The United States and Russia in Africa

A survey of US and Russian political, economic, and military-security relations with Africa

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Sammanfattning

Syftet med denna studie är att kartlägga hur USA:s och Rysslands politiska, ekonomiska, militära och säkerhetsrelaterade relationer med Afrika, samt deras geografiska prioriteringar på kontinenten har utvecklats under de senaste två decennierna. Både USA och Ryssland har intresse av att säkerställa tillgång till strategiska platser, naturresurser och inflytande i Afrika. För USA har det militära engagemanget fått allt högre prioritet, framförallt vad gäller kontraterrorism. En ökad betoning på militära och säkerhetsrelaterade relationer är ännu tydligare i Rysslands utrikespolitik gentemot Afrika, som använder öppna och dolda medel för att uppnå sina mål. På senare tid har stormaktskonkurrens blivit högsta prioritet i Afrika för Ryssland och, åtminstone på ett retoriskt plan, för USA. När det gäller geografiska prioriteringar är Nordafrika, särskilt Egypten, den mest prioriterade regionen för båda länderna, följt av Afrikas horn. För USA är Östafrika en annan viktig region, medan Ryssland är mer engagerat i Centralafrika.

Nyckelord: USA, Ryssland, Afrika, utrikespolitik, Afrikapolicy, diplomati, ekonomi, säkerhet.

Summary

The objective of this study is to survey how US and Russian political, economic and military-security relations with Africa, and their geographical priorities on the continent, have evolved over the last two decades. Both the United States and Russia have interests, in terms of securing access to strategic locations, natural resources, and influence, in Africa. For the United States, military-security relations have become increasingly emphasised in the last two decades, with counterterrorism at the centre of its engagement. The tilt towards military-security instruments in foreign policy towards Africa is even clearer for Russia, which uses a two-track policy of overt and covert means to achieve its objectives. In recent years, great power competition has become the top priority in Africa for both Russia and the United States, at least rhetorically. In terms of geographic priorities, North Africa, particularly Egypt, is the most prioritised region for both countries, followed by the Horn of Africa. Another important area for the United States is East Africa, whereas Russia is more engaged in Central Africa.

Keywords: United States, Russia, Africa, foreign policy, Africa policy, diplomacy, economics, security.

Preface

This report is produced as part of the Studies in African Security at the Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI). It is commissioned by the Swedish Ministry of Defence and is part of a series of studies analysing foreign state actors' interests and engagements in Africa. The first report in this series is "Foreign military bases and installations in Africa", from 2019, which maps the military installations of 12 non-African states on the African continent. Now, in 2020, the focus has been broadened to analysing the political, economic, and military-security relations between African countries and a selection of the 12 non-state actors, including China, France, Germany, India, Italy, and Spain. The aim of these reports is to create a foundation for future studies on Africa as an arena for global power competition.

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Acronyms

ACSBS	Africa Conflict Stabilization and Border Security
AFARICA	US Air Forces Africa
AFRIC	Association for Free Research and International Cooperation
AFRICOM	United States Africa Command
AGOA	African Growth and Opportunity Act
AMISOM	AU Mission in Somalia
ANC	African National Congress
AU	African Union
BIT	Bilateral investment treaties
BNC	Binational commission
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa
BUILD	Better Utilization of Investments Leading to Development
CDC	Center for Disease Control and Prevention
CENTCOM	US Central Command
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CNSP	Comité national pour le salut du peuple (National Committee for Salvation of the People)
CJTF-HOA	Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa
DOD	Department of Defense
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
EUCOM	US European Command
FDI	Foreign direct investment
FMF	Foreign Military Financing
FOI	Swedish Defence Research Agency
FRELIMO	Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (Mozambique Liberation Front)
FTA	Free trade agreement
GDP	Gross domestic product
GNA	Government of National Accord
GRU	Glavnoe razveditelnoe upravlenie (Main intelligence directorate)
IED	Improvised explosive devices
IMET	International Military Education Training
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IS	Islamic State
ISR	Intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance
KGB	Komitet gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti (Committee for state security)
LNA	Libyan National Army
LNG	Liquefied natural gas
MARFORAF	US Marine Corps Forces Africa
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MINURSO	UN Mission for the support for the Referendum in Western Sahara
MINUSCA	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Central African Republic

MINUSMA	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MONUSCO	UN Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MPLA	Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NAVAF	US Naval Forces Africa
NSS	US National Security Strategy
NDS	US National Defense Strategy
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
ODA	Official development aid
OECD	Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development
OFAC	US Office of Foreign Asset Control
OPIC	Overseas Private Investment Corporation
PACOM	US Pacific Command
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
PMC	Private Military Company
PMI	President's Malaria Initiative
RHC	Real estate, hospitality and construction
RIAC	Russian International Affairs Council
SADEC	Southern African Development Community
SAM	Surface-to-air missiles
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
SOCAFRICA	US Special Operations Command Africa
TIFA	Trade and Investment Framework Agreement
TSCP	Theatre Security Cooperation Programs
UAE	United Arab Emirate
UN	United Nations
UNCTAD	UN Conference on Trade and Development
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNGA	UN General Assembly
UNISFA	UN Interim Security Force for Abyei
UNMISS	UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan
UNSC	UN Security Council
UNSMIL	UN Support Mission in Libya
USAID	US Agency for International Development
USD	US dollar
USIDFC	US International Development Finance Corporation
USARAF	US Army Africa
VEO	Violent extremist organisation
WEEE	Women's Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment
YALI	Young African Leaders Initiative

1 Introduction

The United States and Russia have a history of rivalry dating back to the Cold War. In Africa, this great power competition coincided with African movements for independence from the Western European colonial powers, which the United States and the Soviet Union could exploit. Motivated by a desire to contain the influence of the other party, the two countries used diplomatic, economic and military means to win over allies sympathetic to their respective causes. With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, however, Africa lost its strategic importance and the two countries' interest in Africa declined.

With its many growing economies, large market size and resource richness, there is a renewed interest in the continent. The past two decades has witnessed a change in foreign state actors' engagement in Africa. China and India have taken over the position as Africa's largest trading partners and significantly increased their political and military ties to the continent. There is also increased interest from countries such as Turkey, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Qatar. Several large European countries (such as Germany, Italy and Spain) have started to review their policies and activities there.

The objective of this study is to survey how US and Russian political, economic and military-security relations with Africa, and their geographical priorities on the continent, have evolved over the last two decades. The United States is an important cooperation partner of the EU, not least when it comes to the security sector, where they have worked together in several African countries. Russia's relations with the United States and the EU, on the other hand, have been more complicated, especially after 2014, when Western countries imposed sanctions on Russia because of its illegal annexation of Crimea and instigation of war in eastern Ukraine. For both Russia and the United States, Africa is increasingly viewed as an arena for great power competition.

This study is part of a larger research programme at the Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI), which aims to understand how the renewed interest in Africa and the re-emergence of global power competition may affect African development and future security cooperation between European and African countries. In 2020, the aim of the programme has been to survey the policies and activities of major external actors in Africa. In addition to the United States and Russia, the engagement in Africa of the four major EU member states, France, Germany, Italy and Spain; and the two Asian powers, China and India; has been surveyed.[1] The aim of these studies is to provide a foundation for further research on how external actors interact with each other on the African continent, and how the African countries in turn respond to the renewed interest.

The question of how African countries view and respond to US and Russian policies and activities on the continent is thus beyond the scope of the present study. Also beyond the current scope is an analysis of how the United States and Russia relate to each other on the African continent, and what the potential implications of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and the 2020 US election might be.

1.1 Method and sources

To analyse the policies and activities of the United States and Russia in Africa, we use a method similar to the one in Gasinska and Gunnarson (2020). The analysis builds on a study of national policy documents as well as a survey of the two countries' presence and activities in Africa. The latter is based on statistics from international and national organisations, and information from research publications, reports, and news articles. More specifically, data has been retrieved from such international organisations as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the United Nations (UN), the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and

[1] For an analysis (in Swedish) of France, Germany, Italy and Spain's interests in Africa, see Gasinska and Gunnarson, (2020). For an analysis (in Swedish) of China and India's interests in Africa, see Englund and Neuman Bergenwall (2020).

Development (OECD), and the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), as well as national databases.

The two countries' respective relations with the African continent are analysed and presented separately. US policy towards Africa is identified through an analysis of central documents developed for Africa policy. Russia, on the other hand, does not have specific policy documents for different geographical regions. Instead, a bottom-up analysis of other policy documents was used to derive Russia's policy towards Africa. These documents were preferably Russian-language primary sources, such as strategic policy documents, as well as secondary sources from Russian think tanks and media.

The broad geographical and thematic approach of this study is associated with certain challenges. First, Africa is comprised of 54 sovereign states, with significant political, economic, and cultural differences, so that the specific context of a single country often requires adjustments in the overall policy for the region. Since the focus of this report is to identify the overall policies of the United States and Russia towards Africa (or its sub-regions, where applicable), their policies towards specific African countries are not analysed. The intention, as in previous studies within this research program, is to identify general trends in external actors' policies and activities in Africa, to provide a foundation for future, more narrowly-focused studies.

A second challenge emanates from the asymmetry in US and Russian engagement on the African continent, where the United States has a much larger presence and number of activities than Russia. There is also a difference in the availability of open sources and official documents regarding the two countries' engagement in Africa. This means that there is a discrepancy in the depth and level of detail provided in the analysis of US and Russian relations to the continent. For example, the analysis of US economic and foreign assistance activities in Africa is more comprehensive than the corresponding analysis of Russia's. This is partly because US engagement in this area is more extensive, but is also a reflection of a difference in the availability of open source information. Another discrepancy that follows from Russia's lack of a coherent approach to Africa is that the chapter on Russia in this report puts more emphasis on analysing bilateral relations.

A third challenge is that Africa is commonly divided into two main regions (North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa) and several sub-regions. For both the United States and Russia, North Africa (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia) is often treated as part of the Middle Eastern region, whereas all other African countries are regarded as sub-Saharan Africa. This provides a challenge when analysing regional policies or statistics, especially since it is not always clear which definition of the regions is being used. In this report, we are careful to mention whether any information only concerns North Africa or sub-Saharan Africa. When it comes to other sub-regions, such as Maghreb, Sahel, West Africa, East Africa, the Horn of Africa, and Central Africa, different definitions exist. Unless otherwise specified, the following divisions are used:

- Central Africa: Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and São Tomé and Príncipe.
- East Africa: Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda.
- Horn of Africa: Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia.
- Maghreb: Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia.
- Sahel: Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger.
- Southern Africa: Angola, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.
- West Africa: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo.

1.1.1 Outline and indicators

The outline of this report is as follows. Chapter 2 presents the survey of how US policy and activities in Africa have evolved over the last two decades. Chapter 3 provides a similar survey of Russia's engagement in Africa. Chapter 2 and 3 follow the same structure, described below. The final chapter presents a comparison of the two countries, as well as concluding remarks.

Each of the country chapters begins with a brief summary of the country's historic ties to Africa since the end of World War II and a discussion of its current overall policy towards the continent. This is followed by a survey of *political relations,* focused on the two countries' diplomatic representation, high-level meetings and official state visits to the continent. For Russia, this section also covers soft power exerted through election meddling and the use of disinformation campaigns. *Economic relations* are described via an analysis of the main partner countries in terms of total trade, imports, exports and investments, as well as of the main sectors of trade and investment in the last ten years. This is followed by a survey of *foreign assistance,* focused on overall trends in disbursements, main recipient countries and types of assistance. This analysis is restricted by data availability and covers 2011–2018, for Russia, and 2001–2018, for the United States. *Military-security relations* are described using a survey of the two countries' military approaches, presence, exercises, security cooperation programmes, and arms exports. For the United States, this last section also covers military assistance.

2 US relations with Africa

Since the end of World War II, US foreign policy towards Africa has shifted back and forth between engagement and withdrawal. While US priorities in Africa have primarily been based on national security interests, such as limiting the influence of various actors and ensuring access to natural resources and strategic locations, the United States also has a tradition of promoting democracy, development, and peace and security. This chapter presents a survey of US political, economic, and military-security relations with Africa.

2.1 Historic ties to Africa

Although the interactions between the United States and Africa did not start during the Cold War, this period marks the most significant engagement. After World War II, the United States was perceived by many emerging African states as a "champion of self-determination" and "anti-colonial".[2] At a time when US foreign policy was mostly defined by great power competition with the Soviet Union, the image of being anti-colonial enabled the United States to move its positions forward and start forming new allegiances with African countries.[3] At this time, US priorities in Africa was in containing Soviet influence (by providing economic and military assistance to key allies and anti-communist rebel organisations), in extracting raw material (particularly uranium) for strategic industries, and obtaining military bases near the Middle East.[4] The few exceptions that generated interest outside the Cold War logic include the humanitarian emergency during the Biafra civil war, in the 1960s or the Ethiopian famine in the 1980s. Another exception was the white rule in South Africa and Rhodesia (today part of Zimbabwe), where the US Cold War strategy was challenged by US constituencies and advocacy networks concerned about the systematic racial discrimination in these countries.[5]

In the immediate post-Cold War period, the United States sought to pursue "strategies of positive, pro-active engagement".[6] Enhancing democracy, good governance and human rights started to attract more attention. Resources previously targeted to Cold War allies (e.g., Zaire, Liberia and Sudan) were redirected to countries actively engaged in democratisation (e.g., South Africa, Ethiopia and Mozambique). In the area of conflict management, a notion arose that, in certain circumstances, US traditions and values demanded participation in humanitarian interventions, even when no direct strategic or economic benefits existed. This new form of engagement was, however, short lived. With the Black Hawk Down incident, in October 1993, when 18 US Rangers were killed in a mission in Somalia, both policymakers and public opinion in the United States became wary of deploying ground forces abroad. A period of disengagement and withdrawal followed, where the United States limited its participation in UN peacekeeping missions, and decreased its support for democratisation and assistance to Africa, in general.[7]

With the 1998 bombings of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, concerns were raised about Africa, as a potential sanctuary for terrorists. Following the attacks in the United States on 11 September 2001, counterterrorism and reducing the dependence on Middle Eastern oil became top US national security interests. As a result, a renewed interest in Africa emerged and US engagement increased again. The engagement was further boosted by President George W. Bush's commitment to fighting global health issues, such as HIV/AIDS and malaria, which significantly increased US foreign assistance to the continent. Under President Barack Obama, the priority of counterterrorism remained, but

[2] The United States never had colonies in Africa, and President Roosevelt's inclusion of self-determination of all people as the third paragraph of the 1941 Atlantic Charter put on record the United States taking an anti-colonial stance (see Cohen, 2020, p. 4.).
[3] Hillbom and Green (2010, p. 210).
[4] Magu, 2019; Lawson (2007).
[5] Lyons (2015).
[6] Lawson (2007, p. 2).
[7] Lawson (2007).

with an increased emphasis on 'soft power' and diplomacy, and a desire to reduce the military footprint on the ground.[8] There was also an increased focus on enhancing US investments, particularly in the area of energy, health, and food security.[9]

2.2 Policy towards Africa

US foreign policy builds on cooperation between the executive and legislative branches of the government. The most important strategic document is the National Security Strategy (NSS), which outlines the administration's view on national security concerns and approaches to dealing with them. The purpose of the NSS is to guide other strategic reviews, such as the National Defense Strategy (NDS), and help Congress align the federal budget. Over the last two decades, the administrations have published these two reports once per term.

Each year, the administration prepares a budget proposal, which is submitted to Congress in February. Before approving the federal budget, Congress debates the size, composition and purpose of the proposal. Two congressional committees in Congress play an important role in US foreign policy: the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations and the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. These committees must approve all legislation dealing with foreign affairs. The Secretary of State serves as the minister for foreign affairs, and the Department of State is responsible for implementing the foreign policy. The Secretary of Defense is the chief executive officer of the Department of Defense, which is the department that governs the US Armed Forces.

The most recent NSS report was published by the Trump administration on 18 December 2017. Shortly thereafter, on 19 January 2018, the Department of Defense published the NDS report.[10] These reports made clear that the Trump administration intended to pursue an "America First" foreign policy, aiming to strengthen the US military position globally. The reports described a world of increasing political, economic and military competition in which counterterrorism would no longer be the focal point of US foreign policy. As the 2018 NDS states: "Inter-state strategic competition, not terrorism, is now the primary concern in US national security".[11]

On 13 December 2018, then National Security Advisor John Bolton presented *The New Africa Strategy*, which includes three core objectives:[12]

- advancing US economic interests in the region;
- countering violent extremists and jihadist terrorists; and
- ensuring that US taxpayer dollars devoted to aid and UN operations are used efficiently and effectively.

Although counterterrorism remains one of the objectives in Africa, Bolton's presentation made clear that the new top priority was great power competition. Advancing US economic interests in the region was described as "vital to safeguarding the economic independence of African states", threatened by China's "bribes, opaque agreements, and strategic use of debt" and Russia's "corrupt economic dealings". Similarly, aid effectiveness was linked to great power competition with the motivation that aid has failed to prevent China and Russia "from taking advantage of African states to increase their own power and influence".[13] Overall, the Africa strategy followed the NSS and NDS reports, and described Africa as an arena for countering China and Russia's "predatory practices" and restoring American influence.

[8] Cohen (2020).
[9] NSS (2015).
[10] For an analysis (in Swedish) of the Trump administration's national security policy, see Winnerstig and Rydqvist (2018)
[11] Department of Defence (2018, p. 1).
[12] Bolton (13 December 2018).
[13] Bolton (13 December 2018).

Guided by the NSS, NDS and the New Africa Strategy, the agencies responsible for developing and implementing the foreign policy update and publish policy documents of their own. The Bureau of African Affairs at the Department of State (which develops and manages US policy towards sub-Saharan Africa) has summarised the policy objectives in sub-Saharan Africa as follows:[14]

- advancing trade and commercial ties with key African states to increase US and African prosperity;
- protecting the United States from cross-border health and security threats;
- supporting key African states' progress towards stability, citizen-responsive governance, and self-reliance.

Similarly, the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, which develops and manages US policy towards the Middle East and North Africa, points to the promotion of democracy, prosperity and stability, including freedom of the press, human rights, religious liberty and the rule of law, as their mission.[15] The Department of State's policy priorities appear to be somewhat broader than the objectives stated in the 'New Africa Strategy' and more in line with the Obama administration's 'Strategy toward sub-Saharan Africa', which emphasised the strengthening of democratic institutions, the expansion of economic growth, trade and investment, the advancement of peace and security, and the promotion of opportunity and development.[16]

In terms of geographic priorities within Africa, the most important strategic documents are ambiguous. The section on Africa in the 2017 NSS only states that the Trump administration wants the US government to work with "promising nations" and "reform-oriented governments".[17] The New Africa Strategy and the Bureau of African Affairs are no more precise in stating that the United States will target its efforts to "key African governments".[18] However, with great power competition and the Indo-Pacific region as top priorities, the Horn of Africa – as an important arena for great power competition – and East Africa – as the western border of the Indo-Pacific region – are likely to remain prioritised areas.[19] In addition, the 2020 posture statement of the US Africa Command (AFRICOM)[20] highlights the importance of maintaining access to "strategic choke points and sea lines of communication, including the Mediterranean Sea and the Strait of Gibraltar on NATO's southern flank, the Red Sea and the Bab al Madeb strait, and the Mozambique Channel".[21] What is more, the North African countries of Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia, which enjoy major non-NATO ally status, are also likely to remain prioritised.[22]

With the focus on great power competition, some scholars claim that the Trump administration has started to "question the relevance of Africa for US national interests, and foreign policy, in general".[23] The only new policy initiative mentioned in the New Africa Strategy is 'Prosper Africa' (further discussed in Section 2.4). Admittedly, the Africa strategy also mentions that reviews of US support to UN peacekeeping missions and foreign assistance will be initiated, which may lead to changes of policy and activities once concluded. Thus far, however, the shift in focus has been mostly rhetorical and has not led to major changes in funding or implementation of policy programmes in Africa. As is seen in the remainder of this chapter, US Africa policy has exhibited a great deal of continuity over the last two decades.

