Title
GLOBAL FLOWS: TERROR, OIL AND STRATEGIC PHILANTHROPY


Author
Sandra T. Barnes
Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania
Fellow, Stanford Humanities Center, Stanford University (2004-05)

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GLOBAL FLOWS: TERROR, OIL AND STRATEGIC PHILANTHROPY

At this moment of international crisis Africa is assuming a new and critical role in global affairs. Contrary to popular opinion, United States involvement in Africa is not continuing its post-Cold War decline. In profound ways the opposite is the case. American policy makers and business leaders see in Africa a special set of threats, a special set of dangers, and a special set of challenges. This essay focuses on three elements in the US response to these perceived threats and challenges, and it looks especially at what this response means for people on the African continent itself.

First, American policy makers perceive a double danger: the threat of terrorism and the risk of an interrupted oil supply. Their response is to establish a new and more substantial kind of military presence in Africa. The quality of the response, and particularly the political logic that legitimates it, are different from anything that has come before. This essay examines the consequences of this response for African nations, especially the security and political issues they raise.

Second, corporate leaders see great opportunities for profit in Africa, but they also see special problems: weaknesses of infrastructure and political order as they relate to large scale business endeavors. In response, corporations are creating their own kind of interventions. They are using strategic philanthropy so they can relate directly to local communities and civil society within Africa. It means they are making their own independent contributions to community development. This essay asks what the implications of these major business initiatives are for African societies.

The third concern is with the American media and its response to the major changes just described. With few exceptions television networks and newspapers are paying little attention to these new forms of military and business activity. It is important to examine that silence and to ask why it exists and what its implications are for the future.

The Growing Importance of Africa in US Policy

The year 2002 marked a major post-Cold War shift in US relations to Africa. In that year officials of both the Pentagon and State Department defined Africa as a significant potential threat to American national security (Volman 2003b:573; Goldstein 2004). Earlier the US House of Representatives Subcommittee on Africa had observed that the previous policy of putting Africa on the back burner could no longer be the case, and later some of Washington’s most experienced Africa policy makers confirmed at a bipartisan meeting that the continent was being seen in a new way (US House of Representatives 2001; CSIS 2004). The reasons for elevating Africa to the level of national security threat were terrorism and oil.

The case for terrorism was made by Paul Wolfowitz, Deputy Secretary of Defense, when he addressed military officers and government officials from forty-two African countries. He confirmed that Africa is growing in importance and he stressed that it is imperative to build military institutions. Institutions play a vital role in Wolfowitz’s world view. To Africa’s military leaders he said, “I emphatically disagree” with people who apply historical and cultural determinism to the future of countries. “I believe that
strengthening institutions in Africa has got to be the key to moving forward” because
African states must participate effectively in defeating the “scourge of global terrorism”
(Wolfowitz 2004).

The case for oil as a national security issue was made by both the Assistant
Secretary of State for Africa, Walter Kansteiner, and the Deputy Assistant Secretary of
Defense for African Affairs, Michael Westphal. Theirs were critical moves because the
term, US national security, opens the way to the use of military approaches for protecting
oil production (Volman 2003b:573). The events of September 11, 2001, and the
subsequent war in Iraq, gave emphasis to the facts that this country cannot do without
external oil supplies and that African oil and natural gas are critical elements in the
supply chain.

**Oil and National Security**

The US consumes one-quarter of the world’s oil supply every day. Total production is
eighty million barrels of oil per day of which the US uses twenty million barrels. Much of
it—13 to 18 percent—comes from West and Central Africa. Within ten years the US
National Intelligence Council predicts it may reach 25 percent, with most coming from
Nigeria, Angola, Gabon, and the newcomer Equatorial Guinea (Ebel 2004:114; Goldwyn
and Morrison 2004:15; *Africa Action* 2003). Currently, due to warfare in the Middle East,
Nigeria produces more oil than Iraq, and Angola half that amount (US Department of
Energy 2004).

The amount invested in the oil trade is immense. Last year the US spent $17.8
billion on African oil. This amounted to 70 percent of all US purchases from Africa (US
Department of Commerce 2004). The US does not just buy the oil, however; in many
ways it is dependent on African oil. In the past 10 years, US oil companies invested $30
to $40 billion in West and Central African oil operations, an investment they wish to
protect. If Angolan or Nigerian supplies are disrupted there are few, if any, replacements
outside the Persian Gulf. More than 100,000 jobs in the US are linked to African
oil—many of them in Texas, Louisiana, and California (Goldwyn and Morrison 2004:8,
16). And the second leading US export to Africa, worth $717.3 million annually, is oil
and gas equipment (US Department of Commerce 2004:9).

The main problem is that the supply is constantly vulnerable. Oil theft, vandalism,
seizures of oil facilities, and riots all reduce oil supplies. Disruptions and strikes, such as
those in Nigeria in 2003, decreased production by as much as 800,000 barrels a day
(Goldwyn and Morrison 2004:16). Illegal siphoning provides militias with a way to
secure money to purchase arms with which to engage in criminal activities or protest
various inequities. Foreign oil workers are kidnapped and held hostage to meet the
demands of dissidents. In Angola’s province of Cabinda and Nigeria’s Niger Delta—the
two largest oil-producing regions on the continent—there is intense anger that erupts in
violence against the oil industry and national governments over the unfair sharing of oil
revenue, unemployment, and the destruction of the living and productive environment.

