sometimes it is. Given the nature of the African security environment, it is sometimes impossible to pursue broader economic, political, and humanitarian aims without a concomitant threat or application of arms. In discussing US security assistance efforts in 2001, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs William Bellamy noted, "None of the Administration's priorities in Africa can be realized in the presence of deadly conflict. We must help to stop the wars in Africa."<sup>175</sup>

Within Africa, creating surrogates involves the use of security assistance to develop state military forces that are both capable and willing to intervene in regional contingencies in which the United States perceives a national stake yet is hesitant to commit its own troops. Security assistance provides the basis for and shapes the sponsor-surrogate relationship. To be of value to the United States, the surrogate must not only act when required but must also do "the task in a desirable way." This may not always, but will often, require a degree of donor control over recipient behavior. Addressing security assistance from a mind-set of surrogate force devel-

opment as opposed to partner capacity building highlights the need for donor control associated with donor material support.

It is a serious mistake to assume that the capacity developed through US security assistance programs in Africa will necessarily be utilized in a manner that best supports US strategic goals. In other words, we cannot underestimate the need for donor control. Conversely, it is also wrong to overestimate the potential for US control over recipient behavior, despite the robust application of screening, monitoring, and contracting mechanisms. An important, albeit basic, conclusion derived from this analysis is that within the context of security assistance and surrogate force in Africa, agency is rarely if ever perfect. The recipient will always perform in a manner that is suboptimal, at least to some degree, from the perspective of the donor. Even in the best of situations, the donor and recipient will not have complete identity of interests or matching perceptions of acceptable risk. The donor-recipient relationship does not occur in a vacuum. It will always be subject to competing relationships. Understanding these dynamics, the strategist should be able to better contemplate and weigh agency costs associated with the implementation of US security assistance strategy in Africa. Referring to such costs, Susan Shapiro explains that “the trick, in structuring a principal-agent relationship, is to minimize them.”<sup>176</sup>

The following tentative recommendations are derived from the above analysis:

1. Despite the growing rhetoric of pan-Africanism and preference within Africa to operate through a regional security organization, the United States should maintain the focus of its security assistance programs at the bilateral level. It should attempt to align its efforts with the development of the ASF and support, through “creative” assistance, the regional and subregional mechanisms but not at the expense of strong bilateral donor-recipient relationships.

2. The United States should reconsider its predominant focus on anchor states. In terms of screening, the United States seems overeager to seek out the most powerful and influential states in the region. These states, however, are not necessarily the best surrogates in terms of willingness or appropriateness. Reliance on a few dominant states increases the potential for reverse leverage within a donor-recipient relationship. Still, it is unrealistic to bypass the subregional powers. The aim, instead, should be to seek greater balance and not overlook the Burundis of the region.


3. The United States must remain wary of disregarding surrogate shortcomings (e.g., questionable democratic practices, poor human rights records, and complicity in ongoing conflicts) out of perceived strategic necessity. Looking the other way on such issues may garner short-term gains but could hurt US security assistance efforts in the long term by skewing recipient perceptions of donor expectations. Further, the United States must be concerned not only that the surrogate performs the desired task but also that it performs the task in a desirable way. A military with a reputation of human rights abuses or dubious civilian control at home is, anecdotally, more apt to tarnish the sponsor's reputation when "acting for" in an external conflict.

4. The United States should weigh carefully the trend toward the "fire brigade" model of developing surrogates through security assistance. This may be adequate and necessary in some situations, but the long-term donor-recipient relationship remains important. When donor and recipient interests do not completely align and risk implications for the recipient are significant, the future value of such relationships is a key source of donor influence over recipient behavior.

5. The United States should assess more realistically and more creatively the potential utilization of its own military forces in the region. Announcing to the world, even if in hyperbole, that AFRICOM will be deemed a success if it "keeps American troops out of Africa for the next 50 years" is not particularly sound. Restraint in military affairs is commendable and desirable. Unreasoned restraint, however, is problematic, especially when national interests are at stake. Liberia in 2003 was nothing like Somalia in 1993, yet the specter of Somalia weighed heavily, probably too heavily, in US decision making. This is not a call for the United States to become embroiled in African conflicts, but if the United States expects African surrogates to accept significant risks, it may need to reconsider its own aversion to military involvement in the region.