[14] US Bureau of African Affairs (a).
[15] US Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (a).
[16] US Strategy toward sub-Saharan Africa (2012).
[17] NSS (2017, p. 52).
[18] Bolton (13 December 2018); US Bureau of African Affairs (a).
[19] Faleg and Palleschi (2020).
[20] AFRICOM is one of eleven combatant commands of the US Department of Defense. AFRICOM is responsible for US military relations with all African countries except Egypt (which is included in the area of responsibility of the Central Command, CENTCOM), the African Union, and the African regional security organisations.
[21] AFRICOM 2020 Posture Statement (30 January 2020).
[22] US Bureau of Political-Military Affairs.
[23] Kandel (2020, p. 125).

2.3 Political relations

US political and diplomatic relations with African counterparts are centred on promoting trade and investment, peace and security, human rights and democratic governance. As stated by the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs at the Department of State: "The Bureau uses diplomatic tools and public engagement to end conflict, highlight the value of education, and enhance respect for democratic institutions, including freedom of the press, human rights, religious liberty, and the rule of law".[24] The emphasis on promoting freedom, democracy, and human rights is consistent with core US political values, which are traditionally viewed as key elements of US 'soft power'.[25]

The 2017 NSS highlights the facilitating of cultural, educational and people-to-people exchanges a priority action within diplomacy and governance.[26] The Department of State leads this work through exchange programmes that support English language learning and teaching, women's empowerment, youth entrepreneurship, media engagement, and cross-cultural dialogue. An example is the Mandela Washington Fellowship, part of the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) launched in 2010, which brings around 700 young Africans each year to the United States for academic coursework and leadership training at American colleges or universities.[27] Other exchange programmes include the International Visitors Leadership Program (for current and emerging leaders), the Fulbright Scholar Program (for students and researchers), and the Fortune-US Department of State Global Women's Mentoring Partnership (for emerging women leaders in developing countries).[28]

In terms of peace and security, the United States has a history of being involved in conflict diplomacy. Before the Organisation of African Unity (OAU, now the African Union) established a mechanism for conflict resolution in the beginning of the 1990s, the United States was often involved as a principal mediator. As the OAU/AU started to take on a greater role in African conflict resolution, the US role changed from principal mediator to active supporter of the OAU/AU's role in conflict mediation, either directly or through the UN Security Council.[29]

In addition to diplomacy, the United States uses sanctions to achieve its national security or foreign policy goals (including counterterrorism, human rights promotion, and conflict resolution). The sanctions can be comprehensive (prohibiting commercial activity with an entire country) or selective (blocking assets of certain businesses, groups, or individuals), and involve trade barriers, bans on arms-related exports, restrictions on foreign assistance, and travel bans. The Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC) at the US Department of the Treasury administers and enforces economic sanctions, whereas travel bans are handled by the Department of State.[30] In Africa, the United States currently has sanctions programmes for Burundi, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Libya, Mali, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Zimbabwe. There are also sanctions programmes such as the Rough Diamond Trade Controls, which affects countries such as Sierra Leone and Liberia, with its restrictions on trade in rough diamonds.[31]

2.3.1 Diplomatic representation

The US diplomatic representation in Africa is comprised of 49 embassies, 6 consulate generals, 1 embassy branch office in Cameroon, and the US Mission to the African Union

[24] US Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (a).
[25] As stated in O'Rourke and Moodie (26 August 2020): "the term soft power generally refers to the ability to persuade or attract support, particularly through diplomacy, development assistance, support for international organizations, education and cultural exchanges, and international popularity of cultural elements such as music, movies, television shows, and literature."
[26] NSS (2017, p. 33).
[27] Mandela Washington Fellowship website.
[28] US Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.
[29] Cohen (2020).
[30] Department of the Treasury; Masters (2019).
[31] Department of the Treasury.

(AU) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Most of the formal diplomatic relations between the United States and African countries were established in the 1960s, after the African countries gained their independence. Some exceptions include Liberia and Ethiopia (where formal diplomatic relations were established in 1864 and 1903, respectively),[32] Morocco (which was the first country to recognise the United States as an independent country in 1777),[33] and South Africa (where the United States had already opened a consulate in Cape Town in 1799).[34] The most recent establishment of a US diplomatic mission was in 2006, when the United States became the first non-African state to establish a diplomatic mission to the AU. In the last two decades, the United States has also increased its engagement with the African regional groups, and accredited ambassadors to the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADEC).[35]

Additionally, the United States has a tradition of sending diplomats with the status of special envoys to address high-stakes conflict. The special envoys are usually designated to represent the president or the secretary of state, and are often used by the administration or Congress to signal special attention to a conflict or issue.[36] Under President Obama, there were two special envoys for Africa: the Special Envoy to the Great Lakes (Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Rwanda) and the Special Envoy to Sudan and South Sudan.[37] Under President Trump, the United States has created two special envoys for Africa. The Special Envoy for Sudan leads US efforts to find a political solution to the crises following the ouster and arrest of the then Sudanese president, Omar al-Bashir, in April 2019.[38] The Special Envoy for the Sahel Region of Africa is responsible for coordinating US cooperation with international and regional partners in countering the rising attacks from violent extremists.[39]

2.3.2 High-level meetings and visits

Each year, the United States holds several high-level meetings with representatives from African countries and organisations. For example, the United States holds high-level bilateral meetings with the AU (since 2013); binational commission (BNC) meetings with Nigeria (since 2010) and South Africa (since 1995); and annual African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) forums, where the United States and AGOA member countries gather to discuss issues of economics, trade and investment.[40]

In 2014, the first US-African Leaders Summit took place in Washington, DC. President Obama and former presidents George W. Bush and Bill Clinton jointly hosted the Summit, which is the largest event that any American president has held with African heads of state. Over 50 African heads of state attended the three-day summit, where discussions centred on trade and investment, security, and good governance. In addition to announcing new initiatives and commitments, including a 6 billion USD commitment to the 'Power Africa' programme and a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) with ECOWAS, the summit was said to have shifted the tone of US-African relations from dependency to partnership.[41] Yet, despite the alleged success, the US-African Leaders Summit has not been repeated since.

Overall, Africa is clearly not a personal priority of President Trump. Of his over 21,700 tweets since taking office, only 54 mention an African country or Africa.[42] Moreover,

[32] US Bureau of African Affairs (b; c).
[33] US Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (b).
[34] US Bureau of African Affairs (d).
[35] US Mission to the African Union.
[36] Lyman and Beecroft (2014).
[37] Cohen (2020).
[38] Department of State (19 June 2019).
[39] Office of the Special Envoy for the Sahel Region of Africa.
[40] US Bureau of African Affairs (e).
[41] Sy (3 August 2015).
[42] The number of tweets (and retweets) made by President Trump between 20 January 2017 and 31 August 2020 that mention an African country by name or the word 'Africa' (but not African American) was collected from the Trump Twitter Archive (see References).

starting with John F. Kennedy, no American president has met with fewer African leaders in their first term than President Trump.[43] As of September 2020, President Trump has made no trips to the African continent and only hosted four African heads of state at the White House: President al-Sisi (Egypt), Prime Minister Al-Sarraj (Libya), President Buhari (Nigeria), and President Kenyatta (Kenya).[44] In comparison, President Obama made two trips, visiting two countries (Ghana and Egypt), and hosted 14 African heads of state at the White House during his first term. Similarly, President Bush made two trips, visiting six countries (Egypt, Benin, Tanzania, Rwanda, Ghana and Liberia) and hosted leaders from 22 African countries at the White House during his first term.[45]

The lower interest in Africa is also reflected by the number of trips taken by Trump's secretaries of state; they have taken significantly fewer trips than the secretaries of states of previous administrations (Bush and Obama). Former Secretary of State Rex Tillerson made two trips to Africa in 2018, visiting Egypt, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya, Chad and Nigeria. His successor, Mike Pompeo, took four trips in 2019–2020, visiting Egypt, Morocco, Senegal, Angola, Ethiopia and Sudan. Table 2.1 summarises the number of individual countries visited and trips made to the African continent by the last three US presidents and their secretaries of state.

Table 2.1. Trips to Africa taken by presidents and secretaries of state during the last three US presidencies.

Presidential visits to Africa				Visits by the secretary of state to Africa			
President	Period	Number of		Secretary of State	Period	Number of	
		Individual countries	Trips			Individual countries	Trips
Donald Trump	2017–	0	0	Mike Pompeo	2018–	6*	4
				Rex Tillerson	2017-18	6*	2
Barack Obama	2013–17	5	3	John Kerry	2013–17	15	22
	2009–13	2	2	Hillary Clinton	2009–13	22	12
George W. Bush	2005–09	6	3	Condolezza Rice	2005–09	14	16
	2001–05	6	2	Colin Powell	2001–05	15	16

*Source: US Office of the Historian (b); Department of State. Note: Trips taken before 31 August 2020. * Pompeo and Tillerson have both visited Egypt and Ethiopia. Hence, summarising the number of individual countries visited and trips in the same way as for the Obama and Bush administrations gives a total of 10 individual African countries visited for Trump's secretaries of state.*

Visits by US presidents to African countries are generally motivated by security and what could be called geopolitical concerns. As the most populous Arab country, holding a strategic location with its proximity to the Middle East, Egypt has been regarded an important country for the stability of the region.[46] From Jimmy Carter to Barack Obama, Egypt has received at least one visit by every US president.[47] Moreover, with 43 visits from US presidents or secretaries of state over the last two decades, Egypt is by far the most well-visited country on the African continent. Under President Trump, however, Egypt has only received two visits, by the secretaries of state, which is the same number of visits made to

[43] Devermont (24 February 2020).
[44] US Embassy in Libya; US Office of the Historian (c).
[45] US Office of the Historian (b; c).
[46] Dahir (9 October 2018).
[47] Ibid.

Ethiopia in the same period. This is a significant reduction compared to President Obama's second administration, when 11 visits were made between 2013 and 2016.[48]

As important allies for US counterterrorism efforts on the continent, Kenya and Nigeria belong to the most well-visited countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Over the last two decades, US presidents and secretaries of state have made 10 visits in total to Kenya and 8 to Nigeria. In addition to trips taken to address the issue of security, past US presidents have also visited countries such as Ghana, Senegal and Ethiopia to encourage their convergence between economic development and principles of human rights and democracy.[49]

2.4 Economic relations

Since the 1960s, economic development has been an important part of the US relationship with sub-Saharan Africa, with development assistance as the backbone of its economic engagement. Over time, however, more attention has been paid to trade and investment, particularly two-way trade, and several programmes have been launched to underpin US-African trade relations. The cornerstone of US-Africa trade policy is the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which was established by Congress in 2000. It is a trade preference programme that grants unilateral trade concessions to all eligible countries, effectively allowing duty-free access to the United States for a set of qualifying products (today around 6,800 products). Eligibility is restricted to sub-Saharan African countries and evaluated on an annual basis.[50] For some countries in sub-Saharan Africa, almost all US imports fall under the AGOA program. One such example is Ghana, which in 2018 had a utilisation rate of 99.1 per cent.[51]

Under President Obama, there was a call for a new direction in "private-sector-led growth", which sought to bring together previous US government efforts, such as the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) and the US Export-Import Bank, with private sector investments. New initiatives were launched, including 'Power Africa', to promote investments and access to electricity; 'Feed the Future', to support agricultural innovation and improve food security; and 'Partnership for Growth', to stimulate US private-sector activities in Africa.[52]

Under President Trump, the United States has maintained the focus on increasing two-way trade between the United States and African countries. In 2018, Congress signed the Better Utilization of Investments Leading to Development (BUILD) Act into law, through which a new institution – the US International Development Finance Corporation (USIDFC) – was created.[53] USIDC is a development bank that combines the functions of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) and USAID's Development Credit Authority, to support investments that are important to US foreign policy, national security, and women's economic empowerment.[54] Some scholars claim that it is a response to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), as it aims to advance US influence in developing countries.[55]

[48] US Office of the Historian (a; b).
[49] Dahir (9 October 2018); ibid (18 February 2020).
[50] Office of the United States Trade Representative.
[51] "The AGOA utilization rate is calculated as the value in U.S. dollars (USD) of imports from a country under AGOA divided by the value of imports from that country under the Harmonized Tariff Schedule (HTS) of the United States product codes eligible for AGOA preferences", (USITC, 2020, p. 25).
[52] Cooke and Downie (2014).
[53] The United States Development Finance Corporation (DFC) was launched in January 2020, as a development bank that combines the functions of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) and USAID's Development Credit Authority. The DFC will support investments that are important to US foreign policy, national security, and women's economic empowerment.
[54] Donor Tracker.
[55] Akhtar and Lawson (2019).

Another initiative launched under President Trump is 'Prosper Africa', which aims to increase two-way US-African trade by improving the coordination of US efforts and providing technical assistance for American and African companies.[56] This initiative has, however, been criticised as being "more notional than a coherent set of policies";[57] underfunded;[58] and unclear about how it differs from past efforts, such as USAID Africa trade and investment hubs (established in the early 2000s).[59]

Notwithstanding the emphasis on trade and investment in US policy toward Africa, the funding of recent initiatives has been nothing near the funding allocated to development assistance, particularly the health initiatives established under President Bush (discussed in Section 2.5).[60] What is more, the US network of trade agreements in Africa is not comparable to what it enjoys in the Americas.[61] Beyond the ongoing trade negotiations on a bilateral free trade agreement (FTA) with Kenya (launched in July 2020), the United States has only a bilateral FTA with Morocco; nine bilateral investment treaties (BIT);[62] and thirteen trade and investment framework agreements (TIFA) in force with African countries.[63]

Despite the growing emphasis on trade and investment, US-African trade relations have remained underdeveloped, at a stagnating or even declining level. Between 2008 and 2018, total US trade in goods with Africa fell by 58 per cent (in nominal terms). Over the same period, Chinese total trade in goods with Africa increased by 38 per cent. As a result, China, India, and France, as well as South Africa, have all surpassed the United States as Africa's largest trading partners. Similarly, in comparison to US trade with other regions of the world, the importance of trade with Africa has fallen from 3.7 per cent of US global trade in 2008 to 1.5 per cent (equivalent to 61.7 billion USD) in 2018.[64]

While it is too early to evaluate whether recent initiatives, such as 'Prosper Africa', will have a positive effect on US-African trade, more research exists on older initiatives, such as AGOA. The results from those studies show that the impact of AGOA has varied over time and across countries, and that the gains have been unstable.[65] For example, a recent study from 2020 shows that the positive impact of AGOA has mainly been driven by increased African export of oil and other minerals, and that only a few sub-Saharan African countries have been able to expand their export of agricultural and manufactured goods.[66]

In terms of trade patterns, the United States has some level of trade with all African countries, but its trade is highly concentrated to Africa's largest economies (in terms of nominal GDP).[67] In 2018, the top five trading partners accounted for 65 per cent of US total trade with Africa, with South Africa alone, its largest trading partner in Africa, accounting for 23 per cent. Although this is a reduction in concentration compared to 2008 (when the top five trading partners claimed 76 per cent of US total trade with Africa), the reduced concentration is not driven by a trade expansion but rather by reduced trade with large African economies. As an example, trade between the United States and South Africa has

[56] Crook and Williams (2019).
[57] Hendrix (2020, p. 1).
[58] Campbell (20 February 2020).
[59] Crook and Williams (2019).
[60] Westcott (2019).
[61] In the Americas, the United States has trade agreements with Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and Peru.
[62] In Africa, the United States has signed a bilateral investment treaty with Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Egypt, Morocco, Mozambique, Rwanda, Senegal and Tunisia; (US Office of Trade Agreements Negotiations and Compliance).
[63] In Africa, the United States has signed trade and investment framework agreements that are in force with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, the East African Community, Egypt, Ghana, Liberia, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, the Southern African Customs Union, and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (see UNCTAD).
[64] Author's calculations based on trade data from IMF DOTS, which was last updated in March 2020.
[65] Frazer and Van Biesebroeck (2010).
[66] Kassa and Coulibaly (2020).
[67] In 2019, the top six economies in Africa in terms of GDP were Nigeria, South Africa, Egypt, Algeria, Angola and Morocco.

decreased (in nominal value) from 43 billion USD in 2008 to 14 billion USD in 2018. Similarly, US trade with Angola, its second largest African trading partner in 2008, has declined from 22 billion USD in 2008 to 3.2 billion in 2018. As a result, Angola is no longer among the top five US trading partners.[68] Table 2.2 lists the top five trading partners of the United States in Africa in 2018 (in terms of total value of exports and imports).

Table 2.2. Top five US trading partners in Africa in 2018 (million USD).

Country	US exports	US imports	Total trade
South Africa	5 517	8 470	13 987
Nigeria	2 668	5 621	8 289
Egypt	5 057	2 481	7 538
Algeria	1 250	4 618	5 869
Morocco	2 945	1 566	4 511

Source: IMF DOTS (last updated March 2020).

2.4.1 Imports from Africa

In 2018, the top five origins of US imports from Africa were South Africa, Nigeria, Algeria, Angola and Egypt. South Africa has been the leading import market since 2014 (see Figure 2.1). Before then, Nigeria was the largest source of US imports (in terms of nominal value). However, with the sharp drop in global oil prices at the end of 2014 and an increased US domestic production of crude oil, US imports from Nigeria started to decline.[69] This pattern holds for all oil-exporting countries, but is particularly noticeable for countries such as Nigeria and Angola, where crude oil comprises around 90 per cent of US imported goods.[70] Moreover, even if oil imports were one of the fastest-growing sectors for US imports from sub-Saharan Africa between 2016 and 2018 (entirely driven by increased oil prices),[71] Nigeria's share of US imports from Africa has not recovered to previous levels. [72]

Nevertheless, oil[73] remains the top imported good from Africa, with a combined value of 14.4 billion USD in 2018. Nigeria and Angola were the top import origins in sub-Saharan Africa, and Algeria and Libya in North Africa.[74] While US imports of oil from Africa are small compared to other regions (accounting for only 7 per cent of US total imports of oil), Africa is a much more important market when it comes to the US second most-imported good from the continent: precious metals and stones[75] (4.8 billion USD), particularly diamonds. The United States is the world's largest market for diamonds, with 86 per cent of US total imports of diamonds[76] in 2018 being from sub-Saharan Africa, with Botswana, South Africa, Lesotho, Angola, and Namibia as the top origins. [77]

[68] Author's calculations based on data from the IMF DOTS, which was last updated March 2020.
[69] USITC (2020).
[70] Observatory of Economic Complexity (b).
[71] USITC (2020).
[72] USA Trade Online.
[73] HS commodity code 27 – Mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation; bituminous substances; mineral waxes.
[74] USA Trade Online. (Data on import value corresponds to the value of goods imported as appraised by US. Customs and Border Protection. This value is generally defined as the price actually paid or payable for merchandise when sold for exportation to the US. It excludes US import duties, freight, insurance, and other charges incurred in bringing the merchandise to the US.)
[75] HS commodity code 71 – Natural or cultured pearls, precious or semi-precious stones, precious metals, metals clad with precious metal and articles thereof; imitation jewellery; coin.
[76] HS commodity code 710231 – Diamonds; non-industrial, unworked or simply sawn, cleaved or bruted, but not mounted or set.
[77] USA Trade Online.