The well-known writer Ken Saro-Wiwa is one of many activists who lost their lives for
engaging in such protests in the Niger Delta.

Local military forces are often used to quell this conflict, but weak governments
do not necessarily bring stability. The consequences may be higher gas prices for
consumers or, worse, discontinued operations by oil companies because they will not
function in conditions of extreme high-risk, nor tolerate conditions that eliminate profit and undermine their investments (Goldwyn and Morrison 2004:12-15).

The oil companies want to regularize the oil supply, and an argument has been made that good governance and transparency on the African side are the key. Many experts worry that the US does not have an effective energy policy with respect to Africa, nor the political will to create one. They want an energy policy that is tied to conditions that are as strict as those of the Millennium Challenge Account, but this is unlikely to happen (Ebel 2004:114-16, 125-26). Both a US Senate committee and Transparency International have drawn attention to this problem, pointing out that oil companies themselves are not transparent. Corruption in the form of bribes, unpublished fees, and contributions plague every level of the African oil industry from western oil executives, to middlemen, to local officials (Stancich 2004).

Corruption goes even further. During Senate hearings in July it was revealed a US Bank turned a blind eye to the flow of suspicious money in the accounts of leaders of an oil-rich African country and in violation of Patriot Act provisions. Leaders of Equatorial Guinea had some sixty accounts and CDs amounting to between $400 and $700 million in a Washington bank—accounts that were closed by the bank a few weeks after they were exposed. It was also revealed that multinational oil companies engaged in questionable payments—at least $1 million—to officials of Equatorial Guinea and their family members, and they invested in joint business ventures with the president, high officials, and again their family members. Until the 2004 report, official US government agencies ignored these under-the-counter transactions. A year before, in 2003, the US reopened its embassy in Equatorial Guinea despite closing it eight years earlier in protest against appalling human rights violations by the current leader (US Senate 2004:3-17). The Embassy was re-established in response to oil industry pressures; more than 3,000 Americans work in Equatorial Guinea and almost all in the oil sector. The new Embassy is housed in a small villa owned by an uncle of the President (Agence France-Presse 2003). While short-term demands may dictate practices such as these, the long-term consequences, as history shows—as it did in the Congo and Somalia but for different reasons—can be nothing short of disastrous and can produce levels of conflict that endure for decades.

Despite experts’ complaints that the US does not have an effective energy policy for Africa, the administration does have a de facto agenda that resides primarily within the Pentagon. Providing energy security and maintaining open sea lanes are two of the components that underpin this policy. Three Pentagon officials have expressed concerns about insecurities in offshore oil-producing regions of West Africa and offshore East Africa where piracy and small arms smuggling are threats. One is US Navy Secretary Gordon England who stressed that “security, stability and reconstruction operations are needed” in the oil rich Gulf of Guinea, and that with the help of its NATO allies the US “will be there to help.” A second is General Charles Wald, Deputy Commander of the US European Command (EUCOM), who is reported to spend half his time on Africa-related issues and who indicated the US is prepared to assist in the process of strengthening African navies. In discussing the strategic interest of US oil imports from West Africa, General Wald was quoted as saying, “…you start saying to yourself, ‘I’d like to have some forward bases in Africa.’…The world has changed. We’re going to have to make our own security. The halcyon days are over.” The third is EUCOM’s Director of Plans...
and Policy, Major General Jonathon Gratton, who expressed concerns over the inability of African states’ to patrol their coastal waters. General Gratton indicated that this inability is leading US planners to envision a growing potential for maritime terrorism, although this position is debated.4

To address these concerns, the US military is preparing itself and especially preparing African militaries to deal with disruptions in oil operations and provide offshore surveillance. The US Navy is increasing its presence in the oil region by spending more time sailing along Africa’s west coast (Lobe 2003).5 A US Aircraft carrier made a brief visit to the Gulf of Guinea during the summer of 2004 during an extensive naval exercise designed as a “show of force.” Coast guard capacities in oil-producing states also are being strengthened. Four coast guard cutters and four helicopters were given to Nigeria’s navy; one coast guard cutter was given to Sao Tome; two boats were given to Ghana; and some small craft went to Madagascar, Djibouti, the Seychelles, and Tunisia. In addition, joint naval exercises are being held, and security training is being given to sailors.6 These and other oil-policing measures are closely tied to the military’s counter-terrorism initiatives.

**US Military Operations in Africa**

Military spending in the four years following 9/11 doubles the amount expended in the preceding four years. The total spent or allocated for arms, training, and regional peace keeping operations that focus primarily on training and arming Sub-Saharan militaries in the four-year period of 2002 to 2005 amounts to $597 million, whereas for 1998-2001 it is $296 million.7 At this rate it will take a comparatively few years to equal the $1.5 billion that some believe was spent during the three decades of the Cold War on arms for African allies (Africa Action 2003).