6. Finally, the United States should exorcise "African solutions to African problems" from its official lexicon. The Clinton administration formally adopted the phrase in the mid 1990s as the basis for ACRI and subsequent security assistance programs.<sup>177</sup> The phrase has persisted within and has shaped US security policy in Africa ever since. Government rhetoric linked to the recent standup of AFRICOM reflects further promulgation. The concept, however, is no longer appropriate or particularly useful. Given the increasing perception of US strategic interests in Africa, many

African problems are also now US problems. Moreover, the United States cannot assume purely African solutions are adequate to protect and further US interests. Although just a phrase, the concomitant mind-set obviates sophisticated analysis connecting US security assistance to its strategic interests. It glosses over the role of US influence in shaping the behavior of the African states that receive and benefit from US security assistance. It wrongly assumes capacity building is enough. In sum, it misses the critical linkage between security assistance and surrogate force.

Through its various security assistance programs, the United States now seeks to build both the capability and willingness of African states to employ military force throughout the region in a manner that supports US strategic interests and precludes the requirement for direct US military intervention. The United States, in effect, is seeking to develop surrogates. Hopefully, this article is of modest value to the strategists involved in the process. It certainly does not provide a clear road map for success or unambiguous policy recommendations. That was not the intent nor would it have been entirely practical, given the nature of security assistance and the complexities of the African security environment. Recognizing the challenges of crafting a strategy for security assistance within any region, Hans Morgenthau contends that “When all the available facts have been ascertained, duly analyzed, and conclusions drawn from them, the final judgments and decisions can be derived only from subtle and sophisticated hunches. The best the formulator and executor . . . can do is to maximize the chances that his hunches turn out to be right.”<sup>178</sup> If AFRICOM hopes to utilize security assistance as an effective hedge against more-direct US military involvement and still pursue effectively US interests within the region, these hunches need to be pretty good. 

#### Notes

1. The Congressional Research Service (CRS) cites “Africa’s role in the Global War on Terror and potential threats posed by uncontrolled spaces; the growing importance of Africa’s natural resources, particularly energy resources; and ongoing concern for Africa’s many humanitarian crises, armed conflicts, and more general challenges, such as the devastating effect of HIV/AIDS” as driving the creation of AFRICOM. See Lauren Ploch, *Africa Command: US Strategic Interests and the Role of United States Military in Africa* (Washington, DC: CRS, August 2008), ii.

2. Comments by Principal Deputy Undersecretary of Defense Ryan Henry, 23 May 2007, quoted in Ploch, *Africa Command*, 7.

3. Ploch, *Africa Command*, 20, 27.

4. Unattributed interview with US military advisor to the African Union, April 2009.

5. William H. Mott IV, *United States Military Assistance: An Empirical Perspective* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002), 4–5. For the purposes of this article, the terms *military assistance* and *security assistance* are treated interchangeably.

6. Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management, *The Management of Security Assistance* (June 2001), 45.

7. Former Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Herman Cohen defines proxy war as “internal conflict that has been orchestrated and supported almost entirely from the outside.” See Herman J. Cohen, “US-Africa Policy as Conflict Management,” *S AIS Review* 21, no. 1 (Winter–Spring 2001): 241–42.

8. For example, see Björn Hallberg, “The US proxy war in East Africa,” *Silent Nation*, 28 December 2006, <http://silent-nation.com/2006/12/28/the-us-proxy-war-in-east-africa>.

9. Alvin Z. Rubenstein, *Moscow’s Third-World Strategy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 168.

10. Some commonly cited cases include reliance on the Hmong tribesmen in Laos, the South Vietnamese in Indochina, the Northern Alliance against the Taliban in Afghanistan, the Kosovo Liberation Army in Kosovo, the Contras in Nicaragua, and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) in Angola.