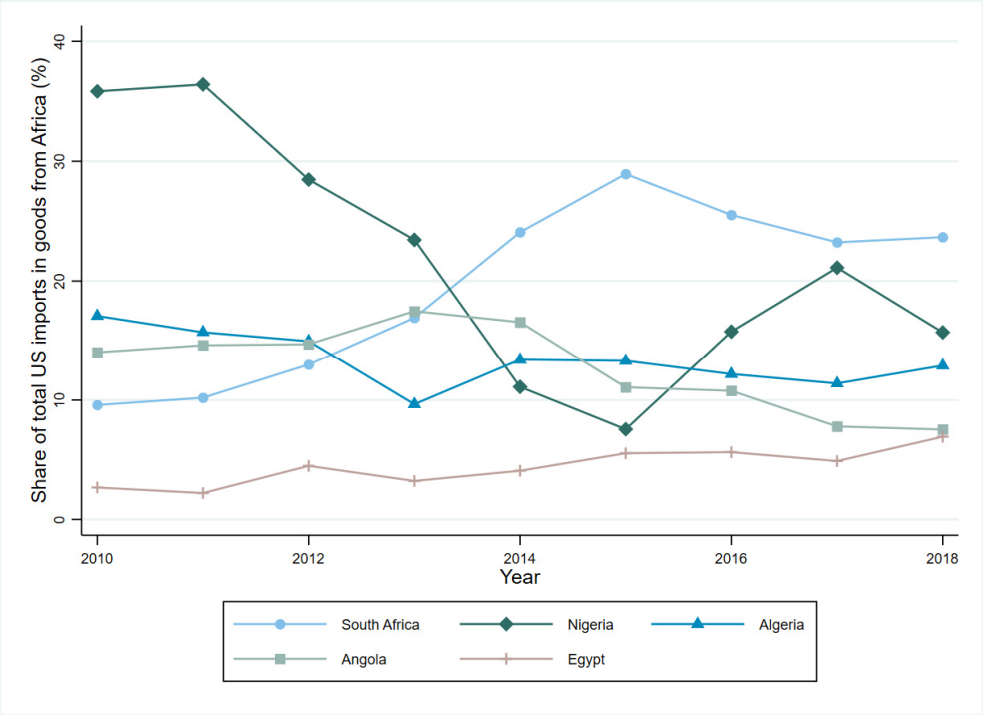

Figure 2.1. Change in the top five African origins as a share of the total US imports of goods from Africa in 2018. *Source: IMF DOTS (last updated March 2020).*

Other large import goods (in terms of total value) from Africa include fertilisers (1.0 billion USD), cocoa (898 million USD) and coffee, tea, mate and spices[78] (887 million USD). Morocco is the main African origin of US imports of fertilisers, accounting for 77 per cent of US total import of fertilisers from Africa in 2018. Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, the world's largest producers of cocoa, provided over 96 per cent of US total import of cocoa from Africa.[79] In terms of US imports of coffee, tea, mate and spices, Madagascar, followed by Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda, were the main origins.[80]

2.4.2 Exports to Africa

The leading destinations of US exports to Africa have been more or less the same over the last decade. In 2008, the top five US export markets were (in descending order) South Africa, Egypt, Nigeria, Angola and Morocco. By 2018, all of these countries, except Angola, remained at the top. While there has been an overall decline in US exports to Africa over the last decade, some countries have seen an increase. One such example is Ethiopia, to which US exports increased in 2008–2018 by 3.3 per cent (in nominal value), making it the fifth largest US export destination in Africa in 2018. Other growing US export markets include Guinea-Bissau, Comoros, Togo and Eswatini. On the other end (with a percentage decline in nominal value 2008–2018), are countries such as Angola, Benin, Libya, and Zimbabwe (see Figure 6.1 in the Appendix).

[78] HS commodity code 31 – Fertilisers; HS commodity code 18 – Cocoa and cocoa preparations; HS commodity code 09 – Coffee, tea, mate and spices.
[79] In 2018, the United States imported cocoa and cocoa preparations from Côte d'Ivoire to a value of 771 million USD and from Ghana to a value of 155 million USD.
[80] USA Trade Online.

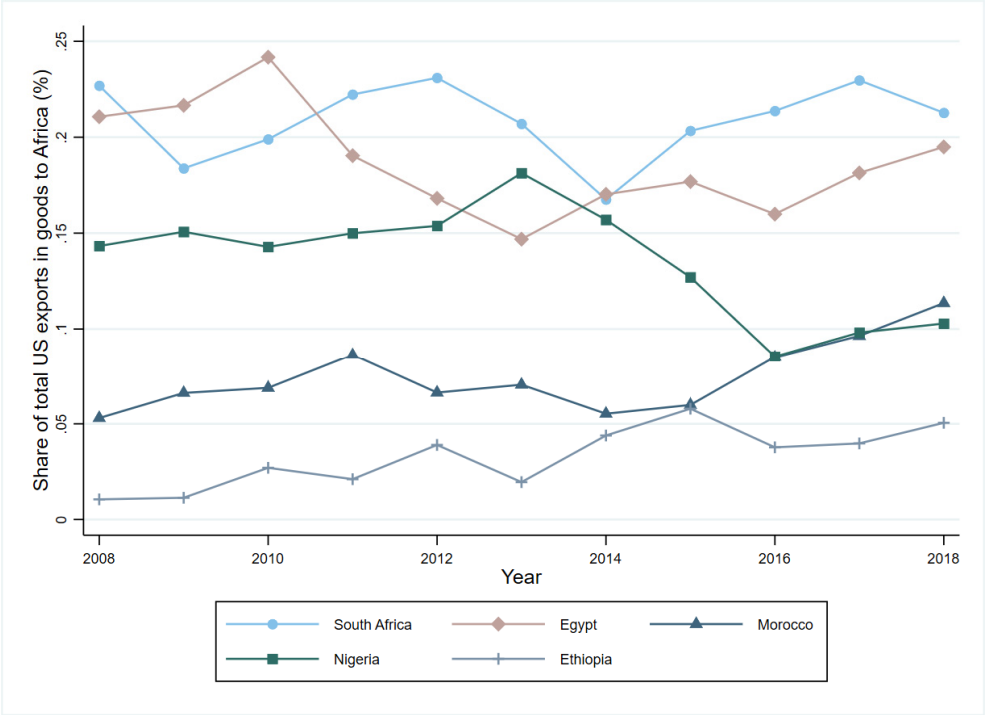

Figure 2.2. Change in the share of US total exports of goods to Africa of the top five destinations in 2018. *Source: IMF DOTS (last updated March 2020).*

The top US export goods to Africa in 2018 were mineral fuels (3.8 million USD), nuclear reactors[81] (3.5 billion USD), aircraft[82] (3.1 billion USD), vehicles[83] (2.7 billion USD) and oil seeds[84] (1.4 billion USD). The main destinations for US exports of mineral fuels were Morocco, Egypt, and Togo. South Africa was the main destination for U.S. exports of nuclear reactors, followed by Egypt and Nigeria, which were also the main destinations for US export of vehicles to Africa in 2018.[85]

The main destinations for US exports of aircraft were Ethiopia, Morocco, and Egypt.[86] Civilian aircraft were one of the fastest-growing US export goods in 2016–2018, when this sector grew from 417 million USD to 2.2 billion USD. The increased demand for civilian aircraft has been driven by increased air travel to and from the African continent, and in particular, by Addis Ababa becoming an international hub.[87]

US total export of oil seeds was primarily to the North African countries of Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco, with Egypt alone accounting for 83 per cent.[88]

2.4.3 Investment in Africa

Together with France and the United Kingdom, the United States has traditionally been one of the leading investor economies in Africa. Yet, relative to US foreign direct investment (FDI) to other parts of the world, Africa has always been a minor destination. Over the last

[81] HS commodity code 84 – Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; parts thereof.
[82] HS commodity code 88 – Aircraft, spacecraft and parts thereof
[83] HS commodity code 87 – Vehicles, other than railway or tramway rolling stock, and parts and accessories thereof
[84] HS commodity code 12 – Oil seeds and oleaginous fruits; miscellaneous grains, seeds and fruit; industrial or medicinal plants; straw and fodder.
[85] USA Trade Online. (Data cover domestic export. That is, goods that are grown, produced, or manufactured in the United States and commodities of foreign origin that have been changed in the United States, including changes made in a U.S. Foreign Trade Zone, from the form in which they were imported, or which have been enhanced in value by further processing or manufacturing in the United States.)
[86] Ibid.
[87] USITC (2020).
[88] USA Trade Online.

decade, Africa's relative importance has declined even further. In 2009, Africa hosted about 1.2 per cent of US total FDI. In 2018, this share had fallen to 0.8 per cent.[89] Consequently, the United States has started to lose ground relative to other foreign investor economies in Africa. With an FDI stock of 48 billion USD in 2018, the United States was Africa's fifth largest investor economy after the Netherlands (79 billion USD), China including Hong Kong (67 billion USD), the United Kingdom (67 billion USD), and France (53 billion USD).[90] This is a significant drop compared to 2014, when the United States was the second largest investor economy, after the United Kingdom, with an FDI stock in Africa of 64 billion USD (in nominal value).[91]

In terms of the number of FDI projects, however, the United States remained at the top with 130 new projects in 2017, an increase of 43 per cent compared to 2016, and 58 more projects than the second largest investor; the United Kingdom.[92] Most of these projects were within the real estate, hospitality and construction (RHC) sector, with companies such as Hyatt and Hilton expanding their presence in sub-Saharan Africa.[93] Another sector that has attracted US investment is the power and utility sector, with Nigeria and Ghana as the most attractive destinations in 2017.[94]

Overall, US FDI to Africa is largely concentrated to mining and extractive industries, which comprised 15 billion USD of the 48 billion USD total US FDI stock in Africa in 2018 (see Figure 2.3). The largest share of these investments was directed to Nigeria, Africa's largest oil-producing country, where multinational companies such as ExxonMobil and Chevron have made large investments. Other African countries that have attracted US investment in mining and extractive industries include Ghana, Algeria and Libya.[95]

The manufacturing sector is the third largest sector of US FDI to Africa. South Africa was the largest recipient in 2017, holding 88 per cent of the total US FDI stock in manufacturing in Africa. South Africa has also attracted a large share of US investment in finance and insurance industries (87 per cent), and holds the third largest US investment position, before Nigeria, and after Mauritius and Egypt.[96]

[89] US Bureau of Economic Analysis (a).
[90] World Investment Report (2020, p. 28).
[91] World Investment Report (2016, p. 38).
[92] EY Africa Attractiveness (2019, pp. 8, 23).
[93] Reuters (26 September 2018); Hilton Newsroom (5 October 2017).
[94] EY Africa Attractiveness (2019, pp. 26–27).
[95] US Bureau of Economic Analysis (b).
[96] US Bureau of Economic Analysis (b).

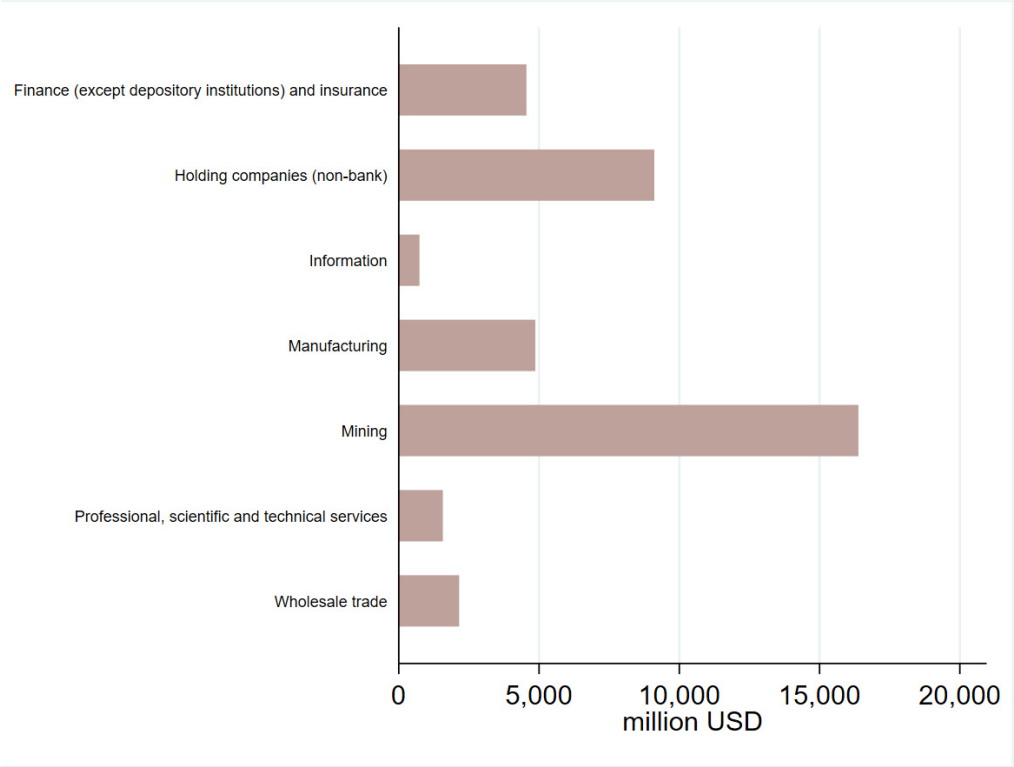

Figure 2.3. US Direct Investment Position abroad on a historical-cost basis, 2018. *Source: US Bureau of Economic Analysis (b). Note: Excludes US stock of direct investments in depository institutions and other industries where data was suppressed to avoid disclosure of individual companies.*

2.5 Foreign assistance

Traditionally, the United States has viewed foreign assistance as an important instrument of foreign policy, and it is currently the largest component of the US international affairs budget.[97] Some of its largest trade partners and important allies are former beneficiaries of US foreign assistance (e.g., Germany and Japan after World War II, and South Korea, Taiwan and Chile, in the 1960s and 1970s).[98] Ever since the first US aid programme took shape after World War II (with the Marshall plan), spending on foreign assistance has held bipartisan support. While this support has typically been stronger from the Democratic Party, some of the largest increases in spending have occurred under Republican administrations (e.g., Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush). More recently, Congress has shown bipartisan support of foreign assistance spending by rejecting the Trump administration's proposals to cut the international affairs budget by one-third.[99]

US government foreign assistance is broadly classified into two types: economic assistance and military assistance. This section focuses on economic assistance, which is foreign assistance with a humanitarian or development objective. Military assistance is defined as assistance "for the benefit of recipient government armed forces, or aid that subsidises or substantially enhances military capability", and is discussed in Section 2.6.5.[100]

Most of US foreign assistance to sub-Saharan Africa falls under the category of economic assistance. In 2018, the region received 34 per cent (11.4 billion USD) of US total economic assistance, making it the top region to receive US economic assistance in the world (see Figure 2.4). If the North African countries are included (which requires that regional

[97] Lawson and Morgenstern (2019).
[98] Runde (2020).
[99] Ingram (2019).
[100] Foreign Aid Explorer (last updated 23 April 2020).

programmable aid is excluded), the share of total disbursement of US economic assistance to Africa corresponds to 54 per cent.[101] By contrast, only 4 per cent of US total disbursements of military assistance, equivalent to 0.5 billion USD, was allocated to the sub-Saharan African region.[102] Most of the military assistance to the African continent is in fact allocated to the North African countries, but even if these countries are included (and, consequently, regional programmable aid is excluded), the share of US total military assistance allocated to Africa is only 15 per cent.

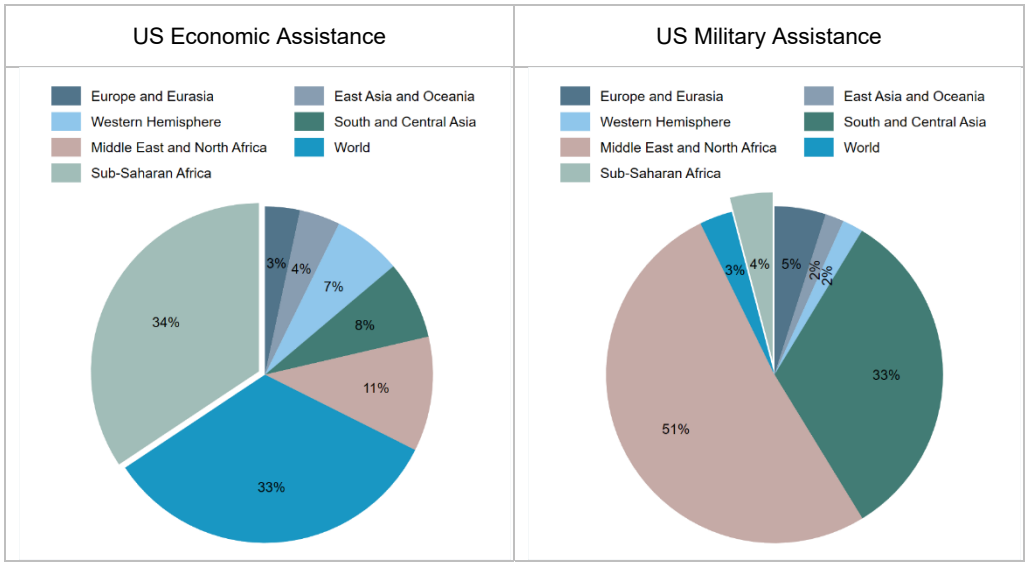

Figure 2.4. Regional distribution of US total economic and military assistance (disbursements, 2018). *Source: Foreign Aid Explorer (last updated 23 April 2020). Note: Includes both regional and bilateral programmable assistance.*

Over the past two decades, the share of US foreign assistance allocated to the sub-Saharan African region has more than doubled (in real terms). While military assistance has grown significantly relative to its initial level, the growth in foreign assistance spending to sub-Saharan Africa has been primarily driven by increases in economic assistance (see Figure 6.2 in the Appendix). In particular, US economic assistance to sub-Saharan Africa has devoted an increasing share (over 70 per cent) to Africa's health challenges, including HIV/AIDS, malaria, maternal and child health, and nutrition. This assistance has been primarily allocated through disease-specific initiatives such as the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI),[103] which have contributed to boosting US interest in the continent, as well as the image of the United States in Africa.[104] There has also been an incremental increase in funding to programmes addressing agricultural development, economic growth, peace and security, and democracy, human rights and good governance.[105]

Under President Trump, economic assistance has been linked to US national security concerns and economic growth, with economic development, particularly for women, and improving the effectiveness of US foreign assistance, as top priorities. To achieve these objectives, the US government has launched new initiatives, such as the Women's Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment Act (WEEE), which requires USAID to

[101] Author's calculations based on data from the Foreign Aid Explorer (last updated 23 April 2020).
[102] In 2018, total disbursements of U.S. foreign assistance amounted to 46 billion USD, of which 33 billion USD were economic assistance and 13 billion USD were military assistance.
[103] Husted et al. (2020).
[104] Hackbarth (2009).
[105] Husted et al. (2020).

integrate considerations of gender equality and women's empowerment into all its strategies, projects and activities.[106] In 2018, a foreign assistance review was launched, but how it will affect US foreign assistance to Africa remains unclear, since it has not been concluded at the time of writing this report.