Over and above worries about oil security, this expanded level of funding arises out of identifiable concerns that terrorist activities in African states threaten stability and security elsewhere in the world. The concerns are based on the conviction that support networks for Hezbollah are developing in West Africa, terrorist cells are operating in South Africa, the recent capture of Islamic extremists who entered Niger and Chad from Algeria will lead to further unwanted border crossings from North Africa, and that Osama bin Laden’s call to followers to make Nigeria a global priority may come to pass (Ellis 2004; Snyder 2003; Goldwyn and Morrison 2004:14; Goldstein 2004). So important are these new counter-terrorism initiatives that the US Armed Forces European Command (EUCOM) was ordered to extend operations into West and Central Africa and to consider this region a “priority zone in global counterterrorism efforts” (Goldwyn and Morrison 2004:14).

The amounts of military spending provided in this essay do not represent the full picture. Military activity cannot be reduced to isolated amounts of money in publicly accessible budgets, but an entire strategy the funding for which is dispersed among numerous government bodies and programs. Amounts needed to establish and run a full-scale military base, as is the case in Djibouti and is discussed below, are not included. Funds to send a US aircraft carrier into the Gulf of Guinea, however briefly, or to donate coast guard ships and helicopters to African navies, also are not given. The same is true of the State Department which has awarded contracts to private military contractors for services provided in, for example, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Cote d’Ivoire.8 The
Pentagon has numerous freestanding programs that supply arms and training and that have separate Africa budgets, but it also has three military commands—US Central Command (CENTCOM), US Pacific Command (PACOM), and EUCOM—that divide responsibility for Africa. It is not possible to calculate the entire amount that goes into these operations because spending is embedded within budgets that are not necessarily Africa specific. Figures are provided for operations where possible. Otherwise it is possible only to provide some idea of their extent.

One side of the funding picture consists of US efforts to establish its own military presence on African soil. The US government does this in several ways.

- First, are full military bases. It is fairly well known that an entire military base was established in Djibouti in 2002 to oversee counter-terrorism activities in the Horn, East Africa, Yemen, and adjacent stretches of the Indian Ocean. It consists of about 2,000 military personnel and employees of Kellogg, Brown, and Root, a Halliburton subsidiary (CENTCOM 2004a, 2004b). It is less well known that the Island of Diego Garcia has US weapons stockpiles, airbases, and personnel. It is ignored as an African site because both Mauritius and Great Britain claim sovereignty and because it is primarily used to serve American interests in the Middle East (Volman 2003a). A third base is believed to be in progress in Algeria. According to Jane’s Defence Weekly, “Washington is quietly building a huge military surveillance base at Tamanrasset” in the south of the country and at the same time is training the Algerian military to engage in counter-terrorism maneuvers.

- Second, are access points, known as lily pads or jumping off places. A series of such facilities, technically called “secure co-operation locations,” are being established to refuel aircraft, temporarily house soldiers, store equipment, or conduct intelligence operations. They are not full military bases. They are being established at existing African military bases or airfields to provide, in Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld’s words, “freedom of action” in responding to internal conflicts, security and terrorist threats, and to allow for temporary occupation by US military personnel when necessary. Access posts for US military operations already are in use, some more heavily than others, at Entebbe Airport in Uganda, Kenya, and Algeria, as indicated. Numerous other agreements are signed (Gabon, Ghana, Morocco, Namibia, Senegal, Zambia) or are under discussion (Angola, Botswana, Mali, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, and South Africa). Funds for leasing, equipping, and staffing these posts—a not insignificant amount—are not included here.

- Third, are several special programs in southern Africa. They include a special program in Botswana to train police in antiterrorism tactics and a cooperative arrangement with the South African government to support the war on terror through financial, diplomatic, and law enforcement activities. Funding by the US for military enhancements and training in these two southern African countries, for the three-year period 2002-04, amounts to roughly $23.2 million (US Department of State 2004:196-97, 256-58).

- Fourth, are plans to place 5,000 to 6,500 American troops in up to a dozen African locations. General James Jones, NATO Supreme Commander and Commander of EUCOM, stated that 2,000 to 3,000 of these military people will
be used in West Africa to undertake brief assignments as quick-reaction teams of air, ground, and sea forces (Lobe 2003). Because the number of US troops currently on the ground in Africa is less than it was 20 years ago, experts are urging that the number be increased quickly (CSIS 2004:32).

The other side of the funding picture involves the ways in which the US is strengthening African military capabilities. The US government does this through several mechanisms.

- First, are plans to increase African countries’ peacekeeping capacities. One of the most dramatic figures, announced in June of 2004, is a project to train 75,000 military peacekeepers worldwide, with most coming from African nations. This project is part of the $660 million Global Peace Operations Initiative to which the US has tentatively committed $100 million.12

- Second, are three ongoing programs involved in training the military in African countries. From 2002 through 2005, these programs are spending $250.6 million. One of the programs trained some 2,000 military officers from 47 African countries in 2003 with similar numbers expected in 2004 and again in 2005.13

- Third, are joint military exercises involving ten African countries in recent years (Benin, Cote d’Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Uganda), and joint naval, air force, and military medical operations (Volman 2003a).

