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U.S. Strategy in Africa: AFRICOM, Terrorism, and Security Challenges

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writes, “During the 1990s, when oil prices were low, Russia pushed for expanded energy cooperation, but China . . . was reluctant. . . . The rise in world oil prices . . . turned the tables. . . . China became more eager . . . [and] Russia became increasingly reluctant to commit to deeper energy integration.” Whether this “uncertain courtship” in the energy sector becomes a more serious relationship will depend on “world oil prices, China’s willingness to pay more for natural gas, China’s willingness to play by Russia’s ‘rules of the game’ . . . and Russia’s concerns about the ‘China threat.’”

Another valuable contribution is the collection’s examination of the interaction of regional security issues, such as in Central Asia or on the Korean Peninsula, with the Russia-China relationship. While the Taiwan issue is amply discussed, another regional security issue could well have a similarly potent influence on the trajectory of the overall relationship between the two countries. If Russia goes forward with a large planned sale of weaponry to Vietnam, including Kilo-class submarines, it will no doubt cause new tensions between Moscow and Beijing. This example serves to illustrate the broader importance of understanding the Russia-China relationship for world politics across all regions and therefore underscores the importance of this valuable book.

LYLE GOLDSTEIN
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Francis, David J., ed. *U.S. Strategy in Africa: AFRICOM, Terrorism, and Security Challenges*. Oxford, U.K.: Routledge, 2010. 216 pp. \$114

After a period of involuntary neglect due to pressing business elsewhere, the United States appears to appreciate Africa’s elevated strategic importance in terms of counterterrorism and energy security, among other things, and to regard regional stability, democratic development, economic reform, good governance, humanitarian assistance, and the fight against HIV/AIDS as subsidiary objectives that are conducive to serving those two interests. This development makes this work by David Francis, holder of the Chair of African Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Bradford, timely. Fortunately, it is also thematically well conceived, with part 1 laying out U.S. security policy and part 2 discussing African responses, the two comprising a broadly complementary set of earnest assessments by perceptive analysts.

In Washington, the conventional wisdom on U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) seems to be that although the Pentagon established it so awkwardly in 2007 that African leaders and populations worried that it was an instrument of neocolonialism, subsequent adjustments in strategic communication have largely allayed African fears. Perhaps unsurprisingly, then, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Theresa Whelan’s tidy and professional précis of the American strategic perspective incorporates standard Pentagon palliatives and spin control. The next three chapters are more probing and provocative.

Daniel Volman makes a forceful argument that “the difference between AFRICOM and other commands—and the allegedly ‘unfounded’ nature of its implications for the militarization of the continent—are not as real or as

genuine” as advertised. Nevertheless, he appears to exaggerate the importance of AFRICOM as a geopolitical bulwark against China, as well as the role of the Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA), AFRICOM’s sole major ground asset, as a platform for kinetic counterterrorism operations. Furthermore, the evolution of AFRICOM over the past two years has cast doubt on Volman’s characterization of the command as inimical to “an international and multilateral partnership with African nations.” J. Peter Pham, in his chapter on terrorism and security challenges, provides a fuller and more accurate picture of CJTF-HOA’s primary function (essentially defense diplomacy) and a nuanced account of how AFRICOM might help harmonize African and American security interests.

M. A. Mohamed Salih is less sanguine on that score. His doubts, however, rest not on assumptions of malign American intent but rather on the insusceptibility of Africans’ profound human-security problems to military solutions. In turn, Shannon Beebe, a senior Africa analyst in the U.S. Department of the Army, considers a human-security model for Africa that is self-consciously at odds with the traditional “state-centric realist paradigm.” This may seem like pie in the sky to some, but it does contain some concrete elements—for example, free-trade zones to short-circuit corruption and lubricate economic activity.

The rejoinders on Africans’ behalf range from wholesale condemnation to selective criticism of U.S. policy. According to Jeremy Keenan of the University of London, Africans predominantly see Washington’s profession of concern for development and security

as transparent cover for hegemonic assertions of “imperialist power.” Wryly acknowledging the “cottage industry in policy discourse” that the establishment of AFRICOM has produced, Thomas Kwasi Tiekou, a Ghanaian, focuses on the interplay of AFRICOM and the African Union (AU). He notes while the two are ostensibly compatible, partisan dialogue between Africans who fear that American preoccupation with oil supplies and counterterrorism will subordinate the AU and those who hope that AFRICOM will enable the AU the better to prevent, manage, and resolve conflicts has stalled U.S.-African multilateralism. He constructively urges conceptualizing the relationship in terms of hard, soft, and smart power in order to clarify AFRICOM’s optimal contribution.

David Chuter offers a sweeping big-picture essay containing several sharp, if downbeat, insights. In particular, he suggests that the optimistic Western “assumption that a strong organisation can be created on the basis of weak states” is especially dubious in the African context. In his view, Africa needs to develop a model of security that “does not take Western ideas and experiences as a starting point.” After Josephine Osikena’s balanced survey of activity between Africa and other international actors (especially Brazil, India, and China), Francis himself provides a trenchant conclusion on the future of U.S.-African relations. Cued by signs of the potential privatization of U.S. military and security operations in Africa and by the disinclination of Western analysts to see salient links in Africa between poverty and political violence, he duly questions the capacity and will of the United States to do much more

than attend to its own core security interests on the continent. More optimistically, he recognizes that the United States must remain open to debate on AFRICOM's proper role. Thus he recapitulates the sensible tone of this fine edited collection—hard-nosed but not hopeless.

JONATHAN STEVENSON
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Koblentz, Gregory D. *Living Weapons: Biological Warfare and International Security*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 2009. 272pp. \$35

Gregory D. Koblentz, the deputy director of the Biodefense Graduate Program and assistant professor of government and politics at George Mason University, has written an outstanding analysis of one of the most significant national security challenges of the modern era. The author devotes five crisp chapters, written in easily understandable terms, to the complexities of the potential use of biologicals in modern warfare.

He describes the national security implications of the potential use of biological weapons by state actors as well as those with no state affiliation. One of the areas Koblentz addresses, in necessary detail, is the existence of many barriers to preventing proliferation of biological weapons by states, nonstate actors, and terrorists.

Koblentz uses case studies to review the biological warfare programs of Iraq, Russia, and South Africa, speculating on the strategic assessment of the risks and benefits each country may have considered in determining whether to proceed with the development of these

offensive weapons. With each example the reader is able to understand better the nature of the biological threat and how truly difficult it is to control such a weapon once in an aggressor's hands.

The United States has the most powerful military force of modern times but is having a most challenging time defeating an asymmetric adversary in Afghanistan. When one considers the potential of a lesser state actor or a terrorist group to develop and use biological weapons against a militarily superior force, one is forced to ask *when* the use of this weapon will occur, not *if*. As Koblentz astutely points out, "Biological weapons were the first weapon prohibited by an international treaty, yet the proliferation of these weapons increased after they were banned."

This book is a must-read not only for the professional military officer, diplomat, and politician but for the average citizen as well. It is for anyone who wishes to gain a better understanding of the current biological weapon threat and is interested in or responsible for protecting the nation's vital interests.

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Potholm, Christian P. *Winning at War: Seven Keys to Military Victory throughout History*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010. 304pp. \$39.95

Winning at War is the product of over forty years of academic inquiry into the nature of war by Christian Potholm, a professor of government at Bowdoin College. He proposes that throughout history there have been seven keys to