Most US foreign assistance is provided through bilateral agencies. Overall, more than 20 government agencies are responsible for the funding or execution of US foreign assistance activities. USAID is the largest implementing agency, with disbursements of over 20 billion USD in 2018. Other major assistance players are the Departments of State, Treasury, Defence and Agriculture; the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in the Department of Health and Human Services; and the Millennium Corporation Challenge (MCC).[107] The strategic goals and priorities of USAID are outlined in 'the Department of State and USAID Joint Strategic Plan FY 2018–2022'. Under President Trump, USAID has a new "ultimate goal" of ending the need for foreign assistance, through the following four priorities:[108]

- protect America's security at home and abroad,
- renew America's competitive advantage for sustained economic growth and job creation,
- promote American leadership through balanced engagement, and
- ensure effectiveness and accountability to the American taxpayer.

Within these priorities, there is, however, a continued focus on health, economic growth, private-sector partnership and humanitarian relief.

2.5.1 Economic assistance

Since 2009, HIV/AIDS has been the single largest sector of economic assistance to sub-Saharan Africa (see Figure 2.6). In 2018, disbursements to HIV/AIDS programmes amounted to 3.5 billion. Most of this assistance was provided through PEPFAR, which has, since its establishment in 2003, provided over 85 billion USD to the global HIV/AIDS response.[109] South Africa, with the third largest adult HIV prevalence rate in the world, was the largest recipient of funding for HIV/AIDS programmes in 2018.[110] Other large recipients include Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

Emergency response is the second largest sector of economic assistance to sub-Saharan Africa, with disbursements in 2018 amounting to 2.4 billion USD. South Sudan, followed by Nigeria, Ethiopia and Somalia were the largest recipients. The third largest sector of economic assistance to sub-Saharan Africa is basic health, to which 819 million USD was allocated, with Ethiopia and Tanzania as the main recipients.

Overall, Ethiopia was the single largest recipient of US bilateral economic assistance in sub-Saharan Africa in 2018, followed by Kenya, Nigeria, South Sudan and Uganda.

Among the North African countries, Egypt was the top recipient of US economic assistance in 2018. In this region, government and civil society is the largest sector of US economic assistance, with Tunisia and Libya as the main recipient countries. The second largest sector is banking and finance, in which Egypt is the main recipient.[111]

[106] US Congress.
[107] Author's calculations based on data from the Foreign Aid Explorer (last updated 23 April 2020).
[108] USAID (2018).
[109] HIV.gov.
[110] CIA World Factbook.
[111] Foreign Aid Explorer (last updated 23 April 2020).

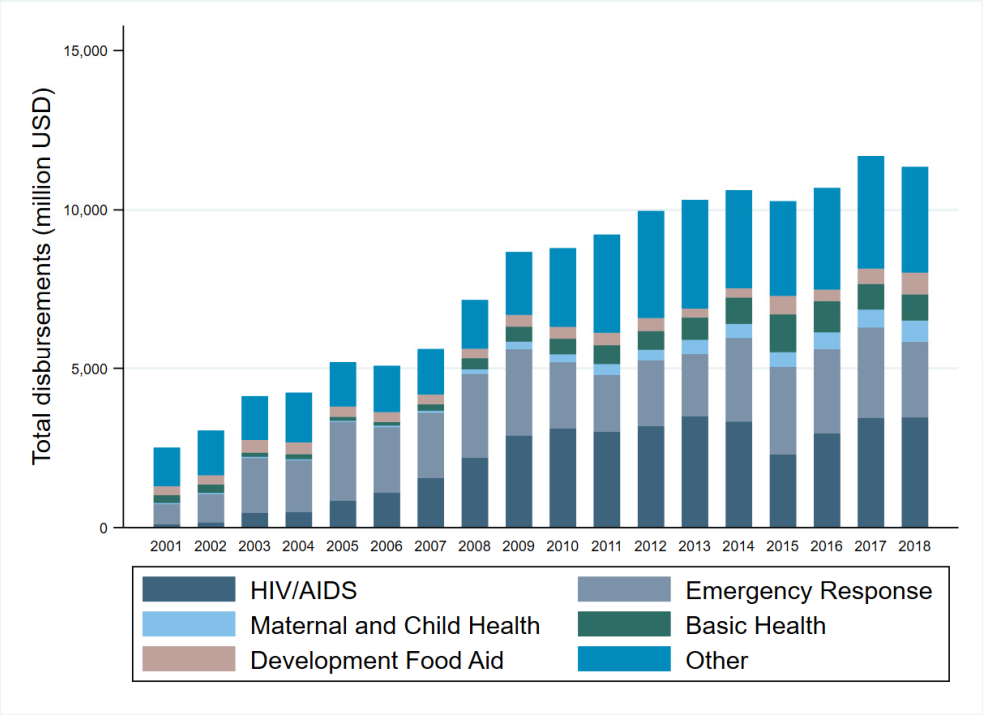

Figure 2.6. The distribution of US economic assistance to sub-Saharan Africa across sectors in 2001–2018 (million USD, constant prices). *Source: Foreign Aid Explorer (last updated 23 April 2020). Note: Includes both regional and bilateral programmable aid.*

2.6 Military-security relations

Africa has never been a top strategic priority of US national security policy. Yet, as global terrorism became the number one threat to US national security, the strategic importance of Africa started to grow. The 1998 bombings of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania underscored Africa as a source of terrorist threats, and in the 2002 NDS, Africa was listed as one of the fronts in the Bush administration's Global War on Terrorism.[112] The creation of the US Africa Command (AFRICOM) in 2007 further confirmed that the United States had national interests in Africa that required the capability of sustaining a long-term commitment.[113] Under President Obama, Africa continued to be of strategic importance as the United States took on a new approach of a "light footprint", for which Africa became the testing ground.[114]

With the recent emphasis on great power competition, however, the strategic importance of at least sub-Saharan Africa appears to be in decline. In November 2018, the Pentagon announced plans to reduce US forces in Africa by 10 per cent.[115] In December 2018, Bolton announced that the administration would review US support for UN peacekeeping missions.[116] In August 2019, the Department of Defense initiated "blank slate reviews" of US military operations and postures to align resources with the objectives of the 2018 NDS, beginning with the military posture in Africa. Although the implications of these reviews on US engagement in Africa have not been revealed at the time of writing this report, the New York Times reported in December 2019 that Secretary of Defense Mark Esper has been considering "a major reduction – or even a complete pullout – of American forces from West Africa".[117]

[112] NSS (2002).
[113] Pham (2014, p. 32).
[114] Kandel (2014, p. 13).
[115] Department of Defense Newsroom (15 November 2018).
[116] Bolton (13 December 2018).
[117] Cooper et al. (24 December 2019).

At the same time, there are factors speaking against major changes to the US military approach and presence in Africa. Firstly, containing violent extremist organisations (VEOs) remains an objective in the New Africa Strategy and is highlighted in the paragraph on Africa in the 2018 NDS.[118] Secondly, funding for peacekeeping operations and the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership programme reside under the Security Assistance Account under the Department of State, and are thus not part of the "blank slate reviews" at the Department of Defense.[119] Thirdly, several US legislators (both Republicans and Democrats) have spoken out in defence of a US military presence in the Sahel region and West Africa.[120]

In addition, the United States recently signed a ten-year military cooperation agreement with Morocco and a military accord with Tunisia. These agreements were signed during Secretary of Defense Esper's visit to Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria in October 2020. According to AP News, Esper also discussed expanding US-Algerian security cooperation in the Sahel region with Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune and the army chief, General Saïd Chengriha.[121] Hence, even if the Trump administration has expressed a wish to change US military operations and presence in Africa, it has not yet been translated into any concrete proposals of change, and may come to face opposition in Congress if suggested.

Thus, the current US military approach in Africa exhibits considerable continuity with the approach that emerged under President Obama, which in turn builds on the adaptations made under President Bush's second term.[122] The approach is based on a light footprint on the ground, involving cooperation with African and international partner nations, and a reliance on the use of surveillance drones, military drone strikes, and special forces operations.[123] There is also an emphasis on soft power, diplomacy, and multilateralism,[124] as reflected in the objectives of the Department of Defense's 2018 Strategy for Africa:[125]

(i) support the "whole-of-government" effort to address African security challenges;
(ii) leverage international partnership to support the security objectives;
(iii) maintain strategic access and influence; and
(iv) seek low-cost, resource-sustainable, innovative security solutions.

The effectiveness of this military approach has, however, been contested.[126] There are, for example, concerns that the "whole-of-government" approach will lead to a militarisation of development and diplomacy, and that the increased allocation of resources to the Department of Defense will affect the Department of State and USAID's ability to act as equal partners. In addition, scholars have argued that addressing security issues through partner countries with weak track records of democratic governance stands the risk of reinforcing the view that security concerns exceed concerns of democracy and human rights.[127]

In terms of US geographical priorities, North Africa, the Horn of Africa and East Africa are the top priorities. The 2020 Posture Statement of AFRICOM points to the "strategic choke points and sea lines of communication, including the Mediterranean Sea and the Strait of Gibraltar on NATO's southern flank, the Red Sea and the Bab al Mandeb strait, and the Mozambique Channel", as "critical to most of our geographic and functional combatant

[118] Bolton (13 December 2018); Department of Defense (2018).
[119] Cooper (6 March 2020).
[120] Williams (18 February 2020).
[121] AP News (2 October 2020).
[122] Tankel (2020).
[123] Kandel (2014, p. 13).
[124] Patman (2015).
[125] Lenihan (16 May 2019).
[126] For an overview of the research of US military operations in Africa, see e.g., Allen (2018).
[127] Goerg (2016).

commands".[128] To assure access to these strategic choke points, General Stephen Townsend, commander of AFRICOM, has said that the United States wants to be the strategic partner of choice for countries such as Djibouti and Somalia.[129] Furthermore, at the House Armed Services Committee hearing on 10 March 2020, General Townsend said that the most critical areas in Africa to focus US efforts on are the southern part of Somalia and the tri-border region of Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso.[130] While this last statement points to the Sahel region as a critical area for US efforts, both General Townsend and Secretary of Defence Esper have called on European countries to step up their efforts in this region. In particular, on 30 January 2020 General Townsend said that European countries could and should take over some of the support that the United States has been providing to the French in the Sahel region (such as airlift and aerial refuelling).[131] Similarly, Kathryn Wheelbarger, Acting Assistant Secretary of Defence for International Security Affairs, on 10 March 2020 said that while the United States is concerned with developments in Libya, particularly "Russia's encirclement", "the threat emanating from northern Africa is most acutely a European challenge".[132] These statements can be interpreted to say that West Africa and Libya have become lower priorities for the United States.

In terms of key partners on the continent, the United States has a close relationship with Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia, which enjoy major non-NATO ally status that provides them with military and economic privileges.[133] Other long-standing partners, which have been important partners in US counterterrorism efforts, are Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa.[134]

2.6.1 Military presence in Africa

Prior to the establishment of AFRICOM, responsibility for military operations in Africa was divided between the European Command (EUCOM), the Central Command (CENTCOM), and the Pacific Command (PACOM).[135] With the establishment of AFRICOM, the responsibility for all US military relations with African countries (except Egypt, which is included in the area of responsibility of CENTCOM), the AU, and the African regional security organisations was consolidated under one combatant command.[136] AFRICOM is comprised of six component commands (presented in Table 2.3), such as the US Naval Forces Africa (NAVAF), and the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA).

There are around 5,100 US service members and 1,000 Department of Defence personnel currently working on the African continent.[137] In addition, there are 2,000 assigned to the headquarters in Stuttgart and AFRICOM units at MacDill Air Force Base, in Florida, and RAF Molesworth, in the United Kingdom.[138] On 31 July 2020, a press release from AFRICOM revealed that the command has been ordered to make plans to relocate the AFRICOM headquarters and forces from Germany. According to the press release, "the command will look first at options elsewhere in Europe, but will also consider options in the United States".[139] The relocation of AFRICOM is part of a larger reduction and relocation of 12,000 troops from Germany, which President Trump has pushed for since 2018, with accusations that Germany is not paying enough for its defence.[140]

[128] AFRICOM 2020 Posture Statement (30 January 2020).
[129] Townsend (30 January 2020).
[130] Townsend (10 March 2020).
[131] Townsend (30 January 2020).
[132] Wheelbarger (10 March 2020).
[133] US Bureau of Political-Military Affairs.
[134] Kandel (2014).
[135] Cohen (2020).
[136] AFRICOM website
[137] Townsend (30 January 2020).
[138] AFRICOM website
[139] AFRICOM Public Affairs (31 July 2020).
[140] Vandiver (31 July 2020).

Table 2.3. The location and conduct of the AFRICOM component commands.

Component commands	Location	Conduct
US Army Africa (USARAF)	Operating from Vicenza, Italy	Sustained security engagement with African land forces.
US Naval Forces Africa (NAVAF)	Headquarters in Naples, Italy	Forward-deployed naval component that supports counterterrorism operations, provides maritime security and builds capacity with partner nations
US Air Forces Africa (AFARICA)	Located at Ramstein Air Base, Germany	Sustained security engagement and operations
US Marine Corps Forces Africa (MARFORAF)	Located in Stuttgart, Germany	Operations, exercise, training and security cooperation activities
Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA)	Headquarters at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti	Operations in the Combined Joint Operations Area
US Special Operations Command Africa (SOCAFRICA)	Located in Stuttgart, Germany	Persistent, networked and distributed special operations in direct support of AFRICOM

Source: AFRICOM website.

The US approach in Africa involves operating from a network of "enduring" and "non-enduring" military outposts, including forward operating sites, cooperative security locations, and contingency locations.[141] This network of outposts (or 'lily pads', as they are also called) range from 'permanent' installations with access to an airstrip that can be used for air operations, to supply depots that can be activated in the event of an emergency.[142] AFRICOM planning documents from 2019 reveal that the United States has 29 outposts in 15 different African countries.[143] Figure 2.8 shows the approximate location of these installations. In comparison to 2018 (as shown in Lindström, 2019), the cooperative security location in Gabarone (Botswana) and the four forward-operating sites in Faya Largeau (Chad), Lakipia (Kenya), Benina (Libya), and Gao (Mali) have been or are in the process of being closed. According to an article in *The Intercept*, another two outposts have also been closed, but which two has not been publicly disclosed.[144]

In addition to US military outposts on the continent, the United States has bilateral agreements on the use of 29 African international airports as refuelling centres; forward operating sites on Diego Garcia and the Seychelles in the Indian Ocean, and a significant maritime security programme in Africa.[145]

[141] "Enduring" outposts provide "strategic access and use to support United States security interests for the foreseeable future", whereas "non-enduring" outposts (or 'contingency locations') support and sustain "operations during contingencies or other operations" and "can be categorized as initial, temporary, or semi-permanent" (Turse, 27 February 2020).
[142] Lindström (2019).
[143] According to an article in the *Intercept*, two of these sites have been closed, but there is no information about which two (Turse, 27 February 2020).
[144] Turse (27 February 2020).
[145] Lindström (2019).

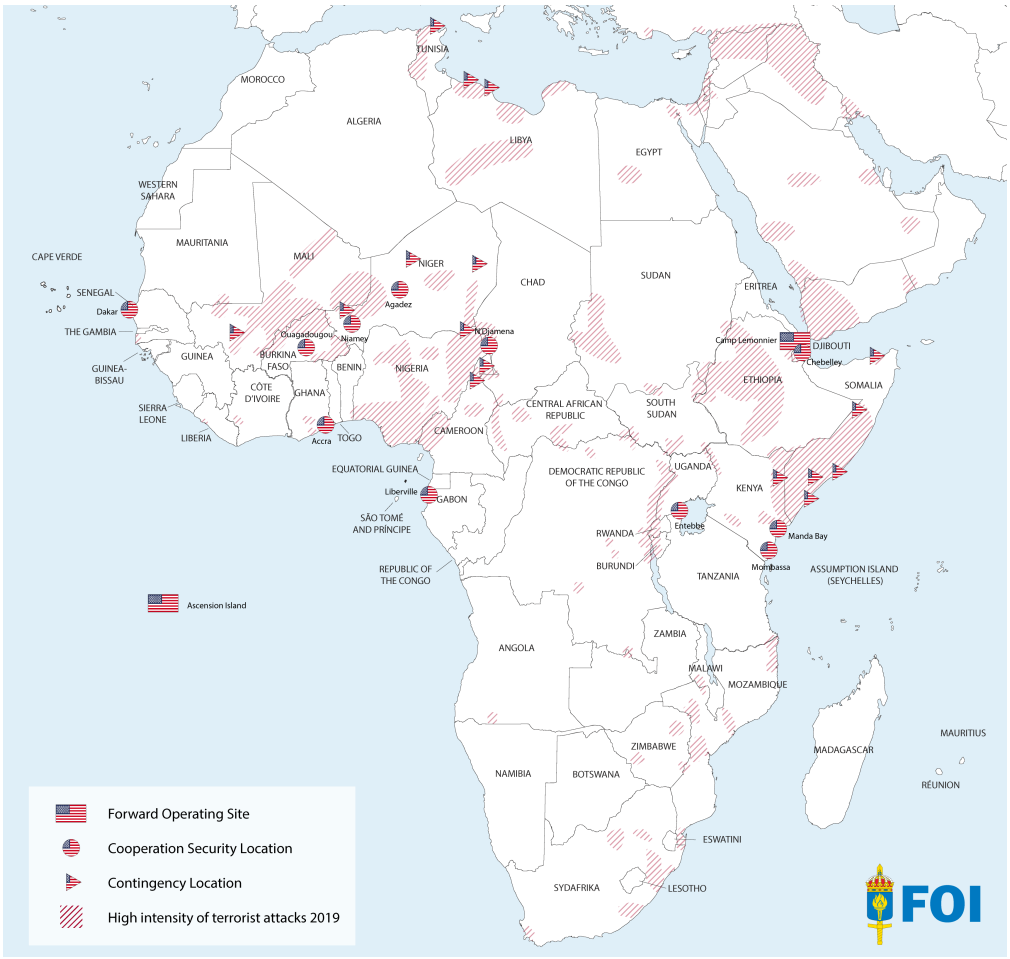

Figure 2.8. Assessment of US military bases and installations in Africa in 2019. *Source: FOI, based on US military documents for 2019, published in The Intercept (27 February 2020), and Global Terrorism Database (2020).*

The latest campaign plan of AFRICOM was presented in the 2019 Posture Statement, on 2 February 2019. Among the five lines of effort (presented in Table 2.4), AFRICOM has two counterterrorism operations in its area of responsibility: the East Africa Counterterrorism Operation, and the North and West Africa Counterterrorism Operation. The purpose of these operations is to degrade the strength and reach of violent extremist organisations (VEOs). As violent extremism and insecurity in West Africa have grown significantly in the last decade, however, the purpose of AFRICOM's counterterrorism operations in West Africa has recently shifted from a strategy to degrade to one of containment.[146]

In East Africa, the counterterrorism operations involve airstrikes against al Shabaab and IS-Somalia, and advising, assisting, and accompanying missions with partner forces within AMISOM.[147] General Townsend has described al Shabaab as the most dangerous to US interests of all VEOs in Africa.[148] As an example of the intensified threat against US interests from al Shabaab, also outside Somalia, al Shabaab attacked a US military outpost in Kenya (Manda Bay Airfield) on 5 January 2020, killing three US personnel.[149]

In 2019, the United States conducted 63 declared air strikes against al Shabaab and IS-Somalia, which is a significant increase compared to the sum of 36 airstrikes in 2009–

[146] Lead Inspector General Report (2020).
[147] Ibid.
[148] Townsend (10 March 2020).
[149] Lead Inspector General Report (2020).