- Fourth, are informational seminars that include networking activities between US and African military officers. They are staged regularly in the US and in Africa by the Africa Center for Strategic Studies, an arm of the Pentagon’s National Defense University.14

- Fifth, are ongoing weapons supply programs In the past four years, 2002-05, $211 million has been allocated to give weapons to or authorize purchases of weapons by African countries through the Pentagon.15

- Sixth, are two new counter-terrorism initiatives for the whole Sahel region for which $225 million is being spent. They are:
  -- The Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Initiative, a $125 million training and weapons-provision project involving nine western African countries: Mali, Mauritania, Chad, Niger, Senegal, Nigeria, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco. So far only $7.75 million has been spent on this project.16
  -- The East Africa Counter-Terrorism Initiative, EACTI, a $100 million project designed to carry out military training for security and control of people and goods at borders and along the coast involving five East African countries: Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania (Pope 2004).

- Seventh, is a special Africa Regional Fund. It was authorized to spend $3 million of a $12 million budget in 2004 to support counter-terrorism training and assistance in a select number of African countries using initiatives not included in the programs listed above (US Department of State 2004).

- Eighth, is US funding to United Nations peacekeeping operations in Africa. These funds also are not reflected in the programs mentioned above.

There are puzzling inconsistencies in these efforts to ensure stability and security, just as there are contradictions in US policy with respect to transparency in the oil industry.
One of them is that efforts to promote stability and strengthen the African military by providing arms, military training, and peacekeeping operations are undermined by America’s failure to help block a huge small arms trade that operates illegally in Africa. At the same time the US builds military capacities, it leaves in place the conditions for the emergence of illegal militia and criminals and the violence they perpetrate. Former Assistant Secretary of State Chester Crocker calls this an “outrage” that will not stop until the US joins cooperative international attempts to bring it to a halt (CSIS 2004:30).

A Global Military
A profound ideological divide exists between those who favor a Pentagon-centered involvement and those who want US-Africa relations to include a broader combination of diplomacy, humanitarian aid, and poverty eradication. A recent Heritage Foundation report favors the Pentagon and maintains that if the military gives Africa high priority US political leaders and policy makers will have access to more knowledge of the continent, better intelligence, more awareness of African issues, and greater success if and when Washington needs to intervene to protect its interests. To these ends, the report proposes that CENTCOM create a sub-regional command structure for Africa—something that does not now exist (Carafano and Gardiner 2003).

Barnett divides the world into three unequal parts, in much the same way Immanuel Wallerstein’s world systems theory sets out three regions of the world in relation to the rise of global capitalism (Wallerstein 1974). He has core states—the global north—that are wealthy, stable, and thick with global network connectivity, particularly in terms of security arrangements and financial and media flows. He has peripheral or gap states—the global south—that are poor, have much political repression, conflict, poverty, and disease that incubate the next generation of global terrorists; they are neither secure nor engaged in much global connectivity. He has mediating or seam states that sit at the borders of gap states. They are known for allowing terrorists into the core and need to be cultivated to “suppress bad things coming out of the gap.” His only seam state on the African continent is South Africa (Barnett 2003:174-75).

Barnett believes economies and democracies cannot be strengthened unless conflict is eliminated, and conflict can only be eliminated through the military. In his view security is the “most influential public-sector export” the United States has to offer. If a world region is peaceful, he writes, there will be strong links between that region’s military and the US military; there will be permanent US military bases and long-term security alliances (Barnett 2003:228).
Much of this security export already is in place. America now has 725 military bases placed strategically throughout the world, not counting numerous secret bases and 969 bases on US soil. One scholar warns this is not an empire of colonies, but one of military bases (Johnson 2004).

**The Role of the Military in Post-Colonial Africa**

On the other side of the ideological divide are policy-makers—primarily from the State Department, Congress, NGOs, and international bodies—who argue against a lopsided military and Pentagon-based approach to foreign affairs. They see In Africa another Cold War build-up in the making, and warn that when the US propped up dictators who were friendly to the West, and armed weak African militaries, this destabilized the fragile mechanisms of governance that were inherited at independence. Therefore they advocate policies that focus on a mix of tactics: diplomacy, enhanced intelligence; assistance to indigenous NGO’s that are involved in local governance; policies that promote transparency in business; even policies that include some military—but especially those that privilege military training. No policy, they argue, can be weighted in a single direction (CSIS 2004).

No one is as eloquent as Senator Russell Feingold who cautions that the Pentagon should not drive foreign policy or be in a *de facto* position to use its vast resources whenever or wherever it decides to engage. In his words, “subordinating basic human rights to accommodate larger strategic goals…comes back to haunt us.” In the past, institutions of state and civil society were “utterly destroyed…leaving civilians few tools for building a better future and warlords ample opportunity” to loot the wealth of their own countries (CSIS 2004:149-57).

