

US POLICY IN AFRICA | *WHAT'S NEW ?*



War in northern Mali, chaos in Libya, mobilisation against Boko Haram, attacks in Tunisia and Kenya... violence is engulfing large parts of the continent. But what about US policy in Africa? Eight months after the first United States-Africa Summit (August 2014), marked by the announcement of two new programs, there have been no real changes. At most an inflection: emphasis is placed on the development of trade and investment, and not only to refute talks of the "militarisation" of US policy in Africa or strengthening the stability of the continent. This may be the main lesson of the initiatives announced. The United States wants to find ways to further benefit from the growth of a space that cannot be reduced to conflict and violence.

Africa is generally understood as a peripheral space for American power, a feeling reinforced by the prominence given to Africa in major US strategic documents and the announcement in the autumn of 2011 of a policy shift towards the Asia-Pacific region (1). Although Africa has never been at the top of Washington's priorities, renewed interest has however been noticeable for several years around an indirect approach based on a minimal footprint, interventions through partners and, in the long term the development of local capabilities (2). In this regard, the United States/Africa Summit in August 2014, bringing together about 50 African heads of State and qualified by many as historic, fits into this dynamic with two new programs aimed at strengthening the resources of African armed forces. But far more than these, and while Africa is expected to have a population of 2 billion in 2050 with a GDP comparable to that of Europe (3), it was dominated by the promotion of development and economic exchanges.

| A-Prep and SGI: two not very convincing announcements

In the field of strengthening peace and security, the US/Africa summit in August 2014 was marked by two announcements. The first concerns the launch of the *Security Governance Initiative* (SGI), through which the United States wants to increase its aid to six countries in Africa (Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Tunisia) by releasing in the first year, \$65 million (€48 million) in order to "improve *security sector institution capacity*". Based on a logic of partnership and focussed on sustainability (4), the SGI should be based on regular assessments and the training of a dedicated team within the State Department, supported by representatives from the Defense Department, USAID, Justice Department, and the Department of *Homeland Security*.

The second announcement concerns the *African Peacekeeping Rapid Response Partnership* (APRRP, in short A-Prep), a \$110 million (€82 million euros) aid initiative spread over a three to five year period and intended to assist in the establishment of an African rapid response peacekeeping force with the support of Ghana, Ethiopia, Senegal, Tanzania, Rwanda and Uganda (5). More specifically, this assistance should make it possible to strengthen, in each of these countries but also in technical functions at the African Union headquarters, capacity in the fields of military training, equipment maintenance and repair, institutional support and interoperability with other peacekeeping forces located in Africa. For their part, the African partners undertake to ensure that their soldiers and equipment can be deployed quickly, and express their intention to participate in deployments within missions of the United Nations or the African Union to respond to emerging crises.

(1) Josette Durrieu, " Comptes-rendus de la Commission des Affaires étrangères, de la défense et des forces armées " (Sénat), session of 9 July 2014 (<http://www.senat.fr/compte-rendu-commissions/20140707/etr.html>).

(2) See: Maya Kandel (dir.), *La stratégie américaine en Afrique*, Études de l'IRSEM, 2014, No.36.

(3) Institut Montaigne, *Afrique-France : mettre en pratique le co-développement*, December 2013 report, p. 51.

(4) After the first year, the United States plans to provide " *additional funding commensurate with the needs of the program and according to its extension to other countries*" ("Fact sheet on the security initiative between the United States and six African partners", Office of the Press Secretary of the White House, 6 August 2014, <http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/french/texttrans/2014/08/20140807305241.html#axzz3YA7j7XU4>).

(5) Although Uganda is not a major contributor to United Nations peace operations, it is an leading ally of the United States in Somalia, and even one of the few sub-Saharan Africa partners considered in Washington as having professional and competent armed forces. Moreover, in 2 011, the United States sent a hundred military "advisors" to the Uganda to hunt down the leader of the *Lord Resistance Army*, before strengthening them in 2014 with 150 soldiers from the special forces and four CV-22 Osprey aircraft.