2017.[150] The key hub for US counterterrorism operations in this region (and in Yemen) is Camp Lemonnier, in Djibouti, a site that the United States has leased from the Djibouti government since 2001.[151] Camp Lemonnier is the largest US military base on the continent and hosts around 3,000 US personnel. In addition to the 500 special operations forces deployed to Somalia, US forces at Camp Lemonnier are also deployed to anti-piracy operations in East Africa and the Horn of Africa. [152]

Table 2.4. AFRICOM's line of efforts and activities.

Lines of efforts	AFRICOM activities
Strengthen Partner Networks	Establish new partnerships with countries and organisations, strengthen existing relationships through enhanced communication and synchronisation, and counter the activities of external actors, such as China and Russia. This approach focuses on maintaining the United States as the preferred security partner in Africa.
Enhance Partner Capacity	Build African partner capability focused on the following: defence institution building, countering illicit trafficking, maritime security, efforts to counter improvised explosive devices (IED), humanitarian assistance, infectious disease control, and counter-VEO efforts.
Develop Security in Somalia	The approach centres on security cooperation, engagements, and exercises, as well as advising, assisting, and accompanying authorities, to strengthen the Somali Security Forces.
Contain Instability in Libya	Use military tools to advance diplomacy, conduct operations to degrade VEOs, improve the security architecture of the Libyan Government of National Accord, and, once a political reconciliation is achieved, strengthen the national security forces of a recognised Libyan government.
Support Partners in the Sahel and Lake Chad Region	Conduct engagements, exercises, and limited operations, and provide appropriate security assistance to increase partners' willingness and capabilities in counter-VEO efforts.
Set the Theatre	Ensure that USAFRICOM has the authorities, capabilities, footprint, agreements, and understandings in place to maintain access and accomplish USAFRICOM's missions.

Source: Retrieved from Lead Inspector General Report (2019, p. 11), which is based on AFRICOM 2019 Posture Statement (2 February 2019).

In West Africa, the United States is not authorised to conduct unilateral counterterrorism operations. Instead, AFRICOM provides support to African- and European-led counter-terrorism operations, and conducts airborne intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) operations. For example, the United States provides security assistance to the G5 Sahel Joint Force, the Multinational Joint Task Force and the French Operation Barkhane.[153] The regional hub for air operations in this region is Air Base 201 in Agadez, Niger, which the United States began using for ISR operations in November 2019. Around 800 US military personnel are deployed to West Africa.[154]

In North Africa, AFRICOM conducts counterterrorism operations in coordination with the Libyan Government of National Accord (GNA), involving airstrikes against IS-Libya. Due

[150] Turse (22 April 2020).
[151] Lindström (2019)
[152] Lead Inspector General Report (2020).
[153] The G5 Joint Sahel Force is an African-led force consisting of troops from Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger, with assistance from France. The Multinational Joint Task Force consists of troops from Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria.
[154] Lead Inspector General Report (2020).

to increased intensity in the ongoing civil conflict between GNA and the Libyan National Army (LNA), the United States withdrew its forces from Libya in April 2019, and conducts all its operations from outside the country. This has, according to the Lead Inspector General Report (2020), limited the operation's effectiveness. Another concern of the United States is the growing presence of Russian mercenary forces in Libya, which allegedly "threatens future US military partnerships and counterterrorism cooperation by impeding US access to Libya".[155] According to the 2020 Posture Statement, Russia sees "an opportunity to gain a strong position on NATO's southern flank".[156]

In terms of personnel contribution to peacekeeping missions in Africa, the United States has (as of 31 August 2020) a contribution of 28 military personnel. Table 2.5 shows the distribution of these across different UN peacekeeping missions in Africa.

Table 2.5. US contribution of personnel to U.N. peacekeeping missions in Africa.

Peacekeeping mission	Personnel contribution
UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)	9
UN Mission to South Sudan (UNMISS)	7
UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Central African Republic (MINUSCA)	7
UN Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO)	4
UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL)	1

Source: UN Peacekeeping website (contributions as of 31 August 2020).

2.6.2 Military exercises in Africa

In an effort to improve maritime security and strengthen partner security capability and stability in specific regions, the United States conducts several military exercises with African and Western partner nations on an annual basis. The largest special operation forces exercise is Flintlock, which has been organised since 2005. It is an African-led, integrated military and law enforcement exercise focused on counterterrorism and border protection. The latest exercise took place in Mauritania and Senegal on 17–28 February 2020, and involved around 1,600 participants from 30 African and Western nations.[157]

Another annual exercise is African Lion, which has been organised by the US Marine Corps Forces Europe and Africa for 16 years. From 2019, US Army Africa owns the exercise, and plans to make it the biggest exercise on the continent. In 2019, there were 2,500 troops participating from Senegal, Morocco, Tunisia, Senegal, Spain, France, Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States.[158] The African Lion planned for March–April 2020 was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It was going to be hosted by the Royal Moroccan Armed Forces and was planned as "a joint force headquarters-validating, partnership-strengthening, readiness-building, multinational, multi-domain and multi-functional exercise".[159]

US Naval Forces Africa conducts two annual maritime exercises. Obangame Express is an at-sea maritime exercise to increase maritime safety and security in the Gulf of Guinea. The ninth exercise was held in March 2019, and included 2,500 personnel, 95 ships and 12

[155] Ibid., p. 4.
[156] AFRICOM 2020 Posture Statement (30 January 2020, p. 4).
[157] Department of Defense News (3 March 2020).
[158] Rempfer (16 October 2019).
[159] AFRICOM website.

aircraft from 33 countries.[160] Phoenix Express is conducted with North African and Western partner nations to promote national and regional security along the African coast of the Mediterranean Sea. In 2019, Phoenix Express was hosted by Morocco and included participants from Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Libya and Egypt. In 2020, both Obangame Express and Phoenix Express were cancelled due to the outbreak of Covid-19.[161]

Justified Accord and Shared Accord are two exercises in support of UN/AU peacekeeping operations. The last Shared Accord was organised in Rwanda in August 2019 and included command post, field training and medical readiness exercises.

Other exercises include Cutlass Express, United Accord and Unified Focus. Cutlass Express is focused on maritime law enforcement and security promotion in East Africa. United Accord is a command post exercise to strengthen capability and interoperability within the framework of MINUSMA troop-contributing countries. Unified Focus is an exercise with troop-contributing countries to the Multinational Joint Task Force (Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria) focused on counterterrorism capabilities. The last United Accord was held in 2018, which is also the last year when Unified Focus was held.

2.6.3 Security cooperation programmes in Africa

AFRICOM has a number of Theatre Security Cooperation Programs (TSCP) aiming "to build operational and institutional capacity and develop human capital" in areas such as maritime security, logistics planning, deployment capacity, and peacekeeping operations. These programmes provide a framework for AFRICOM's engagement with regional partners in cooperative military activities and development.[162] In total, there are eleven TSCP in Africa. The African Partnership Station is the main maritime security cooperation programme and focuses on building partner capability in maintaining maritime security.[163] Another example is the International Military Education Training (IMET) programme, which General Townsend has described as "invaluable" and "a long-term way to influence a government and a military".[164] IMET is a programme that provides funds to African military personnel to attend US military professional training programmes in the United States and abroad.[165]

An example of the US "whole-of-government" approach to regional security is the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership programme. It is a US interagency programme, established in 2005, which coordinates the efforts and resources of military, public diplomacy and development programmes to counter terrorism and VEOs in the Sahel and Maghreb. The aim is to build local capacity and facilitate cooperation in the region. Partner countries include Algeria, Burkina Faso, Chad, Mauritania, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and Tunisia. The military exercise Flintlock is one of the military activities included in this program.[166]

2.6.4 Arms export to Africa

The United States is the world's largest exporter of arms, accounting for 36 per cent of total global arms exports in 2015–2019. Africa is, however, a relatively small arms export market for the United States. In 2015–2019, only 5 per cent of US total arms export was to Africa. While this still makes the United States the second largest exporter of arms to the African continent (14 per cent of total arms exports to Africa), it is small compared to Russia (which

[160] Oyekanmi and Petesch (1 April 2019).
[161] AFRICOM website.
[162] Ibid.
[163] Ibid.
[164] Townsend (30 January 2020).
[165] AFRICOM website.
[166] Warner (2014).

covers 49 per cent of the African market) and just ahead of China (which holds 13 per cent of the market).[167]

Within Africa, US arms exports are highly concentrated to North Africa, principally Egypt and Morocco. In 2015–2019, Egypt and Morocco were the destinations for 50 per cent and 44 per cent, respectively, of US total exports to Africa. In sub-Saharan Africa, the top three destinations were Kenya, Uganda and Nigeria, each with a share of around one per cent of US total arms exports to Africa.

US exports to Africa are mostly comprised of transport vehicles (such as armed personnel carriers, helicopters, and light transport aircraft), or components (such as turbines, engines and turbofans). In 2015–2019, the United States also exported a large number of anti-tank missiles to Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt. Export of larger equipment is mostly second hand and provided as military assistance under the DOD Excess Defence Articles (described in the next sub-section).[168]

2.6.5 Military assistance to Africa

As mentioned in Section 2.5, the majority of the US military assistance to Africa is provided to the North African countries, in particular Egypt. In 2018, the disbursements of military assistance to Egypt amounted to over 1 billion USD, making it the second-largest recipient of US military assistance in the world, after Afghanistan. Of this military assistance to Egypt, 98.6 per cent was provided through the Foreign Military Financing (FMF) programme.[169] This programme, established under the Arms Export Control Act in 1961, allows the Department of Defence to provide grants for the purchase of US defence equipment, services, and training.[170] Egypt has received military assistance under this programme since 2001. While still one of the main recipients, the disbursements to Egypt under the FMF programme have been significantly reduced over the last two decades; from the initial level (in 2018-prices) of 1.8 billion USD in 2001 to just over 1 billion USD in 2018. Other African countries that receive assistance under this programme (although far from comparable in size) are Djibouti, Morocco and Tunisia.

In sub-Saharan Africa, the majority of US military assistance is provided for stabilisation operations and security sector reform (see Figure 2.6). From 2008 to 2018, this sector has increased by almost 200 per cent (in real value). In 2018, Somalia was the largest recipient of US military assistance, most of which was provided to stabilisation operations and security sector reform, in particular peacekeeping operations, through the UN Support Office in Somalia and the AU Mission in Somalia. All sub-Saharan African countries that received military assistance for peacekeeping operations from the United States in 2018 are listed in Table 2.3. In addition to this bilateral assistance, the United States provided military assistance to peacekeeping operations through the Africa Conflict Stabilization and Border Security (ACSBS) programme, in the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Gambia.[171]

[167] SIPRI (2020).
[168] SIPRI Arms Transfer Database, accessed (25 August 2020).
[169] Foreign Aid Explorer, last updated (23 April 2020).
[170] Defence Security Cooperation Agency (b).
[171] Foreign Aid Explorer (last updated 23 April 2020).

Table 2.6. Countries in Africa where the United States provided military assistance to peacekeeping operations in 2018.

Country	Disbursements (fiscal year 2018)
Central African Republic	12.5 million USD
Democratic Republic of the Congo	3.7 million USD
Liberia	3.8 million USD
Somalia	212 million USD
South Sudan	19.9 million USD

Source: Foreign Aid Explorer (last updated 23 April 2020).

Other large programmes of military assistance in sub-Saharan Africa include the Global Train and Equip Program (187 million USD) and the DOD Excess Defence Articles (155 million USD). The Global Train and Equip Program is a counterterrorism programme implemented by the Department of State. It provides training services and equipment to national security forces of foreign countries and falls under both assistance sectors: counterterrorism, and stabilisation operations and security sector reform. The purpose of the programme is to build capability and capacity of partner nations such as Uganda, Kenya, Burkina Faso, and Nigeria.[172]

The DOD Excess Defence Articles programme involves transfers of excess defence equipment, which are provided at a reduced price or as a grant, to foreign governments, or international organisations.[173] In 2018, the United States provided defence equipment through the DOD Excess Defence Articles programme in the form of grants to Morocco, Niger, Egypt, Kenya, and Djibouti.[174]

As can be seen in Figure 2.7, the funding to programmes within the counterterrorism sector significantly dropped in 2018 compared to the previous seven years. This reduction may be a result of changes in the accounting procedures at the Department of State, which has stopped identifying how much assistance is provided to US counterterrorism programmes.[175] Between 2013 and 2017, Kenya was the largest recipient of assistance to bilateral programmes within the counterterrorism sector.

[172] Defence Security Cooperation Agency (c).
[173] Defence Security Cooperation Agency (a).
[174] Foreign Aid Explorer (last updated 23 April 2020).
[175] Security Assistance Monitor (16 May 2018).

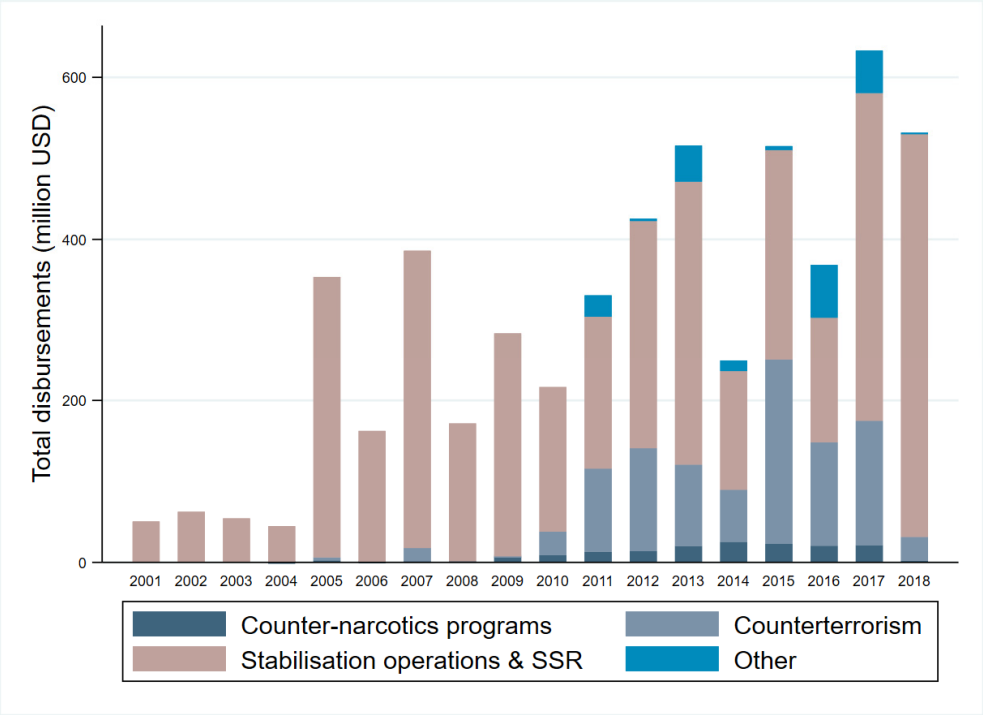

Figure 2.7. The distribution of US military assistance to sub-Saharan Africa across sectors in 2001–2018 (million USD, constant prices). *Source: Foreign Aid Explorer (last updated on 23 April 2020). Note: Includes both regional and bilateral programmable aid.*

2.7 Analysis

Over the last two decades, the United States has developed a broad engagement in Africa, largely motivated by an interest in ensuring and maintaining access to strategic resources and locations, and limiting the influence of various actors who pose a threat to US interests, but also in promoting development, democracy, rule of law and human rights. In terms of geographic priorities, the relationships with the large economies, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Nigeria, and South Africa, as well as strategically located countries in the Horn of Africa and East Africa, are prioritised.

The most significant change in US approach to Africa in the last two decades is arguably the increased emphasis on defence and security. Following the attacks on 11 September 2001, the United States became increasingly concerned that an unstable Africa could affect the stability and security of other parts of the world. As a result, advancing peace and security, with the short-term objective of counterterrorism and the longer-term objective of building African defence capacity, has become a priority of US policy objectives. While US security commitments toward Africa remain modest in relation to its commitments towards other regions of the world, the United States has increased its military presence and assistance to African countries, and increased its bilateral and multilateral security cooperation with both regional and international partners in Africa. The military approach of a light footprint on the ground has allowed the United States to minimise the risk to US troops and maximise its comparative advantage in intelligence gathering. Thus, enabled the United States to provide critical support to strategic allies (through e.g. ISR operations), while reducing the risk of popular pressure arising at home against its military presence on the continent.

Notwithstanding the increased focus on security relations, the United States has maintained its objective of promoting democracy and development. In addition to benefiting from having a globalised culture spread through sport, market brands, film, music, and the English language, the United States has an extensive set of foreign policy instruments including diplomacy, foreign assistance, preferential trade programmes, and sanctioning of human

rights violators to achieve these objectives. During the last two decades, Africa has become the top destination of US economic assistance. The United States has increased its diplomatic representation and support to the AU, and expanded its set of programmes to enhance US-African trade and investments. The United States has also (at least on paper) adopted a "whole of government" approach (comparable to the EU's comprehensive approach) to enhance the coordination between its diplomatic, development and defence efforts.

Despite all this, the United States has started to lose ground to other external actors, particularly China, which has surpassed the United States in being Africa's single largest trading partner, and become a larger investor economy in Africa. What is more, Afrobarometer polls from 2014/2015 show that China is seen as having a greater external influence than the United States, particularly in the surveyed countries in Southern, Central and East Africa.[176] Furthermore, as the United States has withdrawn its ground forces from Libya, other countries, including Russia, have gained more influence and affected US access.

In light of this, and the Trump administration's general emphasis on great power competition, US official documents and public statements about Africa have in the last four years placed increasing emphasis on Africa as an arena for great power competition. While this suggests that the United States will continue to have an interest in Africa, there have been concerns that resources will be shifted away from Africa to more prioritised arenas of great power competition, and that this will lead to at least a partial withdrawal from the continent. These concerns have been reinforced by the Trump administration's reviews of US military operations and postures, and foreign assistance, as well as by the fact that President Trump has shown very little personal interest in Africa, with no visits to the continent during his first term in office, and few meetings with African leaders in general. Whether these concerns are valid and continue to be relevant under the next administration remains to be seen. Thus far, however, this new (rhetorical) focus on great power competition has not yet been translated into any major shift of US policy or activities in Africa.

[176] Afrobarometer (2016).

3 Russia's relations with Africa

On 23–24 October 2019, in the Russian Black Sea town of Sochi, Russian President Vladimir Putin hosted the first-ever Russia-Africa Summit. The event brought together representatives from 54 African countries – 45 of which were represented by their heads of state or government – as well as by the heads of eight major African continental and regional organisations, over 100 ministers, and a large number of owners and top managers of the largest corporations on the African continent.[177] The Russia-Africa Summit demonstrated Moscow's growing ambitions toward Africa in recent years. This chapter presents an analysis of how these ambitions have evolved over the last two decades, with a particular emphasis on developments after the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, when Westerns sanctions against Russia pushed Moscow to expand its ties in other directions and substitute for the loss of market share in Europe.