11. DoD, Joint Publication 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, October 2008, <http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jpreferencepubs.htm>.

12. Rubenstein, *Moscow’s Third-World Strategy*, 170.

13. George Liska, *The New Statecraft: Foreign Aid in American Foreign Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), 96.

14. *Ibid.*, 112–13.

15. According to Duncan Clarke et al., security assistance serves to promote regional stability, aid deterrence, help friendly countries defend themselves, advance US economic interests, maintain alliances, secure access to facilities and resources, gain political influence, and further understanding of American values and institutions. See Duncan L. Clarke, Jason D. Ellis, and Daniel B. O’Connor, *Send Guns and Money: Security Assistance and US Foreign Policy* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997), 2.

16. House, *US Security Assistance and Arms Transfer Policies for the 1980s: Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Affairs*, 97th Cong., 1st sess., 1981, 154.

17. House, *Foreign Economic and Military Assistance: Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Affairs*, 99th Cong., 1st sess., 1985, 129.

18. *Ibid.*, 133.

19. House, *US Security Assistance and Arms Transfer Policies for the 1980s: Hearings before the Subcommittee on International Security and Scientific Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Affairs*, 97th Cong., 1st sess., 1981, 91.

20. House, *Building the Capacity of Foreign Military Forces: Hearings before the Committee on Armed Services*, 109th Cong., 2nd sess., 2006, 4.

21. Bertil Dunér, “Proxy Intervention in Civil Wars,” *Journal of Peace Research* 18, no. 4 (1981): 353–61.

22. *Ibid.*, 357–58.

23. Mott, *United States Military Assistance*, 77, 24.

24. *Ibid.*, 10.

25. William H. Lewis, “Political Influence: The Diminished Capacity,” in *Arms Transfers in the Modern World*, eds. Stephanie G. Neuman and Robert E. Harkavy (New York: Praeger, 1979), 196.

26. Dunér, “Proxy Intervention in Civil Wars,” 358.

27. Susan P. Shapiro, “Agency Theory,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 31 (2005): 263–84.

28. To denote the actors within a security assistance relationship, I utilize the terms *donor* and *recipient*. The sponsor-surrogate relationship necessarily incorporates a donor-recipient relationship in that the sponsor provides some form of material support. The sponsor is distinguished from the donor, however, by the additional efforts to exert influence over the recipient in an effort to utilize the recipient’s military forces for donor purposes.

29. Nicole Itano, *Liberating Liberia: Charles Taylor and the Rebels Who Unseated Him*, Institute for Security Studies (ISS) Occasional Paper no. 82 (Pretoria, South Africa: ISS, November 2003).

30. Somini Sengupta, "UN Leader Calls for Peacekeeping Force in Liberia, Possibly Led by US," *New York Times*, 29 June 2003, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html>.

31. House, *US Policy toward Liberia: Hearing before the Subcommittee on Africa of the Committee on International Relations*, 108th Cong., 1st sess., 2003, 45.

32. Senate, *The Gulf of Guinea and US Strategic Energy Policy: Hearing before the Subcommittee on International Economic Policy, Export, and Trade Promotion of the Committee on Foreign Relations*, 108th Cong., 2nd sess., 2004, 1.

33. Colin Powell, quoted in Kirk Semple, "Bush Orders US Troops to Position off Liberian Coast," *New York Times*, 25 July 2003, <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/07/25/international/africa/25WIRE-Liberia.html>.

34. Richard W. Stevenson, "Bush Team Says It's Weighing Intervention in Liberia's Torment," *New York Times*, 2 July 2003.

35. Reed Kramer, "Bush Makes Symbolic Shift on Liberia, but Dying Continues," 28 July 2003, reposted from *allAfrica.com*, [http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Urgent\\_Action/apic-72903.html](http://www.africa.upenn.edu/Urgent_Action/apic-72903.html).

36. Christopher Marquis and Thom Shanker, "Pentagon Leaders Warn of Dangers for US in Liberia," *New York Times*, 25 July 2003, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html>.