The destructive consequences of supporting dictators and building military strength are palpable. In post-independence years, up to 2001, there were 80 successful military coups d’etat, 108 failed coups, and an additional 139 well-documented coup plots (McGowan 2003:339). Coups lead to factionalism which leads to more coups. Military regimes are not accountable to the public and therefore they encourage greater levels of corruption and authoritarianism. When the US encourages conditions that strengthen the military, it flies in the face of its own stated policy which is to promote democratic forms of government. The paradox is that the US national security interest can lead to a military build-up that subverts the very premise, the reduction of conflict, it is based upon.

Again Equatorial Guinea is instructive. At the same time experts warned the US government not to repeat Cold War mistakes of propping up dictators, the State Department authorized a private for-profit military company of former Pentagon officers to work with President Nguema to strengthen Equatorial Guinea’s coast guard so it would protect off-shore oil operations that were being conducted there by Exxon. Nguema came to power through a coup; he leads a one-party state; and he has been charged with glaring human rights abuses. Yet, as already indicated, relations with Equatorial Guinea were re-established at the urging of oil companies, and military expertise was provided to help protect them (Frynas 2004:527-28; Wayne 2002).

While I cast my lot with the policy-makers who favor practices that lean mainly toward diplomacy, humanitarian aid, and assistance to grassroots NGOs that promote democratic forms of participation in the public sphere, there is one military effort that
may prove worthwhile. I believe a case can be made for providing logistical support to regional peacekeeping entities such as the Economic Commission of West African States (ECOWAS) or the African Union (AU). They have been critical in quelling civil war in Sierra Leone and now are playing a role in policing the Darfur conflict. This kind of assistance places responsibility for security in the hands of an African multi-national collectivity and neutralizes a military build-up and influence within a single state. It also neutralizes US influence on individual states. Fighting terror or reducing conflict with military build-up is a thorny issue, and one for which I do not have all the answers. I do know, however, that this is a key problem and one the US must solve with honor and with honest concern for the consequences it will have for African people in twenty to thirty years.

Global Capitalism and Corporate Philanthropy

At the same time the US is establishing new and more elaborate military security in Africa, the corporate world is providing its own form of security. The message that conflict and poverty are bad for business, is giving rise to a fresh set of business practices that are making their way throughout the world by means of a new kind of corporate philanthropy. In the past three to five years, corporations are attempting to increase their value, and shield themselves from a multitude of negative forces, including the ramifications of working in weak states, by engaging in local community development projects. These projects are known as “strategic philanthropy” (Porter and Kramer 2002:57).

The strength of this phenomenon is shown by how much is being invested. Multinational firms spend from _ to 4 percent of their annual in-country operating budgets on community development. In Guinea, Alcoa\(^\text{18}\) spends about $5 million a year, an amount that slightly exceeds 4 percent of its annual operating budget.\(^\text{19}\) General Electric is spending $20 million on a project to improve health infrastructure in South Africa (Roner 2004). Of the five Shell companies operating in Nigeria, four have community development offices. One devotes $60 million a year, or 3 percent of its in-country operating budget to community development. The USAID budget for Nigeria is about the same, i.e. $63.9 million.\(^\text{20}\) The amounts are not extravagant if it is true, as the former Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Chester Crocker claims, that large companies realize a 26 to 28 percent rate of return from Africa—one of the highest rates in the world (Snyder 2003).

This new type of corporate social development should not be confused with old-style company philanthropy—which certainly continues. It does not include random contributions to charitable causes or one-time donations—say an orphanage in Nairobi, or Merck’s dramatic donation of the drug, *ivermectin*, to control river blindness which was distributed by other international agencies. Neither does it include foundations that are created from corporate earnings such as the Gates Foundation.

The new philanthropy is an in-house operation, although two consulting firms were recently established to advise companies on how best to enter the development field. It is devoted to sustainable development projects such as improving the infrastructure, education, agriculture, or providing seed money for growing local businesses. Some of the community projects are innovative and creative, such as one by Daimler-Chrysler in South Africa. This company developed ways to use sisal in the
interiors of their automobiles and then helped local farmers return to sisal production so they could supply company needs. Richards Bay Minerals, a mining company also in South Africa, set up a training and advising center for vendors, street hawkers, and other informal sector workers, simultaneously providing them with micro-credit opportunities and sub-contracting relationships (Forstater 2002:37-40). Most companies try to fit their own core strength to the local community in which they are located, and find ways to maximize their development investments. To demonstrate that social development is adding value, the trend is for corporations to subject their projects to stringent evaluation and performance standards known as “performance-based development.” These standards, as a former corporate development officer explained, are equivalent to or possibly exceed anything in the NGO, foundation, or government world.\(^{21}\)

Corporations point out that strategic philanthropy is inevitable because intensive competition in the global marketplace will soon force them to function in the poorest regions of the world. Rather than compete for an ever-smaller slice of existing markets, they must create “opportunities at the bottom of the pyramid” that in turn require them to create conditions in which they can better operate (Forstater 2002:38). Companies recently began to use promises of community development to compete with one another. For example, business interests in China and India are locked in a bidding war in which each is offering millions of \textit{aid-for-oil} dollars in return for oil concessions in Gabon and Angola (\textit{Agence France-Presse} 2004).