3.1 Historic ties to Africa

Russia's interest in Africa is far from a new phenomenon. The Soviet Union devoted little attention to Africa before World War II. However, with the emergence of the Cold War, its policy became more coherent. Moscow provided important political support to various decolonization movements across Africa. Rather than being driven by Marxist ideology, this support was mostly grounded in the simple objective that the Soviet Union then shared with the United States: the dismantling of the French and British empires. It was only in the beginning of the 1960s, as most African countries gained their independence, that Africa became an important front in the Cold War. The Soviet Union eventually saw Africa as a promising arena for competition with the United States. It developed relations with more than 40 African countries, and provided technical assistance in different areas. Many African countries were drawn to the Soviet Union's Marxist-Leninist and anti-imperialist ideology. Particularly Ethiopia, Somalia, Mozambique, Angola, Egypt and Libya were at various times key Soviet allies.[178]

Some of these countries, particularly Mozambique, Angola, and, Ethiopia, also provided the stage for armed proxy conflicts during the Cold War. For instance, during the Mozambican war of independence (1964–1977), Moscow rendered full and unconditional support to the Communist forces of the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO), which turned out to be a decisive factor in their ultimate victory.[179] In the Angolan civil war (1975–2002), Moscow supported the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). As a result, Soviet naval, army and air force troops and advisors had access to the Luanda military base for more than 25 years.[180] In Ethiopia, Soviet troops were deployed under the guise of military advisors when the country had a Marxist regime (1974-1991).[181]

The Soviet Union also tried to engage African youth and opened its universities for students from African "socialist-brotherly nations". Many of those who later became prominent African politicians studied at the Patrice Lumumba University, which was established in 1960, in Moscow.[182] Others, such as post-apartheid leaders of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki and Jacob Zuma, received military training in the Soviet Union, as part of its outreach to the African National Congress (ANC) during the apartheid era.[183]

[177] Kortunov et al. (2020, p. 6).
[178] Besenyö (2 June 2019).
[179] Sukhankin (2020b).
[180] Hedenskog (2019, p. 37).
[181] Felgenhauer (2020).
[182] Wijayadasa (29 January 2020). For instance, Hifikepunuye Pohamba, former president of Namibia; Youssouf Saleh Abbas, former prime minister of Chad; and Miche Djotoids, former president of Central African Republic. The Patrice Lumumba University is now called University of Friendship of the Peoples.
[183] Stronski (2019, p. 4).

Despite its efforts and investments, however, the Soviet Union never managed to build long-lasting alliances with African regimes. By the end of the 1980s, it projected only limited influence across the continent. With the Soviet economy under recession and relations with the West having improved, Moscow's interest in Africa declined.[184] During the 1990s, post-Soviet turmoil ended many of Russia's global ambitions, including in Africa. Russia closed nine embassies and three consulates on the African continent and drastically reduced the number of personnel subordinated to the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA).[185] Russian cultural institutions closed down, economic relations were unilaterally terminated, and Moscow abolished previously generous aid programmes.[186]

Since the early 2000s, as part of President Vladimir Putin's drive to reassert his country as a major global player, Russian foreign policy has become more active and assertive. Russia's main foreign policy goals are to revitalize itself as a recognised global great power, diminishing the influence of the United States, and re-establish a recognised sphere of interests in the post-Soviet space. After the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the Western sanctions imposed on Russia, the geopolitical competition with the West and Russia's efforts to project power abroad have increased. This can be seen not only in the post-Soviet area, but also in regions such as Africa, the Middle East, the Western Balkans and Latin America.[187]

From the early 2000s, Russia began to re-establish a small foothold in Africa, starting with South Africa and the African Union (AU) – two actors Russia identified as partners in supporting its vision for a multipolar world. Russia then expanded its activities, involving itself in UN peacekeeping operations, and from 2008, participating in the international anti-piracy task force outside Somalia. Since then, the Russian influence and presence in Africa have grown substantially and now include political, military-security, economic, diplomatic, and informational resources to rebuild old ties and develop new ones.[188]

3.2 Policy towards Africa

The increased interest in Africa under Putin, however, has yet to manifest itself in Russia's strategic documents. There is no comprehensive 'Russian Africa Strategy' comparable to the US Africa Strategy outlined in December 2018. A review of various official Russian documents enshrining Moscow's main foreign and defence objectives – such as the National Security Strategy, the Foreign Policy Concept and the Military Doctrine – all confirm, in fact, that Africa still holds rather minor strategic importance for Moscow, although these documents are now several years old and in the process of being updated.

Russia's Foreign Policy Concept traditionally separates North Africa, which it considers a part of the Middle East and, as such, a potential source of instability and terrorism, from the rest of Africa. The current concept, from 2016, limits its attention to sub-Saharan Africa to only a single paragraph (No 99), the very last paragraph among the regional foreign policy objectives. It calls for enhancing bilateral and multilateral relations, improving political dialogue, promoting trade and economic cooperation, preventing regional conflicts, and facilitating post-colonial settlement in Africa, as well as promoting ties with the African Union.[189] The wording is the same as in the previous concept from 2013.

The current National Security Strategy, from 2015, deals with Africa in three paragraphs. Paragraph 16 mentions that "the increase in migration flows from Africa and Near Eastern countries has demonstrated the non-viability of the regional security system in the Euro-Atlantic Region based on NATO and the European Union". Paragraph 18 lists Africa among the "regions becoming the basis for the spread of terrorism, interethnic strife, religious

[184] Dreyfus (2020, pp. 1–2).
[185] Marten (2019, p. 155).
[186] Besenyö (2 June 2019).
[187] Hedenskog and Persson (2019, pp. 82–84).
[188] Hedenskog (2019, pp. 34–37).
[189] Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2016).

enmity and manifestations of extremism". Finally, Paragraph 96 notes that Russia develops political, trade and economic security, as well as military-technical cooperation and humanitarian and educational contacts, with the states of Africa and regional associations of these states. Additionally, South Africa, as a partner in BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa), is mentioned separately, in one paragraph (No 88), as a priority for a strategic partnership with Russia.[190]

Russian military doctrines are usually scant on specific geographic references per se. The latest doctrine, from 2014, is no exception. Although it does not mention Africa, South Africa gets a unique mention, in the same context as in the National Security Strategy.[191]

The lack of official policy documents dealing with Africa makes it interesting to study how some of the Russian think tanks – such as Valdai Discussion Club and the Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC), both close to the country's political leadership – view Russian policy in Africa. According to a report from the Valdai Discussion Club, Russia's Africa policy is guided by some shared values with African countries, which gives Russia a favourable position, in comparison with Western states, in dealing with Africa. Primarily, this relates to the commitment to de-colonialization. Unlike some Western and Asian countries, Russia never colonised Africa, neither politically nor economically. Russia also does not carry the burden of the slave trade. The report further lays down the countries that Russia's policy on Africa prioritises:[192]

- large economies (South Africa, Egypt, and Nigeria);
- comfortable hubs, in terms of financial and business infrastructure (Mauritius, Rwanda, and Ghana);
- traditional partners, a legacy of the Soviet Union (Angola, Mozambique, and the Seychelles); and,
- countries interested in developing political, economic and military co-operation with Russia (Zimbabwe and the Central African Republic).

A RIAC study points out that potential areas for cooperation between Russia and African countries include geological exploration and mining, space exploration, the energy industry (power generation and infrastructure projects, including alternative energy and electric power distribution), the defence industry, health care, education, social services, the environment, and so on.[193]

Although Africa is clearly not the first priority in Russian foreign policy, Moscow sees its actions in Africa as a chance to expand its military footprint and reduce the negative economic consequences of the sanctions and the overall deteriorating relationships with the West. The Russian political leadership also sees Africa as an arena to act in as an international mediator, humanitarian great power, effective counterterrorism partner and influential soft power. Last, but not least, Africa presents opportunities to boost its economy and as a source of lucrative deals for close associates of President Putin.[194]

One of Russia's main goals in Africa is to project power on the global stage, and particularly to strengthen its global position by winning support from African states at the United Nations (UN). Africa comprises the largest voting bloc in the UN, with the 54 African states accounting for 25 per cent of the General Assembly (UNGA) and three seats in the UN Security Council (UNSC). Currently, the holders of these UNSC seats are Niger, South Africa and Tunisia.

The result, however, is mixed. For instance, the 27 March 2014 UNGA resolution to not recognise Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea can serve as an example of Russia's rather limited ability to attract African support in the UN. Of the 54 African countries, only two

[190] Russian Security Council (2015).
[191] Russian Security Council (2014).
[192] Balytnikov et al. (24 October 2019, pp. 4–10).
[193] Kortunov et al. (2020, p. 5).
[194] Shchetkina (14 July 2019).

African states (Zimbabwe and Sudan) joined Russia and voted against the resolution, while 23 countries abstained, and six did not show up for the vote.[195] In total, 100 states voted for the resolution, 11 against, and 58 abstained.

However, Russia has received support from African partners in key UN votes on Syria and has cultivated authoritarian regimes in Africa as potential allies in blocking international efforts to promote human rights and democratic governance through UN-affiliated organisations and agencies. Russia's advocacy for the principle of non-intervention in international affairs of sovereign states and its rhetorical calls for Africans – not Westerners – to resolve African issues have contributed to the growing synergy between Russia and the African states within the UN.[196] For instance, when Russia in 2016 withdrew its signature from the Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court, Moscow encouraged several African countries to do the same.[197] Russia has also used its veto as a permanent member of the UNSC to shield African countries, such as the Central African Republic, Libya, Sudan and Zimbabwe, from international human rights-related criticism and sanctions for war crimes and other bad behaviour.

Another main goal of Russia in Africa is accessing raw materials and natural resources, and supporting energy and power developments in Africa through Russian companies. Africa is the home to some of the world's largest resources of coltan, cobalt, gold and diamonds.

The third main goal connects to arms exports and security cooperation. Algeria and Egypt are the largest importers of Russian arms in Africa. Since 2015, Russia has developed more than 30 bilateral military cooperation agreements with African states, involving such various issues as peacekeeping, joint training, military-technical cooperation, and anti-piracy operations (see Figure 3.5 and Table 6.1 in the Appendix).

3.3 Political relations

The foreign policy of Putin's Russia, in contrast to the foreign policy of the Soviet Union, is not driven by any particular ideology. While Russia's foreign policy goals tend to be consistent, the implementation can be flexible. An example of such flexibility was Madagascar's 2018 presidential election, where Russia allegedly offered to help no fewer than six candidates, including the incumbent, before abandoning him in favour of the frontrunner. In another example, from Guinea, the Russian ambassador openly supported a controversial plan to amend the constitution to allow President Alpha Condé to serve more than two terms. According to the ambassador's words: "constitutions are no dogma, Bible or Koran. It's constitutions that adapt to reality, not reality that adapt to constitutions".[198]

One principle, however, followed consistently in Moscow's foreign policy, whether in the post-Soviet area or in Africa, is opposition to what it sees as Western meddling in other countries' internal affairs in the name of promoting human rights and democracy. For the Kremlin, the events in Libya in 2011, for instance, when the dictator, Muammar Gadaffi, was ousted after a Western military intervention, exemplified Western double standards. The United States and the leading Europeans spoke of universal values and human rights, but, viewed from Moscow, their policies were driven by geopolitical and commercial interests. Western capitals also call for the removal of Assad in Syria, yet turn a blind eye to political repression in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, both which happen to be key United States allies.[199] Likewise, Russian leaders do not consider "colour revolutions" as expressions of genuine popular discontent, but as a variant of Western soft intervention, which aims towards regime change.[200] In line with this, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov criticised French calls for an investigation into the results of the Democratic Republic of the

[195] UN General Assembly (2014); Dedet (2019).
[196] Stronski (2019, p. 7).
[197] Russel and Pichon (2019, p. 8).
[198] Reuters (11 January 2019).
[199] Lo (2015, pp. 94–95).
[200] Hedenskog and Persson (2019, p. 90).

Congo's 2018 presidential election as "interference". In Sudan, during the turmoil in the aftermath of the April 2019 coup that led to the ousting of President Omar al-Bashir, Russia warned against "external intervention" and denounced extremists and provocateurs who attempted to destabilise the country.[201]

Russia's flexible and pragmatic foreign policy implementation offers a generous control room for dealing with politically unstable and frequently isolated regimes in countries handsomely endowed with natural resources. The Russian leadership does not particularly care about the state of human rights in these countries, and does not criticise African regimes for their human rights abuses.

Russian involvement in sub-Saharan Africa follows a similar pattern to the one tested in Syria: Moscow (covertly) enters into agreement with the country's leadership and, in exchange for covert military support, receives concessions on access to target country's natural resources. Under this scheme, a portion of the profit allegedly goes to the Russian state budget (via the firms involved), while the rest is distributed among private individuals who, in fact, may be closely associated with President Putin and the Russian government.[202]

The prominent role of private businesspersons and semi-state actors in Russia's engagements in Africa make it possible to speak of a two-track approach:

1. the official track, consisting of contacts maintained by large state-backed corporations and official institutions, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and Ministry of Defence (MoD);
2. the un-official track, where the key roles have been allocated to businesspersons close to President Putin and semi-state actors such as Private Military Companies (PMCs).

At the official level, the most important Russian diplomat (except for Foreign Minister Lavrov) for the implementation of Russia's policy in Africa is probably Mikhail Bogdanov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. Bogdanov has been Special Presidential Envoy to the Middle East and Africa since October 2014, and as such has assumed a central role in securing the Kremlin's goals in Africa. He played an instrumental role in preparations for the Russia-Africa Summit and Economic Forum in Sochi in October 2019. His frequent visits to the continent, with a visible tilt towards sub-Saharan Africa, have often been indicators of the Kremlin's intentions to expand. Moreover, Bogdanov has undertaken efforts to facilitate Moscow's military technical cooperation with certain African countries. For instance, his lobbying efforts resulted in the lifting of the UN's arms embargo on the Central African Republic.[203] However, with the Russia-Africa Partnership Forum, a consultation format established following the 2019 Sochi Summit and that was held for the first time in July 2020 (as a video conference, due to the Covid-19 pandemic), there is an indication that these inter-personal ties that dominated Russian official policies, primarily embodied by Bogdanov, are gradually being replaced by a more structured approach.[204]

At the un-official level, the most important actor is probably Yevgenii Prigozhin, the alleged financer of the Wagner Group PMC. Prigozhin, who began his adult life in a Soviet prison cell, convicted of theft, fraud and robbery, started his road to fame when becoming famous as "Putin's chef", for his catering contracts for the Kremlin. Later he also received contracts for the supply of food to the army, schools and kindergartens. Prigozhin has become the centre of a vast network of companies, including media firms, the Internet Research Agency (the "troll factory") in St. Petersburg, oil and mining operations, and private military contractors, such as Wagner Group, which wages plausibly deniable interventions on behalf of Moscow in trouble spots in different parts of the world.[205] Prigozhin is under US

[201] Russel and Pichon (2019, pp. 7–8).
[202] Sukhankin (2020a).
[203] Bugayova and Regio (2019, p. 10); Sukhankin, (2020a).
[204] Sukhankin (2020c).
[205] Weiss and Vaux (28 September 2019).

sanctions for his interference in the US 2016 presidential elections and under EU sanctions over the poisoning of the opposition figure Aleksei Navalny and for providing support for the Wagner Group's activities in Libya.[206]

In late 2017, Prigozhin took an interest in developing business relations with African countries. While the activities were underpinned primarily by self-interest, Prigozhin managed to convince Putin that Russia would benefit from the work in Africa, as it allegedly contributed to Russia's pride and prestige on the continent, as well as strengthened Russia's global standing against the background of its conflict with the West.[207]

In 2019, the Russian investigative journalist project, "Proekt", listed 13 countries in Africa where Prigozhin was active.[208] What all the states had in common was that they were experiencing socio-political instability, were endowed with strategically important natural resources, and constituted spheres of interest of former colonial powers such as France (Central African Republic), Belgium (Democratic Republic of the Congo), and Portugal (Mozambique) – actors who Russia does not see as being credible external competitors in Africa.

3.3.1 Diplomatic presence and high-level meetings

Increasingly close diplomatic ties accompany the growing Russian military and economic engagement in Africa. Currently, the Russian Federation has embassies in 40 countries there.[209]

The number of official visits to the African continent by the Russian President and Minister of Foreign Affairs have increased as well (see Table 3.1). Neither Russia's first president, Boris Yeltsin (1991–99), nor Vladimir Putin, during his first presidential period (2000–2004), visited Africa. After a 2005 visit to Egypt to meet with President Mubarak, Putin's official visits to Africa have become more frequent. Before leaving the presidential post, in April 2008, he also visited Algeria, South Africa and Morocco, in 2006, and Libya, in 2008.

During his four years as president, Dmitrii Medvedev managed to pay Africa one important official visit for a five-country tour to Egypt, Nigeria, Namibia, Angola and South Africa, in June 2009. After returning to the presidency in 2012, Putin has prioritised South Africa and Egypt, with two official visits to each country. He visited South Africa for BRICS Summits in 2013 and 2018 and, in between, Egypt, in 2015 and 2017, for official meetings with President al-Sisi.[210]

Russia's veteran Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sergei Lavrov, in office since 2004, has made Africa a frequent destination for his foreign trips, especially since 2009. Of particular importance have been the "2+2" meetings (MFA and MoD) with Egypt, in 2013 and 2017, the five-country tour of Namibia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Angola and Ethiopia, in March 2018, and the two tours of Maghreb (Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco), in 2005 and 2019.

Egypt is, by far, the country that Russian presidents and foreign ministers have visited most, with 17 dedicated, single-country visits since 2000. Other North African countries, particularly Algeria (6), Morocco (3) and Tunisia (3), are also important destinations. The most visited country in sub-Saharan Africa is South Africa (5). The Covid-19 pandemic, however, drastically reduced the number of foreign trips during 2020. At the time of writing, Putin's most recent official visit to Africa was in July 2018 (South Africa) and Lavrov's, in January 2019 (second tour of Maghreb).

[206] Rozhdestvensky and Badanin (12 September 2019); Marten (2019, p. 162); Meduza (2016); Euractiv (2020).
[207] Shekhovtsov (2020, p. 41).
[208] These were the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Libya, Madagascar, Angola, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, The Central African Republic, Chad, Nigeria and Kenya (Rozhdestvensky and Badanin, 12 September 2019).
[209] Afrikana.ru; Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs website.
[210] President of Russia website; Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs website.

To put the Africa visits in perspective, Russian state officials' visits to Africa are much less frequent than visits to post-Soviet countries, or to Western countries, China and other Asian countries. Since 2000, Putin has in his capacity as president visited Kazakhstan 26 times, Belarus 23 times, and China, 16 times.

Table 3.1 Number of presidential and foreign minister visits to Africa since 2000.

Presidential visits				Foreign minister's visits			
President	Period	Number of		Foreign minister	Period	Number of	
		Individual countries	Trips			Individual countries	Trips
Vladimir Putin	2018–	1	1	Sergei Lavrov	2018–	5	2
	2012–18	2	3	Sergei Lavrov	2012–18	11	10
Dmitrii Medvedev	2008–12	4	1	Sergei Lavrov	2008–12	4	5
Vladimir Putin	2004–08	5	5	Sergei Lavrov	2004–08	4	3
	2000–04	0	0	Igor Ivanov	1998–04	2	5

Sources: President of Russia website; Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs website. Note: Trips taken before 31 August 2020.

3.3.2 Russian soft power

The Russian Foreign Policy Concept, from 2016, notes that 'soft power' has become an integral part of efforts to achieve foreign policy objectives. This primarily includes the tools offered by civil society, as well as various methods and technologies, from information and communication, to humanitarian and other types.[211] The perception of soft power in Russia is, therefore, close to public diplomacy.[212] The main tool for Russian soft power or public diplomacy is *Rossotrudnichestvo*, the Russian Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States Affairs, Compatriots Living Abroad, and International Humanitarian Cooperation, which is responsible for implementing Russia's cultural policy abroad.