37. Richard W. Stevenson, "Bush Seems to Favor Sending a Modest Force to Liberia," *New York Times*, 15 July 2003, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html>.

38. Stevenson, "Bush Team Says It's Weighing Intervention."

39. Eric Scmitt, "Pentagon to Assess Military Needs in Liberia," *New York Times*, 5 July 2003, <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/07/05/international/africa/05MILI.html>.

40. Stevenson, "Bush Seems to Favor Sending a Modest Force."

41. Senate, *The Nigerian Transition and the Future of US Policy: Hearings before the Committee on Foreign Relations*, 106th Cong., 1st sess., 1999, 25.

42. *Ibid.*, 15.

43. Eric G. Berman and Katie E. Sams, *African Peacekeepers: Partners or Proxies*, Pearson Papers no. 3 (Clemensport, Nova Scotia: Canadian Peacekeeping Press, 1998), 19. ECOMOG, or the ECOWAS Monitoring Group, was the name applied to the ECOWAS military force in the 1990s.

44. Adekeye Adebajo, "Mad Dogs and Glory: Nigeria's Interventions in Liberia and Sierra Leone," in *Gulliver's Troubles: Nigeria's Foreign Policy after the Cold War*, eds. Adekeye Adebajo and Abdul Raufu Mustapha (Scottsville, South Africa: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008), 198.

45. Testimony of William Bellamy, in House, *African Crisis Response Initiative, A Security Building Block: Hearing before the Subcommittee on Africa of the Committee on International Relations*, 107th Cong., 1st sess., 2001, 23.

46. Department of State (hereafter: DoS), "African Crisis Response Initiative" (on-the-record briefing, Washington, DC, 28 July 1997).

47. Senate, *Nigerian Transition and the Future of US Policy*, 1, 2.

48. *Ibid.*, 7.

49. *Ibid.*, 15.

50. Correspondence with Victor Nelson, former US defense attaché to Nigeria, March 2009.

51. Institute for National Strategic Studies, "Liberia—from Intervention to Stabilization," INSS Roundtable Series on Post-Conflict Stabilization and Crisis Management (summary of roundtable discussions, National Defense University, Washington, DC, 5 March 2004).

52. Correspondence with Michael Bittrick, former US military advisor to DoS, Bureau of African Affairs, March 2009.

53. Senate, *Weak States in Africa: US Policy in Liberia: Hearings before the Subcommittee on African Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations*, 107th Cong., 2nd sess., 2002, 28.

54. Testimony of Bellamy, 25.

55. US Agency for International Development (USAID), "U.S. Economic and Military Assistance to the World," US Overseas Loans and Grants, <http://quesdb.usaid.gov/gbk>.