Contribution to Peacekeeping from the countries covered by the A-Prep - United Nations (February 2015)

Country	Contribution (troops and police)	World Ranking (Africa)
Ethiopia	7 858	4 (1)
Rwanda	5 660	5 (2)
Senegal	3 079	7 (3)
Ghana	3 012	8 (4)
Tanzania	2 278	13 (8)
Uganda	39	85 (33)

Sources | <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/contributors.shtml>

The necessary funding for the deployment of these two initiatives has been requested for the fiscal year 2016. The State Department has requested \$110 million for the A-Prep and \$16.9 million for the SGI whereas the Department of Defense requested \$47 million for the SGI (6). An uncertainty remains however since the budgets requested have not yet been approved while the commitments necessary for the President's initiatives and for voting the annual budget are difficult to achieve before a House of Representatives with a Republican majority and desires to limit the deficit (7). Moreover, as researchers Alexis Arief and Carla E. Humud remarked in February about Tunisia, the scope and the implementation of the SGI is not clear (8) and, more generally, this initiative raises questions on the efficiency of cooperation between the various departments concerned. Indeed, while in a report published in 2014 the *United States Government Accountability Office* (GAO) noted genuine cooperation between the various agencies involved in the *Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Partnership* (TSCTP) - albeit regretting the lack of integration of the Justice Department, which played a major role in the establishment of the rule of law - (9), the authors of a previous report dated 2008 deplored the absence of an integrated strategy between the State Department, USAID and the Department of Defense (10).

But the main criticism concerns the amount allocated to the two initiatives. "Unfortunately, believe two researchers from Brookings, *the funding levels announced for both A-Prep and SGI are likely too small to generate enough momentum for lasting impacts. The Obama administration states that in future years, "funding will be commensurate with maturing program needs and expansion to additional countries," but only*

(6) *Congressional Budget Justification Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs. Fiscal Year 2016*, 2 February 2015, pp. 115-116 (<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/236395.pdf>). *Counterterrorism Partnership Fund. Department of Defense Budget. Fiscal Year 2016*, March 2015, p. 7 (http://comptroller.defense.gov/Portals/45/Documents/defbudget/fy2016/FY2016_CTPF_J-Book.pdf).

(7) Whereas the Department of Defence had requested \$2.5 billion for the fiscal year 2015 for counterterrorism, only \$800 million was allocated (*Counterterrorism Partnership Fund.*) *Department of Defense Budget. Fiscal Year 2016, op. cit.*, p. 1). It should be noted that an additional \$500 million was granted after the 2015 budget vote, to fight against the Islamic State organization in Iraq and Syria, as well as financing the training and equipment of the Syrian opposition. On the other hand, between the amounts authorised and the amounts actually disbursed, there is also a shift to take into account: for the TSCTP for example, over the period 2009-2013, only 50% of the allocated credits were spent.

(8) Alexis Arief and Carla E. Humud, *Political Transition in Tunisia*, Congressional Research Service Report, RS21866, 10 February 2015, p. 16 (<https://www.fas.org/sqp/crs/row/RS21666.pdf>).

(9) GAO, *Combating Terrorism. U.S. Efforts in Northwest Africa Would Be Strengthened by Enhanced Program Management*, June 2014, pp. 24-25 (<http://www.gao.gov/assets/670/664337.pdf>).

(10) GAO, *Combating Terrorism. Actions Needed to Enhance Implementation of Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership*, July 2008 (<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d08860.pdf>).

\$65 million has been allocated for the first year of SGI, which averages out to just over \$10 million per country' (11). Although: far from taking place in an environment from which the United States are absent, the A-Prep and the SGI come on top of multi-layered programs already existing.

| Two programs for what gain?

Since the attacks of 11 September 2001, Africa has become one of the fronts of the "global war on terror". With the *Pan Sahel Initiative* (PSI), launched in 2002, the United States undertook to establish a company specialising in four Sahel countries: Mauritania, Mali, Niger and Chad. The same year, a presence was established in Djibouti, welcoming more than 2,500 men and becoming the main American base for the deployment of drones. In 2005, the PSI was replaced by the *Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Initiative* (TSCI), which a year later became a partnership (TSCTP), in order to combat terrorism on both sides of the Sahara and to strengthen the stability of the countries concerned through a global approach involving, in addition to the four Sahelian member-countries of the PSI: Algeria, Burkina Faso (since 2009), Cameroon (since January 2014) (12), Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal and Tunisia (13). *Last but not Least*, in 2007, a regional military command for Africa was created (AFRICOM), a first in American history, based in Stuttgart because of the refusal from African States to welcome it on their soil.