Rossutrudnichestvo was established in accordance with a presidential decree in 2008 and now operates in 80 countries, all over the world, under the jurisdiction of the MFA. In Africa, the agency has opened centres for science and culture in seven countries – Egypt, Ethiopia, Morocco, Republic of the Congo, Tanzania, Tunisia and Zambia – and has a representative at the Russian embassy in South Africa.[213] Within its priorities, the agency works particularly with African youth in promoting the Russian language and culture abroad, promoting Russian language teaching as well as extending educational cooperation between Russian universities and universities abroad.[214]

Russia has been deeply engaged in information campaigns to legitimise itself and aid its other strategic objectives in Africa. The Kremlin uses an evolving set of narratives to portray itself as a great power, peacemaker, humanitarian actor, counterterrorism partner, and

[211] Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2016).
[212] Kulkova (9 October 2019).
[213] Rossotrudnichestvo website.
[214] Rossotrudnichestvo website.

counter-narcotics fighter, etc. Russia is attempting to boost these narratives in Africa through propaganda channels such as RT and Sputnik, which broadcast their content in Africa and cooperate with local partners. Other examples of Russian soft power activities include the hosting of the first Miss Central African Republic beauty contest, in 2018 and, on the fifth anniversary of the occupation of Crimea, hosting celebrations in several states, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Botswana, in 2019.[215]

According to Dossier Center (a Russian investigative organisation founded by Mikhail Khodorkovskii, a Russian oligarch who fell out of favour with Putin), in October 2019 Facebook removed three Russian-backed disinformation campaigns linked to Prigozhin. The campaigns targeted Cameroon, Libya, Madagascar, Mozambique, South Africa and Sudan and seemed to be testing new techniques for later deployment elsewhere. Such techniques included working with local proxies to disguise the source of information, expanding the volume of content disseminated, and using a wider range of languages (including Arabic, for the first time). The messaging itself varied, with some promoting Russian policies or business interests in the area, some criticising French and American policies in the region, and others backing certain parties or candidates in elections.[216]

Furthermore, Russia has engaged political operatives in election monitoring and interference in Africa. The agents involved were not employed directly by the Russian state, but by a company controlled by Prigozhin.[217] The organisation, the Association for Free Research and International Cooperation (AFRIC), was created in April 2018, and envisaged as a Russian front organisation that would pretend to be an authentic African initiative, but would effectively promote Russian political and economic interests in Africa. In 2018–2019, AFRIC interfered in elections in five African countries: Zimbabwe, Madagascar, Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Africa, and Mozambique. In these countries, AFRIC closely coordinated its work with Russian political consultants from other Prigozhin-led structures and loyal media.[218]

The result was mixed. In the 2018 Zimbabwean general election, Russia provided electoral campaign assistance to Zimbabwe's new president, Emmerson Mnangagwa, who in November 2017 led a coup d'état that ousted President Robert Mugabe, who had headed the country for 30 years. The Russian engagement was preceded by a number of high-profile contacts between Russian and Zimbabwean officials, such as the visit of Foreign Minister Lavrov to Harare, and announcements of new bilateral joint ventures with Russia, for both a platinum mine and the Alrosa diamond company.[219]

In the 2018 Malagasy presidential election, the Wagner Group sent a small group of political analysts to support the incumbent, President Hery Rajaonarimampianina, in his reelection bid, in exchange for economic agreements on mining (chromite and gold), oil, agriculture, and the port of Toamasina.[220] Rajaonarimampianina had visited Moscow in March 2018, when he held secret talks with Putin and Prigozhin. After the group of analysts had left Rajaonarimampianina, who they considered as not having any chance of winning, Russia backed Andry Rajoelina, the opponent, who won the election. Prigozhin apparently worked with operatives to fund a half dozen or more presidential candidates. He eventually asked them to pool their resources on behalf of Rajoelina, when it became clear that he was pulling into the lead. Around 2018, Prigozhin's network received a contract for a chromite mining joint venture in Madagascar. Initially, the Russian pirouette worked. Prigozhin's company was able to negotiate with the new government to keep control of the chromium mining operation, despite the workers' protests, but the mine shut down almost immediately, as workers launched a strike against its Russian managers.[221]

[215] The National (18 December 2018); Bugayova and Regio (2019, p. 6).
[216] Fidler (21 November 2019); Grossman et al. (2019).
[217] Russel and Pichon (2019, p. 8).
[218] Shekhovtsov (2020, pp. 6–14).
[219] Shekhovtsov (2020, pp. 22–25).
[220] Katz et al. (2020).
[221] Marten (2019), pp. 160–161; Schwirtz and Borgia (11 November 2019).

In the 2019 South African general election, Russia used the opaque and potentially corrupt courtship of then-President Jacob Zuma to obtain a contract to build a nuclear facility. After Zuma's government fell, in a broader corruption scandal, his successor, Cyril Ramaphosa, cancelled the agreement.[222] Thus, it seems that South Africa's stronger democratic norms were able to weaken Russia's influence there.

3.4 Economic relations

Still an economic lightweight in Africa, Russia has nevertheless been quite successful in using its limited economic tools to re-establish its presence on the continent. Although Russia lacks the economic muscles to compete with the United States, the EU, or China, it can still be a rival in specific sectors, such as arms trade. Some of Russia's latest economic deals have been generated by trading favours with governments targeted by international sanctions for corruption and violations of human rights. Zimbabwe is one such case. Towards the end of Robert Mugabe's presidency, Russia shielded Harare from sanctions in the UNSC and pursued political, economic and security ties, despite international criticism.[223]

3.4.1 Trade

Between 2008 and 2018, Russia's total trade with African states increased from 8.4 billion USD to 20.4 billion USD (in nominal value), an increase of over 143 per cent. The largest percentage increase in trade was with Sudan (from no trade, in 2008, to 510 million USD, in 2018) and Senegal (from 3.6 million, in 2008, to 561 million USD, in 2018). During the last decade, there has also been a significant increase (over 250 per cent) in trade between Russia and two of its top trading partners, Egypt and Morocco.[224]

Russia's main export destinations in Africa are Egypt and Algeria. Together, in 2018 these two countries stood for an astonishing 68 per cent of Russia's total exports to Africa. Russia's imports from Africa were slightly more diversified, with three countries – South Africa, Morocco and Egypt – sharing 75 per cent (see Table 3.2 and Figure 3.1 and 3.2). The main product exported to Africa was arms, while imports were agricultural produce, such as cocoa, fruit, and coffee.[225] As a raw-materials exporter, Russia is, structurally, a competitor to many African economies. It produces few products that African consumers and the growing middle-class want.[226]

Table 3.2 Russia's top five trading partners in Africa in 2018 (million USD).

Trading partner	Russian export	Russian imports	Total trade
Egypt	7 146	518	7 663
Algeria	4 801	10	4 811
Morocco	927	546	1 473
South Africa	286	780	1 066
Tunisia	681	137	818

Source: IMF DOTS (last updated March 2020).

[222] Paduano (2020).
[223] Stronski (2019, p. 10).
[224] IMF DOTS (last updated March 2020).
[225] Observatory of Economic Complexity (a).
[226] Stronski (2019, p. 9).

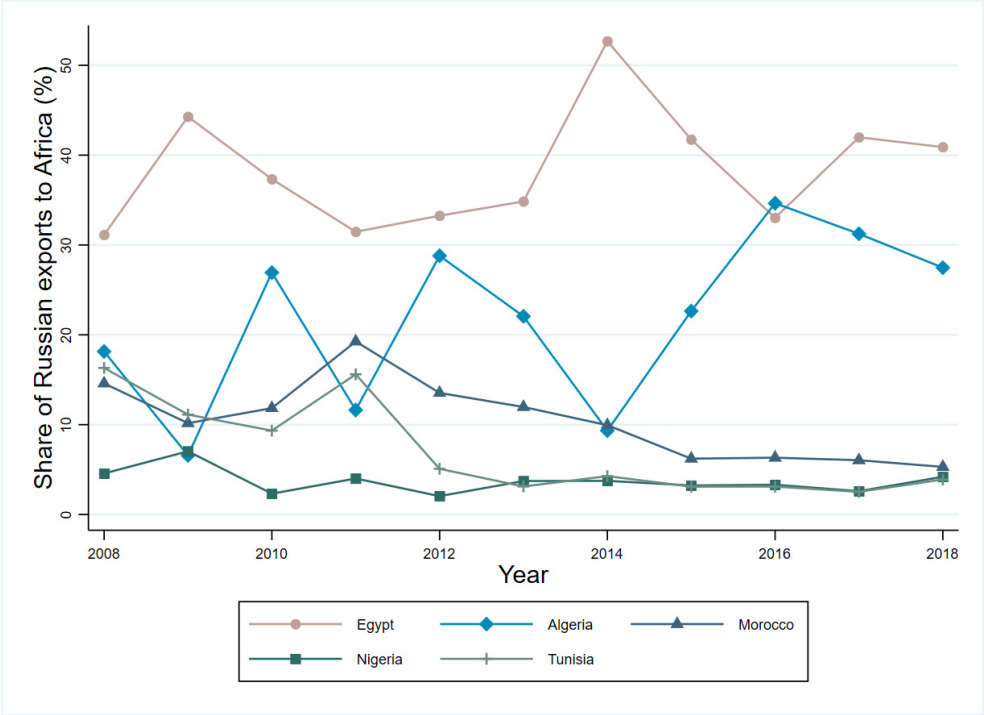

Figure 3.1 Change in the share of Russian total exports of goods to Africa for the top five destinations in 2018. *Source: IMF DOTS (last updated March 2020).*

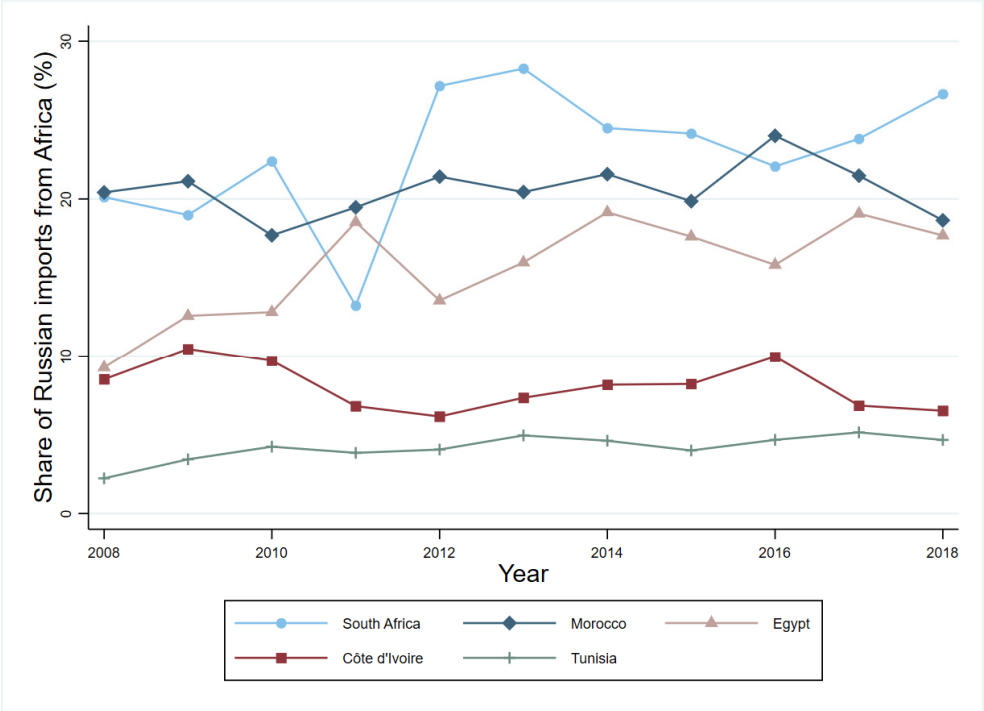

Figure 3.2 Change in the share of total Russian imports in goods from Africa for the top five African origins in 2018. *Source: IMF DOTS (last updated March 2020).*

3.4.2 Investments

Russian investment in Africa is often difficult to trace, since it is often channelled to Africa via third countries, such as Cyprus or the British Virgin Islands. The UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) estimated that in 2017 less than one per cent of total foreign direct investment stock in Africa ultimately originated in Russia.[227]

Hydrocarbons and minerals, particularly, are sectors where Russia has a larger presence; both are strategically important for many African countries, generating the lion's share of their export. Some 20 per cent of all mineral resources in the world are found in Africa, including 83 per cent of the world's platinum, 43 per cent of its diamonds, 40 per cent of the gold, 47 per cent of its cobalt, 43 per cent of all palladium, and 42 per cent of its chrome. Furthermore, 20 per cent of the world's energy resources are in Africa.[228]

Russian oil and gas companies, such as Rosneft, Gazprom and Lukoil, are increasingly interested in Africa. Russia is now seeking to exploit conventional gas and oil fields in Africa and elsewhere. Part of its long-term energy strategy is to use Russian companies to create new streams of energy supply.[229] Rosneft signed a deal to supply Ghana with liquefied natural gas (LNG) in 2018. The company, run by Igor Sechin, one of Putin's closest associates, also has oil and gas projects in Algeria, Egypt, and Mozambique. Lukoil is active in Cameroon, Egypt, Ghana, and Nigeria.[230] Gazprom has natural gas projects in Algeria, while Zarubezhneft has discussed joint oil projects with Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.[231]

The fact that millions of people in Africa do not have access to electricity provides Russia's nuclear power industry with potential markets. Rosatom has signed no less than 18 memorandums of understanding and agreements to develop nuclear energy with African states, including Egypt, Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Zambia, Rwanda, Sudan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Morocco, and Ethiopia. However, no nuclear project have been finished yet, and only two contracts – the ones in Egypt and Nigeria – are in place.[232]

Rosatom is also creating a cadre of Russian-educated nuclear energy scientists in Africa. In in 2019, it has launched a scholarship programme for Africans to study nuclear-related fields in Russia. Rosatom claimed that the programme received thousands of applicants from Nigeria and also invited international nuclear energy students to visit various nuclear plants in Russia.[233]

After energy, Moscow's second area of interest in investing in Africa is mineral riches. This is particularly evident in Zimbabwe, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Namibia and the Central African Republic. Uranium – which is a key to the nuclear power industry – is at the top of the list.[234] Though Russia, itself, boasts massive mineral fields, recent years have seen it suffering from a lack of some rare minerals, including chromium, manganese and titanium, while some reserves (nickel and tin) are on their way to depletion.[235]

The state diamond-mining company, Alrosa, has invested in Zimbabwe and Angola. Alrosa's CEO, Sergei S. Ivanov, is the son of Sergei B. Ivanov, Putin's former classmate from the KGB school, former defence minister of Russia, and so on.[236] Nordgold has expanded its gold mining investments in Burkina Faso, while Rostec, the state-owned defence conglomerate, has signed a deal to develop a new platinum mine in Zimbabwe.[237] All three investments were in 2019.

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[227] Russel and Pichon (2019, p. 5).
[228] Baklanov (10 October 2018).
[229] Besenyö (2 June 2019).
[230] Kuczyński (2019, p. 15).
[231] Bugayova and Regio (2019, p. 3).
[232] Adibe (14 November 2019); Russel and Pichon (2019, p. 7); Kuczyński (2019, p. 17); Burke (28 August 2019).
[233] Bugayova and Regio (2019, pp. 3–4).
[234] Besenyö (2 June 2019).
[235] Kuczyński (2019, p. 15).
[236] Marten (2019, p. 160).
[237] Bugayova and Regio (2019, p. 3).

The state aluminium corporation, Rusal, has invested in Guinea and Nigeria. Guinea is particularly vital for this sanctions-hit aluminium company, which is led by the oligarch Oleg Deripaska, also a close associate to Putin, since the country accounts for 27 per cent of the company's production of bauxite, the ore that is refined to alumina and ultimately smelted into aluminium.[238] In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Russian companies actively extract cobalt, gold, coltan, copper and diamonds, as well as unearth uranium.[239]

Russia has developed increasingly close military ties with the Central African Republic, which has extremely valuable natural resources, such as diamonds, gold and uranium.[240] One of the Russian companies registered in the Central African Republic is the mining company Lobaye Invest Surlu, owned by Prigozhin. Its director, Yevgenii Khodotov, is a former St. Petersburg police officer, now operating in the extractive industries.[241] The Central Africa Republic has become an arena for the competition of interests between Russia and France, the former colonial power.

3.5 Development assistance

Although Russian official development aid (ODA), almost non-existent in the 1990s, has increased since then, it is still much less than the aid provided by donors such as the EU, United States, and Japan. In 2018, only a small part, 5 per cent, of Russia's ODA went to Africa (see Figure 3.3). More significantly, Russia claims to have forgiven over 20 billion USD in Soviet-era debt accumulated by African countries. In 2019, for instance, Russia forgave nearly all of the debt owed to it by Mozambique in exchange for favourable investment conditions.[242]

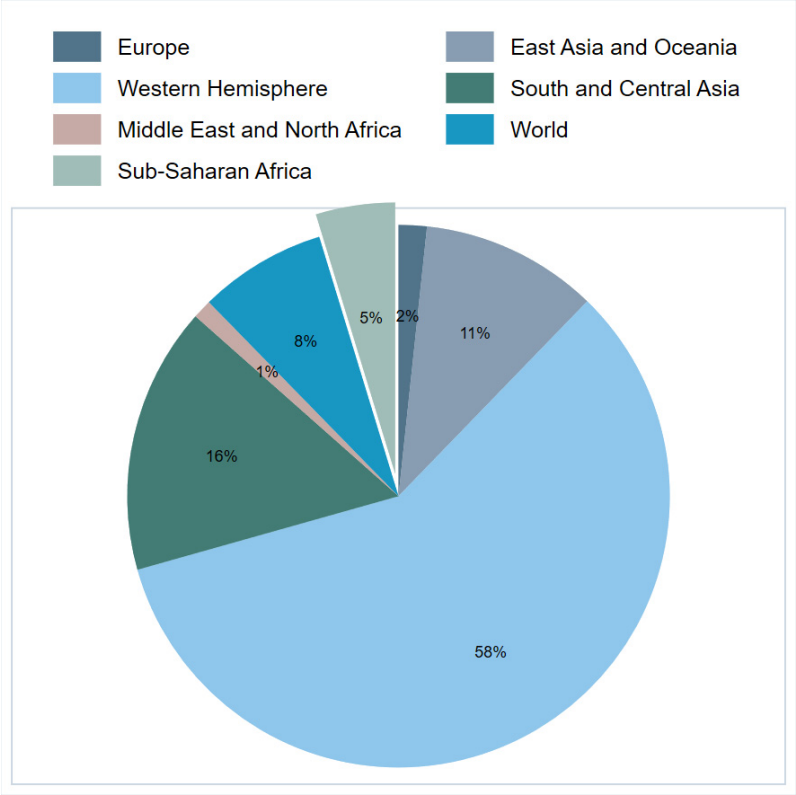

Figure 3.3 Regional distribution of Russia's total official development assistance (ODA) disbursements in 2018. *Source: OECD DAC (last updated June 2020).*

[238] Reuters (19 June 2018).
[239] Kuczyński (2019, p. 16); Russel and Pichon (2019, p. 7).
[240] Sukhankin (2020a).
[241] Olivier (23 August 2019).
[242] Kuczyński (2019, p. 16).