56. DoS, *Congressional Presentation for Foreign Operations, Fiscal Year 2000* (Washington, DC: Bureau of Resource Management, 1999).
57. DoS, *Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations, Fiscal Year 2003* (Washington, DC: Bureau of Resource Management, 2002).
58. BBC News, "Transcript of Interview with President of Nigeria." This comment was primarily in reference to the United States and its Cold War policy in Liberia.
59. Correspondence with Victor Nelson.
60. Stevenson, "Bush Seems to Favor Sending a Modest Force."
61. Reed Kramer, "US-Africa Ties, Boosted by Money for Liberia, Face New Complications over Nigeria Sanctions," 18 November 2003, *allAfrica.com*, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200311180059.html>.
62. Chris Talbot, "Liberian War Restarts," *World Socialist Web Site*, <http://www.wsws.org/articles/2003/jul2003/libe-j21.shtml>.
63. Carolyn Cole and Maggie Farley, "Liberia Peacekeeping Plan Falter," *Los Angeles Times*, 30 July 2003, <http://articles.latimes.com/2003/jul/30/world/fg-liberia130>.
64. Eric Scmitt, "President Orders Troop Deployment to Liberian Coast," *New York Times*, 26 July 2003, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html>.
65. Ibid.
66. Maggie Farley, "West African States Approve Sending Peacekeepers to Liberia," *Los Angeles Times*, 1 August 2003, <http://articles.latimes.com/2003/aug/01/world/fg-liberia1>.
67. Scmitt, "President Orders Troop Deployment to Liberian Coast."
68. House, *US Policy toward Liberia*, 22.
69. Thom Shanker, "US Aims to Back Nigerians, Without Sending in More Marines," *New York Times*, 12 August 2003, <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/08/12/international/africa/12MILI.html>.
70. Blair A. Ross Jr., "The US Joint Task Force Experience in Liberia," *Military Review*, May–June 2005, 66.
71. Itano, "Liberating Liberia."
72. Tim Weiner, "200 US Marines Land in Liberia to Aid African Force," *New York Times*, 15 August 2003, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html>.
73. House, *US Policy toward Liberia*, 9.
74. As one analyst points out, several Marines contracted malaria, and some later died from the illness. Correspondence with Stephen Burgess, Air War College, March–April 2009.
75. Ross, "US Joint Task Force Experience in Liberia," 67.
76. House, *US Policy toward Liberia*, 22.
77. See Ross, "US Joint Task Force Experience in Liberia," 60–67.
78. See Mott, *United States Military Assistance*.
79. Jonathon Clayton, "Liberia Q&A: Why United States is not Sending Troops," *TimesOnline*, 30 July 2003, [http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/tools\\_and\\_services/specials/article853580.ece](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/tools_and_services/specials/article853580.ece).
80. Kathleen M. Eisenhardt, "Agency Theory: An Assessment and Review," *Academy of Management Review* 14, no. 1 (January 1989): 71.
81. Ibid., 58.
82. Unattributed interview with Nigerian military officer, February 2009.
83. Ibid.
84. House, *US Policy toward Liberia*, 45.
85. Ken Menkhaus, "The Crisis in Somalia: Tragedy in Five Acts," *African Affairs* 106, no. 204 (2007): 357–90.
86. Ibid., 364–65.
87. Ibid., 365. The CIC has also been known as the Union of Islamic Courts (UIC). See Testimony of Jendayi E. Frazer in Senate, *Exploring a Comprehensive Stabilization, Reconstruction, and Counter-terrorism Strategy for Somalia*. For consistency, this article utilizes CIC throughout.

88. Mark Mazzetti, "US Signals Backing for Ethiopian Incursion into Somalia," *New York Times*, 27 December 2006, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/27/world/africa/27africa.html>. Also, see Menkhaus, "Crisis in Somalia," 368–89.

89. Chris Tomlinson, "Somalia's Islamic Extremists Set US Back," *Washington Post*, 6 June 2006, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/06/06/AR200606060777>.

90. Menkhaus, "Crisis in Somalia," 369; and Tomlinson, "Somalia's Islamic Extremists Set US Back."

91. Quoted in Tomlinson, "Somalia's Islamic Extremists Set US Back."

92. David Gollust, "US Defends Somalia Peacekeeping Plan," *VOA News*, 30 November 2006, <http://www.voanews.com/english/archive/2006-11/2006-11-30-voa3.cfm>.

93. Testimony of Ken Menkhaus, in Senate, *Exploring a Comprehensive Stabilization, Reconstruction, and Counter-terrorism Strategy for Somalia*.

94. Senate, *Exploring a Comprehensive Stabilization, Reconstruction, and Counter-terrorism Strategy for Somalia*.

95. Quoted in Tomlinson, "Somalia's Islamic Extremists Set US Back."

96. Jeffrey Gettleman, "Ethiopia Hits Somali Targets, Declaring War," *New York Times*, 25 December 2006, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/25/world/africa/25somalia.html>.

97. *United Nations Security Council Resolution 1725*, 6 December 2006.

98. *Ibid.*

99. The AU PSC authorized an earlier version of IGASOM in February 2005, prior to the rise of the CIC, but this proposal stalled. The version endorsed by the UNSC with the additional restrictions on participation was approved by the AU PSC in September 2006. See Cecilia Hull and Emma Svensson, *African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM): Exemplifying African Union Peacekeeping Challenges*, FOI-R-2596-SE (Stockholm: Swedish Defence Research Agency, October 2008), 22–24.