This new wave of corporate philanthropy has its own ideological foundations that date to 2002. One of Harvard Business School’s well-known theoreticians of corporate competition, Michael Porter, writes in a well-argued rationale that modern business succeeds only if it engages with the totality of society, and only if it treats economic and social goals as if they are interconnected. Porter positions himself in opposition to Milton Friedman who held for a generation that business has a social responsibility only to increase profits.\(^{22}\) Porter counters that in today’s business environment, an enterprise cannot expect to compete and survive unless it is integrated into and contributing to the full social context in which it operates (Porter and Kramer 2002:58-60).

The new turn in corporate social development has structural ramifications that are at the very heart of the relationship between the corporate world, local communities, the state, and global entities. At the deepest level are issues of accountability. Multinational corporations occupy an anomalous position in the politico-economic fabric of the African state. They are accountable to the state and dependent on it for their very ability to function. They pay taxes, a percentage of profits, and even rents to the state and its elite leaders. But these payments rarely trickle down to citizens in the localities where a business is located. Angola is now rife with violence over this very issue (Williams 2002:31-33; Goldwyn and Morrison 2004).

There often are no structural mechanisms, in Angola and elsewhere, whereby multinational firms are accountable to the local public outside of the institutions of the state even though they may provide jobs, contracts to local service providers, and other benefits all of which can help grow a local economy. They may even advocate on behalf of a community, serving as informal mediators between local and state layers of government. The levels of involvement are varied; some corporations are well integrated into local community life while others function within walled enclaves that are protected from, and intended to be protected from, their communities of operation.
The point is that strategic philanthropy intensifies local-corporate relationships. It provides an avenue for corporations to become integrated into the civic and social fabric where they operate. Community development is a mechanism through which corporations can be subject to the ebb and flow of political life and to the approval or anger of local people. But it is a relationship of inequality. Corporations are the powerful givers; local communities are the receivers. By setting themselves up as donors in the development sector, and inserting themselves into civil society, corporations place recipients in a position of dependence in which responsibility for performance is reversed and in which the local public becomes accountable to them.

Corporate philanthropy, in and of itself, has the power to provide great benefits to the recipients. It is a significant addition to problems of world development. I am reminded of Kofi Annan’s caution which was used recently to encourage corporations to join the fight against poverty in Africa. The UN Secretary General warned that the unequal distribution of global wealth can only produce conditions that will “undermine and ultimately unravel the open world economy” (Forstater 2002:37). Thus one important positive response to the Secretary General’s warning is that companies are leveraging funds and creating huge community development partnerships with UN organizations and other international bodies, with governments, and with globally-based NGOs. Among other benefits, these leveraged partnerships can help to dilute the patron-client relationships that permeate community development projects that are run by single donors such as corporations. Another significant response is that by law, passed recently by the civilian government of Nigeria, oil companies must contribute 3 percent of their operating budgets to community development. This mandatory contribution goes to the Niger Delta Development Commission which a short time ago completed a master plan for community development in the Niger Delta region. In addition to mandatory development contributions, some companies continue to maintain their own separate programs that they run internally under a general manager for community development.

Many firms realize that in order to maintain a place in the global economy they must take extreme measures to address global inequalities. Yet there are contradictions embedded in current philanthropic practices. Mechanisms have yet to be developed to deal locally with power imbalances produced by strategic philanthropy. Companies have yet to deal with islands of privilege—corporate enclaves or targeted communities—that are created when development is localized. They have yet to address conditions that create additional layers of in-country haves and have-nots, and the conflict this produces. No case is as powerful as that in the Niger Delta where violence is endemic thanks to perceived inequalities among receivers and non-receivers of corporate benefits (Cesarz et al. 2003). Multinational firms have yet to deal with corrupt practices that divert taxes, royalties, and profits paid to the state into private coffers, and that could dramatically increase in-country spending if those monies were used to benefit the general public.

Be that as it may, despite the benefits—and I do not wish to take away from this welcome contribution firms are making to development endeavors—the deep systemic problems that plague African economies are not addressed by the new strategic philanthropy. In subtle ways, this approach contributes to even greater levels of dependence on external capital flows than previously existed. Walter Rodney’s description more than 30 years ago of Africa’s structural position within the global economy is salient. As he wrote, on the eve of independence the wealthy industrialized
states of the north dominated the capacity to extract resources from poor states. They controlled the means to produce commodities from extracted resources. And they dictated the terms of trade by which resources and the commodities manufactured from them circulated throughout the world. There has been no change. Rodney’s vivid portrayal of “flag independence” still holds (1982 [1972]:13-28, 279).

There are no provisions in the new strategic philanthropy to address the systemic power imbalance in the global flows of capital that produce and reproduce African poverty. This structural imbalance—nothing more, nothing less—is the Achilles heel of global economic and political systems today.