However, U.S. involvement dates back longer. Throughout the 1990s, and at the same time looking for the development of personal relationships and networks between high-ranking African and American military leaders, successive American administrations sought to strengthen the military tools on the continent through several programs (14). Between 1991 and 1998, even before the turning-point brought about by the two bombings against U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania (15), arms supplies and training for Africa accounted for more than \$227 million. In the field of mine clearance, from 1995 especially, the United States implemented a program to develop practicable infrastructures, systems and technologies. A year later, the State Department put in place ACRI (*Africa Crisis Response Initiative*), designed to strengthen the crisis management capacity of willing African states. This became ACOTA (*Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance*) and in 2004, it helped train 248,000 peacekeeping soldiers from 25 African countries, in addition to 1,100 police through IPPOS (*International Police Peacekeeping Operations Support*). But the counterinsurgency aid programs, in particular, under the supervision of the American Ambassador stationed in the country concerned, constituted the largest component of American-African cooperation, whether

(11) Dane Erickson and Stephen Friend, "The U.S. - Africa Leaders Summit: Security Initiatives Are Critical to Cementing Africa's Gains", *Brookings*, 14 August 2014 (<http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/africa-in-focus/posts/2014/08/14-security-initiatives-africa-erickson-friend>). "Unfortunately, the funding levels announced for both A-Prep and SGI are likely too small to generate enough momentum for lasting impacts. . The Obama administration states that in future years, "funding will be commensurate with maturing program needs and expansion to additional countries," but only \$65 million has been allocated for the first year of SGI, which averages out to just over \$10 million per country."

(12) GAO, *Combating Terrorism. U.S. Efforts in Northwest Africa Would Be Strengthened by Enhanced Program Management*, op. cit.

(13) Béangère Rouppert and Antonin Tisseron, "De la Méditerranée au Sahel : la sécurité d'abord", published : Abdenour Benantar and Salim Chena (dir.), *La sécurité en Méditerranée occidentale face aux bouleversements au Maghreb et au Sahara*, Paris, L'Harmattan-La Bibliothèque de l'Iremmo, 2015. Antonin Tisseron, "Lutte contre le terrorisme dans le Sahara : la militarisation comme solution ?", *Recherches Internationales* No.97, October-December 2013, pp. 111-128.

(14) Niagalé Bagayoko-Penone, *Afrique : les stratégies françaises et américaines*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 2003, pp. 421-425.

(15) Maya Kandel (dir.), *États-Unis : quelle transition stratégique ? La politique de défense sous Obama, entre dynamiques internes et évolutions internationales*, Études de l'IRSEM, 2013, No.29, p. 32.

through regional programs or bilateral agreements involving: provision of equipment, training (16) and other military services; provision of advice, assistance or training as part of training exercises carried out by the American forces themselves; combined exercises.

In this context, what is the added value of the A-Prep and SGI programs? The \$110 million earmarked for the constitution of an African rapid reaction peacekeeping force represents a large sum: a quarter of the funds estimated for the year 2015 by the State Department in the field of *Peacekeeping Operations* (and even almost all of the expenditure envisaged once the *Overseas Contingency Operations* (OCO) expenditure is removed) and one fifth of the requests for the fiscal year 2016 (a quarter once the OCO are removed) (17). Similarly, the African Standby Force will enter into action in 2015 and recent commitments from African contingents have recalled the efforts that remain to be done for the reinforcement of the capabilities to carry out peacekeeping operations in very violent environments, to which the Blue Helmets are regularly confronted (18). Finally, the A-Prep and the SGI constitute part of the renewed attention towards the African continent after the attack on the US Consulate in Benghazi in September 2012, followed by the kidnapping of over 200 schoolgirls by Boko Haram in April 2014 (19).

But, on the substance, the A-Prep and the SGI do not represent a break at all, both for the approach and the spaces concerned on a continent where, for several years, US aid is increasing (20). As evidenced by the countries benefiting from these two announcements and the budget requests from the Department of Defense to fight against terrorism for the fiscal year 2016 (21), there is a willingness to contribute more strongly to the fight against Boko Haram, the continuation of the "*renewed interest*" (22) for some regions or some countries in North Africa and West Africa, but East Africa - specifically the region of the Horn - remains the security priority for the United States. Similarly, the States of sub-Saharan Africa concerned were, with the exception of Tanzania and especially Niger, already identified by the Department of Defense in August 2001 as the "*key states*" or the "*partner states*" on which to rely for developing relationships (23).