100. At the time, the IGAD consisted of Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, and Uganda.

101. Testimony of David Shinn, former US ambassador to Ethiopia, in Senate, *Exploring a Comprehensive Stabilization, Reconstruction, and Counter-terrorism Strategy for Somalia*.

102. Security Council Report, *Somalia* (New York: UNSC, December 2006), <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org>.

103. Testimony of Menkhaus, in Senate, *Exploring a Comprehensive Stabilization, Reconstruction, and Counter-terrorism Strategy for Somalia*.

104. Jeffrey Gettleman and Mark Mazzetti, "Somalia's Islamists and Ethiopia Gird for War," *New York Times*, 9 December 2006, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/14/world/africa/14somalia.html>.

105. John Prendergast and Colin Thomas-Jensen, "Blowing the Horn," in *Beyond Humanitarianism: What You Need to Know about Africa and Why it Matters*, eds. Patricia Dorff and Princeton N. Lyman (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2007), 136.

106. Testimony of Menkhaus, in Senate, *Exploring a Comprehensive Stabilization, Reconstruction, and Counter-terrorism Strategy for Somalia*.

107. DoS, *Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations, Fiscal Year 2006* (Washington, DC: Bureau of Resource Management, 2005), 189–90. Note: the United States began providing more substantial ESF to AU in FY07. See DoS, *Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations, Fiscal Year 2007* (Washington, DC: Bureau of Resource Management, 2006), 339.

108. Interview with US military advisor to AU, April 2009.

109. Prendergast and Thomas-Jensen, "Blowing the Horn," 139.

110. Berman and Sams, *African Peacekeepers*, 7.

111. DoS, *Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations, Fiscal Year 2002* (Washington, DC: Bureau of Resource Management, 2001).

112. USAID, "U.S. Economic and Military Assistance to the World."

113. DoS, *Congressional Budget Justification* (2002).
114. USAID, "U.S. Economic and Military Assistance to the World."
115. DoS, *Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations, Fiscal Year 2003* (Washington, DC: Bureau of Resource Management, 2002), 188.
116. Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), *Integrating 21st Century Development and Security Assistance: Final Report of the Task Force on Nontraditional Security Assistance* (Washington, DC: CSIS, January 2008), 5.
117. DoS, *Congressional Budget Justification* (2003), 187.
118. *Ibid.*, 188.
119. DoS, *Congressional Budget Justification* (2007), 224. Note: Based on IMET and FMF.
120. DoS, *Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations, Fiscal Year 2005* (Washington, DC: Bureau of Resource Management, 2004), 244.
121. See Tim Murithi, "The African Union's Evolving Role in Peace Operations: The African Union Mission in Burundi, the African Union Mission in Sudan, and the African Union Mission in Somalia," *African Security Review* 17, vol. 1 (2008): 70–82.
122. DoS, *Congressional Budget Justification* (2005), 243.
123. DoS, *Congressional Budget Justification for Foreign Operations, Fiscal Year 2008* (Washington, DC: Bureau of Resource Management, 2007).
124. DoS, *Congressional Budget Justification* (2006), 259.
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161. Interview with DoS official, Bureau of African Affairs, April 2009.
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166. Dunér, "Proxy Intervention in Civil Wars," 359.
167. For discussion of the concept of agency costs, see Shapiro, "Agency Theory," 265.
168. *Ibid.*, 28.
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173. Mott, *Military Assistance*, 17.
174. Andrew McGregor, "Into the Somali Void: Somalia's Islamists Target Uganda's Peacekeepers," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 1, no. 3 (May–June 2007).
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177. Madeleine K. Albright, secretary of state, "US Policy toward Africa" (address, George Mason University, Fairfax, VA, 19 March 1998).
178. Hans Morgenthau, "A Political Theory of Foreign Aid," *American Political Science Review* 56, no. 2 (June 1962), 301–9. Morgenthau's statement is in reference to foreign aid, of which he considers "military foreign aid" to be one element.