Global Media
As stated at the beginning, I am concerned with information that flows through the media about the security measures just described. How much of the popular media is devoted to these issues? I ask this question because it directly relates to how much the general public knows about military operations and corporate philanthropy, and the specific ways these global flows of power and resources are playing themselves out in Africa.

There were nearly 400 articles about Africa during the last three months of 2003 in four major US newspapers: The New York Times, Los Angeles Times, Washington Post, and Chicago Tribune. Not one article discussed the growing US military presence in sub-Saharan countries, although three discussed terrorism or radical Islam. The US newspapers were silent even though a French news service during that same time period pointed out that the US was inaugurating its new lily pad policy and even though National Public Radio had already described the new military installation in Djibouti and announced that its possible effectiveness for counter-terrorism was in serious question. The media said even less with respect to oil, about which there were three peripheral articles, and corporate philanthropy, about which there was nothing.

A few publications have begun to call attention to military initiatives and their relation to oil production and counter-terrorism programs in Africa. But these stories seldom spread widely within the newspaper world or into non-print media outlets, especially television. The little information that is made known about the military buildup in Africa has not had a snowball effect with one significant exception, the radio. In October, 2004, National Public Radio devoted a two-part broadcast to military training initiatives in the Sahel, commenting that they represent a fundamental shift in US tactics toward Africa. The broadcast stated that some African military officials find current US military aid is self-serving; they would prefer logistical support to training, such as the US is now supplying to the African Union for Darfur.

Serious information about the growing US military presence in Africa, while marginal to the popular media, is found in limited-circulation publications, in print and on the internet, such as Africa Action, the ACAS Bulletin, Africa Focus, the Africa Society of the National Summit on Africa, Washington Notes on Africa, and the British-run Jane’s Defence Weekly. They are doing a conscientious job of informing professional Africanists, interest groups that lobby for Africa, and policy makers. With the exception of Jane’s, these publications are often led by Africanists who bridge the divide between academia and the public sphere. It was from Africa Focus (2004), for example, that it was possible to learn first of the Senate hearings on Equatorial Guinea. It was from the ACAS Bulletin (2003), Africa Action (2003), and the writings of Daniel Volman (2003a,
2003/2004) that it was possible to learn of the volume of weapons and training that is being supplied to African countries.

If the mainstream media fails to inform the public on the issues discussed here, what does it find of interest? Unfortunately I echo the same, well-worn litany that insofar as Africa is concerned, “if it bleeds it leads.” True enough, pessimistic articles about African politics, conflict, or the health crisis made up most of the news during my own three-month survey conducted at the end of 2003. Much of the rest was devoted to human suffering, culture and the arts, and blatant sensationalism—a small but powerful genre.

The point is that the choices made by the media of what to stress and what not to stress shape public knowledge and public understandings. Contributors to the journal ISSUE, a publication of the African Studies Association, make a convincing case that during a forty-year time period 73 percent of the news stories about Africa were consistently negative about both politics and society (Schraeder and Endless 1998:32). Added to the negativity is an acute lack of depth in explanations for the causes of conflict and disaster. To be sure the media have time and space constraints. But this means writers are often relegated to short-hand explanations for unfortunate events. Nothing is as familiar as the consistent attribution of violence to ethnic, tribal, or religious cleavages when situations cry out for historic, socio-economic, and contextually-nuanced explanations. Instead the short-hand explanations are coverted into stereotypical notions that transform the human condition to an easy but essentialist label. Howard French, former dean of Africa reporters for the New York Times, who is a passionate believer in the importance of representing African affairs as deeply as possible, laments the fact that identity issues—by which he means that overused pigeon-hole known as ethnic conflict—are far more complex than those that circulate in the news (French 2004).

Equally troubling are the silences that surround US involvement in Africa. A study of news services and TV indicates that less than 1/3 of 1 percent of the coverage—some of it measured for eight years—is devoted to African countries. The percentage goes up a little during times of extreme violence, as with Liberia, Sierra Leone, and the Sudan. Yet this study finds the amount of coverage is more sensitive to GNP, and imports of goods and services, than any other factors. Violence may temporarily increase coverage in a particular country, say the Sudan, yet in relation to a country in which there is conflict and a more robust economy, say Bosnia, the amount of coverage is disproportionately higher for the relatively better-off nation.30

But there is another factor at work. In the US the silences as well as the choices of the media are shaped by America’s special relationship to its African-American population—the descendants of Africa—and the deep history of racism that pervades every sector of American society. The interpretation of events by the media and then by the audience is shaped by this historical legacy. This goes a long way toward explaining the disproportionately large degree of negativity that permeates our knowledge of Africa and the sometimes dismissive and pre-emptive ways in which Africa is treated in American policy determinations.

Despite its paucity, media information can and does influence the agendas of people who shape foreign policy. It is even a key source. But the degree of negative spin put on that information can have dramatic consequences. Again thanks to the journal ISSUE it was demonstrated that the US was first drawn into Somalia by media coverage, but was then forced to disengage when coverage intensified and public pressure on
legislators increased. An instructive comment came from Senator John McCain who told a Senate committee that most of what he knew about Somalia came from the media (Schraeder and Endless 1998:29-30).