(16) The IMET program (*International Military Education and Training*) was created in 1976. It was aimed at training local and foreign personnel following a bilateral approach and through grants to foreign governments, who themselves chose the courses to be taken by their nationals (Niagalé Bagayoko-Penone, *op. cit.*, pp. 425-426). In addition to IMET, a few years ago the United States launched the AMEP program (*Africa Military Education Program*), focused - in October 2013 - on the training of instructors in Botswana, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Malawi, Nigeria and Niger (Colonel Matt Sousa, "Doing Better With Less - Recommendations for U.S. Army in Africa", *The DISAM Journal*, 2014, <http://www.disamjournal.org/articles/doing-better-with-less-recommendations-for-the-us-army-in-africa-1246>).

(17) *Congressional Budget Justification Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs. Fiscal Year 2016, op. cit.*, p. 114. Note that between 2015 and 2016 there is a willingness to strongly reduce the OCO in favour of the ongoing programs.

(18) Minutes of the meeting of 17 February 2015, of the Committee on peacekeeping operations (<http://www.un.org/press/fr/2015/agpk219.doc.htm>).

(19) See: Richard Reeve and Zoë Pelter, *From New Frontier to New Normal: Counter-terrorism operations in the Sahel-Sahara*, Oxford Research Group, August 2014.

(20) Maya Kandel, "La stratégie américaine en Afrique : les risques et contradictions du "light footprint" ", in Maya Kandel (dir.), *La stratégie américaine en Afrique, op. cit.*, p. 13-31, p. 25.

(21) Involving \$ 262 million for the Maghreb-Sahel (113 million granted for FY 2015), 338 million for the basin of Lake Chad (133 million granted for FY 2015) and 669 million for East Africa (220 million granted for FY 2015) .

(22) Maya Kandel, *art. cit.*, p. 15.

(23) Niagalé Bagayoko-Penone, *op. cit.*, pp. 257-258.

| Growing economic ambitions

With regard to the range of actions already undertaken, the purpose of these two programs seems to be, ultimately, above all political. With African leaders seeking increased investments in favour of strengthening security, the A-Prep and the SGI make it possible to respond positively, while reaffirming Washington's priorities and specifically targeting the beneficiaries. On the other hand, all the observers of the United States-Africa Summit agree that the heart of this great meeting consisted of economic issues, where Obama sometimes courted Africa as an emerging player, and sometimes sought to engage Americans on the opportunities of the African continent. As proof, the \$175 million pledged in security matters is greatly outweighed by the \$ 33 billion in public-private investments announced at the end of the Summit, whether they relate to the development of trade between the United States and Africa, with contracts being signed, or the *Power Africa* initiative, designed to connect 60 million African households to the power grid (24).

As was the case for security, the importance of the economy is not new. In 2000, the law known as the *African Growth and Opportunity Act* (AGOA) was passed to support trade with forty sub-Saharan African countries by facilitating their access to the US market, on the condition that they would follow the principles of the market economy, good governance and respect for human rights (25). However, since Barack Obama came into office, this law has becoming increasingly important. Two years after a presidential campaign taking place in a context of financial crisis, the economic dimension was placed at the heart of the Obama's national security strategy in 2010. Thus, Hillary Clinton wrote a memo to all US embassies instructing them to concentrate their priorities on helping American companies access the local market and, in 2012 and 2013, two initiatives were launched: *Doing Business in Africa*, to encourage economic stakeholders to engage in the continent by relying on the African diaspora living in the United States; and *Trade Africa* with the members of East African Communities (26).

The 2015 *National Security Strategy* is indicative of this Africa seen through the articulation between security efforts, national security, economic interests, and local development. The first words of the section dedicated to this subcontinent are " *Africa is rising* ", while the editors clearly stress the role of the United States towards development, democratisation and the fight against insecurity on a continent labelled as probably the " *world's next major centre of global growth* " (27). Moreover, on 8 April, Barack Obama and several senior administration officials met with fifteen members of the private sector, whose companies are present in Africa, to discuss boosting trade and investment with Africa, in the continuity of the August 2014 Summit, and to report back to the administration with the results (28).

(24) "United States-Africa Summit: "Obama Announces \$ 33 billion investment", *RFI*, 6 August 2014

(<http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20140806-sommet-afrique-etats-unis-obama-agoa-investissements-takunda-chingonzo/>).