Conclusion
This essay concludes with the media because I believe there is power in knowledge. I believe knowledge that is consistently mired in negative idioms has profound ramifications. Afro-pessimism is rampant. We tolerate—by which I mean the general public tolerates—what is happening because we have few models with which to construct complex explanations for unfortunate events or hopeful scenarios for what is to come. We expect negativity; we are conditioned to accept the worst. We shrink from involvement because the outcomes are never good.

I also believe silence legitimates action. We tolerate military build-up and the possibility of policing of oil installations because we have too little information with which to construct an understanding of what is happening or why. We have insufficient knowledge to comprehend the consequences of actions taken by those who make policy on our behalf. We laud corporate philanthropy, yet we have little understanding of the systemic conditions that undermine its ultimate effectiveness. We tolerate security measures surrounding the extraction of oil because it relieves us of dealing with the Middle East. We promote the militarization of Africa, ignoring the fact that once again, as with the Cold War, we are recreating client states, playing into the hands of powerful military elites, and strengthening the hands of corrupt leaders. We have failed to interrogate the meaning of “terrorism” itself, and instead we are accepting the label without delving into the political and economic conditions out of which it evolves. The notion of terrorism—like other isms such as socialism, conservatism, or liberalism—allows us to legitimate self-interest indiscriminately and demonize whomever and whatever deviates from that self-interest.

There are those who believe, and I agree with them, that public attention has been diverted to issues of terrorism and the kinds of military build-up and economic security measures that hinder true economic and political growth (Reuters 2004). We dare not lose sight of the fact that the most threatening problems facing the world today are poverty and equity. Only by addressing these problems at their most fundamental, structural, systemic levels will the world have a chance to experience the kinds of security and stability that I would like to call, a global flow of peace.
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Notes
1. Africa’s growing importance in US policy-making circles also is due to factors not considered in this essay, those being the HIV/AIDS health crisis and continually high levels of internal conflict.

2. Anger over revenue-sharing and lack of transparency in oil company payments to government have resulted in a separatist movement in the Cabinda region of Angola (Williams 2002:31–33; Goldwyn and Morrison 2004:2, 12).


5. The author based his article on remarks made by General James Jones, Supreme Commander of NATO and Commander of EUCOM.


7. A breakdown of amounts is given below.

8. Pacific Architects and Engineers was hired by the US State Department for $10 million to assist in the Liberian operations of 2003. The same firm also has worked for the US in Sierra Leone and Cote d’Ivoire (US Department of State 2003; Cilliers 2003).

9. A US Navy P-3 aircraft and about 100 US soldiers used Algeria as a base from which to assist Chad in March 2004 in a successful attempt to eliminate a guerrilla group believed to be sympathetic to Al Quaeda (Jane’s Defence Weekly, August 4, 2004).

10. The US reportedly is using the Entebbe base to assist the Ugandan government with its counter-insurgency campaign in the northern part of the country (Plaut 2004).


13. The three programs and amounts being spent are as follows: 1) The ACOTA program (Africa Contingency Operations Training Assistance) in 2005 is budgeted at $15 million; for four years, 2002–05, the total is $53 million. 2) The ARP program (Africa Regional Peacekeeping) in 2005 is budgeted at $45 million; for four years, 2002–05, it is $154 million. ARP trains and also equips and assists African soldiers in local peacekeeping efforts. 3) The IMET program (International Military Education and Training) in 2005 is budgeted at $10.8 million; for four years, 2002–05, it is $43.6 million. (See US Department of State 2004; US Department of Defense 2004).

14. The most recent seminars were held in Uganda in October, 2004, and Washington

15. Annual amounts spent by and authorized for weapons purchases through the Pentagon are: 2002 = $57.2 million; 2003 = $68.9 million; 2004 = $39.9 million; and 2005 = 44.9 million (See US Department of State 2005; US Department of Defense 2004).


17. The company, MPRI, trains military personnel in Equatorial Guinea, Nigeria, and South Africa, and is helping to establish and operate the Africa Center for Strategic Studies as part of the Department of Defense. See http://www.mpri.com/subchannels/int_africa.html.

18. Alcoa is a leading Bauxite mining firm in Guinea.


22. I thank John Riggan for bringing this to my attention.

23. Business Partners for Development, located in London, was created by the World Bank, British Department for International Development, CARE, mining, and oil and gas companies. The organization’s goal is to find ways for business, government, and civil society to engage together in sustainable community development. See http://www.bpd-naturalresources.org/.

24. I thank Deirdre LaPin for bringing this to my attention.

25. Cynthia Ntini conducted the survey.

26. They include the Christian Science Monitor, Wall Street Journal, Asia Times, Cleveland Plain Dealer, and San Francisco Chronicle.


28. They include Salih Booker, Caleb Bush, Imani Countess, Bill Minter, Michael West, and many others.

29. The journal was recently renamed African ISSUES.