(25) The AGOA Forum, during which the future of a law expiring in September 2015 must be decided, is planned for August in Gabon.

(26) "FACT SHEET: "The Doing Business in Africa Campaign", White House, 5 August 2014 (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/08/05/fact-sheet-doing-business-africa-campaign>) and "FACT SHEET: " Trade Africa ", White House, 1 July 2013 (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/07/01/fact-sheet-trade-africa>).

(27) *National Security Strategy*, White House, edition of February 2015 ("world's next major centre of global growth").

(28) Andrew Westbury, "Africa in the news: U.S. President's Advisory Council on Doing Business in Africa releases recommendations, responds to Garissa Kenya...", blog *Africa in Focus* (Brookings), 10 April 2015 (<http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/africa-in-focus>). The report is available at http://www.trade.gov/pac-dbia/docs/PAC-DBIA-Report_Final.pdf.

| What is the impact for France?

Although the development of a continent with strong demographics is considered to be one of the answers to social, economic and security challenges, an increasing attention to economic interests is not without risks. Along with other partners, the United States is confronted with the difficulty of reconciling counter-terrorism with development and the promotion of democracy, which may indeed be accompanied by a relaxation in the requirements of good governance, fight against corruption, heritage status, or reform of leadership practices. At the United States/Africa Summit, several voices, echoing the concerns of the NGO *Human Rights Watch* or the Republican Ed Royce, Chairman of the Committee of Foreign Affairs in the Chamber, also deplored a lack of emphasis on these matters, referring to a more global reflection on the inability of certain countries to control their entire territory and, more generally, their shortcomings in the collection and equitable redistribution of resources.

A second source of doubt lies in the impact on relations with European partners, and France in the first instance. But on that subject, it is clear that the (re)affirmation of American economic ambitions in Africa is unlikely to disrupt a partnership based on mutual complementarity and aid having quickly overshadowed the expectation - or criticism - at the onset of the Serval operation in January 2013 (29). As with regards economic competition, the threat for French companies comes chiefly from Asia, both in the markets where they are present and in those they want to enter, and the main challenge is that of increasing their competitiveness and investment. Finally, competition for energy resources has been greatly reduced thanks to the decrease in US imports from Africa resulting from greater imports from the Gulf and the "shale revolution" (30). Finally, more than around trade, the main stumbling block could be the acknowledged growing influence of the United States in francophone Africa, as evidenced by the third edition of the African Land Forces Summit for army chiefs of staff, which was held for the first time, in February, in a French-speaking country, in this case in Senegal. Except for the fact that exclusivity, seen from Paris, belongs to the past.

Ultimately, the main issue in the short and medium term rests on the effectiveness of the programs implemented to enable Africans to ensure their security. Whether it is the limits of the light footprint, consequences on the regional power structures of an approach based on a logic of delegation giving some flexibility to the beneficiary countries, including vis-à-vis the United States and their expectations in other areas or on other issues, several works have already been published. This notwithstanding, in the immediate future, the discourse on appropriation, contractualisation and the response to aspirations, should not obscure the meagre operational record after several decades of cooperation with the African armies, whether by the United States or France, and the need for a real return on experience allowing stakeholders to learn from the political and military lessons of past. And this is perhaps why the issue of synergies and cooperation is central, since the French and Americans share the same vision of the African continent, the hazards resulting from the weakness of the States involved and the need for security to allow the necessary development to take place. Also provided, however, that Africans ask themselves what has not worked and the reasons for the current situation.

(29) In particular: Jean-Pierre Chevènement et Gérard Larcher, *Mali : comment gagner la paix ?*, Rapport d'information, Sénat, 16 April 2013 ; Yves Fromion et Gwendal Rouillard, *Rapport d'information sur l'évolution du dispositif militaire français en Afrique et sur le suivi des opérations en cours*, Assemblée nationale, 9 July 2014.

(30) Between July and September 2014, Nigeria did not export a single barrel to US refineries (Stéphane Ballong, "Panique sur la planète pétrole", *Jeune Afrique*, 3 November 2014). See also Peter J. Pham, "AFRICOM's Evolution from Bush to Obama", in Maya Kandel (ed.), *La stratégie américaine en Afrique*, op. cit., pp. 32-46.



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