In 2018, Russia's total net ODA to Africa was 29.7 million USD; all of it went to countries in the sub-Saharan region, with the top recipients being Madagascar (8.9 million USD), Mozambique (8 million USD), and the Republic of the Congo (2 million USD). Relative to 2011, which is the earliest year for which data is available in the OECD database, net ODA to Africa was almost the same (in constant prices). However, between 2013 and 2016, net ODA to Africa (principally sub-Saharan Africa) was substantially higher than the current level (see Figure 3.4).[243]

The African countries who have received Russian ODA has not been consistent from year to year. Tanzania is the only country that has received Russian ODA every year between 2011 and 2018. Other frequent recipients include Mozambique, Guinea and Somalia. Countries such as Uganda, Zimbabwe, and Mali have only received ODA more sporadically.[244]

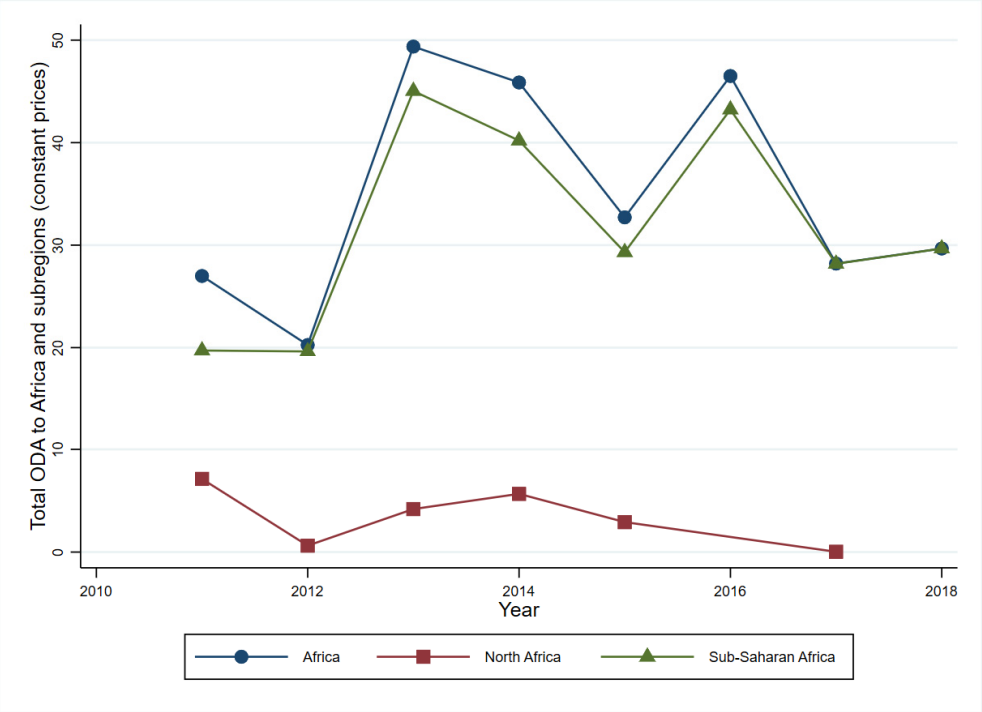

Figure 3.4 Russia's total net official development aid to sub-regions in Africa. *Source: OECD DAC (last updated June 2020).*

Around 60 per cent of Russian ODA is delivered through international organisations, including such global humanitarian organisations as the World Food Programme and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The remaining 40 per cent is provided to Africa in a framework of bilateral cooperation. Russia also makes donations to support education, health care, agriculture, environment and energy.[245] Even if Russia's ODA today is rather symbolic compared to during the Soviet era, Moscow is eager to present itself as a major international donor in Africa, and uses state media outlets, such as Sputnik, to highlight official statements of the limited assistance it provides.[246]

[243] OECD DAC (last updated June 2020).
[244] Ibid.
[245] Besenyö (2 June 2019).
[246] Stronski (2019, p. 12).

3.6 Military-security relations

In Russia's relations with African states, within the security sphere, the overall two-track approach, with one official (overt) and one unofficial (covert) track, is even more pronounced. In the official track, Russia has military-technical cooperation with many African countries. Aside from arms trade, this cooperation also includes regular training, offered by the Russian side, of military and security personnel; these are common ingredients in the more than 30 military cooperation deals Russia has signed with African states in recent years (see Table 6.1 in the Appendix). According to reports, the Mali junta leaders who forced President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita to step down in August 2020, were in Russia on a training programme organised by the Russian Armed Forces, ahead of the military coup.[247] After the coup, the Russian ambassador to Mali and Niger, Igor Gromyko, met with representatives from the National Committee for Salvation of the People (CNSP) to establish cordial relations with the transitional government. During demonstrations in Bamako, the Malian capital, protesters were spotted waving Russian flags and criticising France's Operation Barkhane counterterrorism initiative in the Sahel as a guise for French neo-colonialism.[248]

The second major form of Russian "security export" involves counterterrorism and anti-insurgency training and consultancy services. These activities are enjoying increasing popularity among both North African countries, for example Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and Egypt; and sub-Saharan clients who are experiencing problems with terrorist organisations such as Boko Haram and the IS, including Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger, Chad, Benin, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique and Tanzania.[249] Russia is actively working to build its international reputation as a successful and reliable counterterrorism partner, based on its own efforts both in the North Caucasus and in Syria.[250] Egypt is a very important partner for Russia in this regard, as shown by the joint counterterrorism exercise, "Defenders of Friendship", with Russian and Egyptian (and Belarusian) airborne troops.[251]

Russia is also increasingly engaged in military exercises with African partners. In November 2019, the naval forces of Russia, China and South Africa held the first trilateral naval exercise, "Exercise Mosi", outside Cape Town, South Africa.[252] This exercise came barely a month after another show of Russian military force in South Africa – the landing at Waterkloof Air Force Base of two Russian supersonic Tu-160 strategic bombers, capable of carrying nuclear weapons. Escorted in by South African fighter jets, this marked the first touchdown in Africa of a Russian military aircraft.[253]

Another country that is increasing its cooperation in military exercises is Egypt. In October 2020, Russia and Egypt announced that the first-ever joint naval exercise between the Russian and Egyptian naval forces, "Bridge of Friendship – 2020", would be held in the Black Sea by the end of 2020.[254]

In the covert track, the first major form of Russian activity is the one handled by private military companies (PMCs). Russian PMCs operate in an unclear domestic legal environment. They are not regulated per se and are, in fact, outlawed in both Russian criminal law and the Russian Constitution, despite close ties the Russian MoD and military intelligence service (GRU).[255] This gives the Russian political and military leadership some deniability when engaging PMCs for acting behind the scenes; carrying out various tasks

[247] DW (26 August 2020).
[248] Ramani (2020).
[249] Sukhankin (2020a).
[250] Hedenskog (2020, p. 24).
[251] Russian Ministry of Defence (21 August 2019).
[252] Panda (27 November 2019).
[253] Fabricius (2019).
[254] Kubanskie novosti (8 October 2020).
[255] Dahlqvist (2019).

for dictatorial regimes, including brutal suppression of public revolts and anti-governmental protests; meddling in elections, and so on.[256]

At least two Russian PMCs have been active in Africa – the RSB Group and the Wagner Group. The chair of the RSB Group, Oleg Krynitsyn, has confirmed that the group has contractors in Libya and regional offices in Nigeria and Sudan.[257] The Wagner Group has been active in several African countries: Libya, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, and Mozambique. Created in May 2014 by Dmitrii Utkin, a former military intelligence officer, and allegedly funded by Yevgenii Prigozhin, the Wagner Group has also taken part in conflicts in Ukraine and Syria.[258]

Since 2018, according to the aforementioned investigative journalist project "Proekt", Russia has signed eight different agreements with the countries in which Prigozhin's people work. Of these, four relate to military cooperation. Proekt claims there is no doubt that Prigozhin's actions in foreign policy have been agreed on with President Putin. There is also coordination at a lower level, within the MFA. Presidential Spokesman Dmitry Peskov and the MFA spokesperson, Maria Zakharova, however, both deny any knowledge of Prigozhin's activities in Africa.[259]

3.6.1 Military presence in Africa

Russia is contributing 58 personnel to peacekeeping missions in Africa (as of 31 August 2020). Table 3.3 shows the distribution of these across different UN peacekeeping missions there.

Table 3.3 Russian contribution of personnel to U.N. peacekeeping missions in Africa.

Peacekeeping mission	Personnel contribution
UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS)	23
UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA)	13
UN Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO)	10
UN Mission for the support for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO)	10
UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA)	2

Source: UN Peacekeeping website (contributions as of 31 August 2020).

Some of the military agreements concluded with African states during recent years allow Russia the use of airfields and naval access to ports (see Table 6.1 in the Appendix). Speculations in the media about Russia's trying to establish its own military base in Africa have focused, in particular, on countries where the Soviet Union had a regular presence, but never a permanent base of its own, such as, for instance, Libya, Egypt, and, Sudan, as well as the Central African Republic and Somaliland (a breakaway region of Somalia); and on plans for a naval logistics base in Eritrea.[260] In 2017, Russia was prevented from opening a military base in Djibouti after the United States persuaded Djibouti to decline.[261] In August 2020, the German daily, *Bild,* based on a leaked German foreign ministry document,

[256] Sukhankin (2019).
[257] Boiko (13 November 2018); RSB Group website.
[258] Sukhankin (2020b); Interfax (25 June 2019).
[259] Rozhdestvensky, et al. (11 April 2019).
[260] Hedenskog (2019).
[261] Jacobs and Perlez (25 February 2017).

reported that Moscow had received assurances about being allowed to build bases in no less than six African countries: the Central African Republic, Egypt, Eritrea, Madagascar, Mozambique, and Sudan.[262] In November 2020, Russia and Sudan agreed to establish a naval logistics support centre just north of Port Sudan for the repair and supply of warships of the Russian Navy.[263] At the time of writing, it was not clear whether this logistics base in Sudan, initially proposed by the president Omar al-Bashir in Moscow in 2017, where to complement or replace the one planned for Eritrea in 2019.

Russia already has an agreement with Egypt on sharing air space and bases, modernising military equipment, and deploying Russian Special Forces to western Egypt, close to the border of war-torn Libya.[264] Russia has long used Libya's slow-burning conflict to advance its relationships with Egypt and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), while simultaneously expanding both its influence on Europe's southern border and its access to Libya's natural resources.

Russia's engagement in Libya has both geo-economic considerations and geopolitical interests. In the 2000s, Libyan leader Muammar Gadaffi concluded a number of deals encompassing various industries, including defence manufacturing, railways, roads and highways, hydrocarbons and related infrastructure. After the fall of the Gadaffi regime in 2011, through Western intervention, bilateral agreements froze, to the great irritation of the Russian side. Moscow continues to harbour plans to not only restore those ties, but also to expand economic cooperation to new areas. Included in Russia's geopolitical interests is the fact that Libya is located only some 353 kilometres from the European Union and, following the collapse of the Gadaffi regime, has become a main route for illegal immigration to Europe. Interests that are more domestic-driven include the fear of so-called colour revolutions, which Russia assesses as being Western-sponsored attempts to incite regime change.

In September 2019, according to a leaked UN report, Russia began to deploy an estimated 800–1,200 Russian mercenaries through the Wagner Group in Libya. The Russian deployment temporarily tilted the balance of the conflict with the UN-supported Government of National Accord (GNA) forces in favour of General Haftar and the Libyan National Army (LNA). In April 2019, General Haftar had started to advance on Tripoli in order to take control of Libya's capital. Destabilisation and conflict in Libya created opportunities for mischief, growing Russian influence in the region, and ensuring Russia played a role in the settlement.[265] Russia put its hopes on the possibility that, after an eventual victory, its support for Haftar would result in an opening for Russian oil and gas deals.

However, such hopes were crumbled immediately. In November 2019, the Russian mercenaries suffered sizable losses – 38 members – caused by aerial attacks, allegedly from Turkish forces.[266] Furthermore, in early 2020, the LNA advance on Tripoli was halted due to Turkish military support of the GNA.[267] At the same time, the US Department of Defence accused Russia of sending fighter jets to support Haftar and the LNA.[268] The GNA, after taking the El-Batyria military base from the LNA, and finding the Pantsir-S1 air defence system there, exported from Russia through the UAE, also accused Russia of having broken the international weapons embargo on Libya.[269]

In the Central African Republic, after the military cooperation agreement in August 2018, Russian military have been engaged in military training. The former French colony has been embroiled, at least since 2012, in an intense civil war that is being waged by, among other

[262] Röpcke (12 August 2020); Borshchevskaya (2020).
[263] Defenceweb (12 November 2020).
[264] Russel and Pichon (2019, p. 4).
[265] Megerisi (2020, p. 6).
[266] Sukhankin (2020b).
[267] Belenkaia (18 May 2020).
[268] Raghavan and Dixon (26 May 2020).
[269] Belenkaia (18 May 2020).

forces, religiously driven factors. Some 80 per cent of the country is virtually uncontrolled by the government. Moscow managed both to overcome the international sanctions imposed by the UN in 2013 and to export arms as part of a peacekeeping initiative.

The Russian instructors trained 1,300 military staff in 2018, both in the Central African Republic and in Russia. However, all but five of the allegedly 175 trainers that the UN had been notified of by Russia were employed by the Wagner Group. In addition to the trainers, 40 Russian Special Forces personnel were employed in the Central African Republic's presidential bodyguard, while Valery Zakharov, a former military intelligence officer and close associate of Prigozhin's, served as a security advisor to the country's president, Faustin-Archange Touadéra.

Although not among the biggest players in MINUSCA (see Table 3.3), Russia has managed to establish direct relations with the conflicting parties. Since 2017, there have been AU-backed peace talks between the government of the Central African Republic and 14 rebel groups. In August 2018, in Sudan's capital, Khartoum, Russia launched a parallel initiative of peace talks, led by Zakharov, with just five of the groups. Russian military activities are motivated, at least partly, by interest in the Central African Republic's abundant natural resources, including gold, diamond, and uranium, with Russia offering assistance in exchange for mining concessions.[270] Russia's security presence in the Central African Republic allowed it to take on the mantle of security provider from France. Russian propaganda outlets actively pushed narratives about how France was creating instability in the Central African Republic.[271]

Other countries where the Wagner Group has been present include, for instance, Sudan and Mozambique. In Sudan, the group was linked to the gold prospecting of one of Prigozhin's companies. Moscow backed Omar al-Bashir and urged a crackdown on protesters, in April 2019. Members of the Wagner Group apparently participated in the Sudanese military's violent assaults on the opposition. However, Moscow backed the wrong horse, and saw its influence weakened, temporarily, after the April 2019 coup that ousted al-Bashir.[272] Sudan often functions as a hub for transport of Russian military personnel, mercenaries and arms to other African countries.[273] This position could be further reinforced with the establishment of the new naval support centre in the country.

The Wagner Group arrived in Mozambique, a former Portuguese colony, in September 2019, a few weeks after President Felipe Nyusi visited Putin, in Moscow. The ministers of the interior of both Russia and Mozambique concluded a partnership agreement on mutual protection of classified information. This agreement was seen as a cover for actual cooperation between their special forces. Today, Russia's key motivation in assisting Mozambique is based on the promises embedded in hard geo-economic calculations, oil and natural gas in the Cabo Delgado region, and fighting Islamist radicalism. Local reports indicate that in October 2019, in at least one, and perhaps two, separate combat ambushes conducted by Islamic extremists, up to seven Wagner personnel were killed, alongside a number of Mozambican army forces.[274]

Figure 3.5 summarises Russia's military engagement in Africa in terms of the presence of Russian mercenaries, confirmed military cooperation agreements since 2015, and the destination of Russian arms exports from 2010–2019.

[270] Russel and Pichon (2019, p. 5); ICG (2019).
[271] Stronski (2019, p. 8).
[272] Marten (2019, p. 161).
[273] Sukhankin (2020a).
[274] Marten (2019, p. 162).

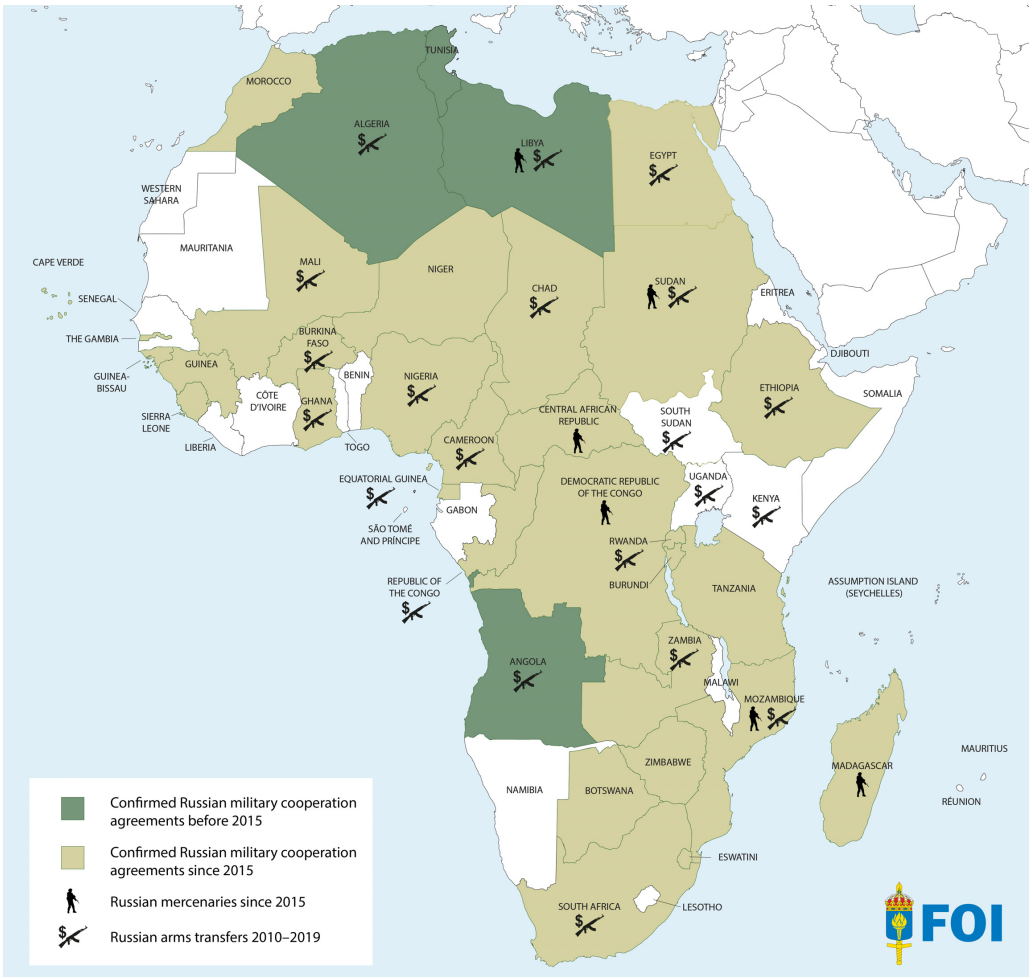

***Figure 3.5. Russian military engagements and installations in Africa**. Source: FOI, based on Hedenskog (2019); Katz et al. (2020); Institute for the Study of War (2020); Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (28 September 2018); RIA Novosti (14 April 2016); Krasnaia vesna (24 May 2019); Interfax (25 June 2019); Defenceweb (27 June 2019).*

3.6.2 Arms exports to Africa

Russia has traditionally been one of Africa's main arms suppliers. During the Cold War, many African armed liberation organisations and African countries – among them Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Zambia and Guinea – bought military equipment from the Soviet Union.[275] More recently, Russia has made significant arms deals with particularly Algeria, Egypt, Uganda, Angola, Sudan and Nigeria (see Figure 3.6).

In 2015–2019, Russia accounted for 49 per cent of arms exports to Africa, followed by the United States, 14 per cent, and China, 13 per cent. The North African countries accounted for 74 per cent of African arms imports from Russia. Moscow's two biggest customers in Africa, by far, were Algeria and Egypt (see Figure 3.6). Russia accounted for 67 per cent of the arms imports to Algeria, the world's sixth largest arms importer, in 2015–2019.[276] Algeria bought around 200 aircraft items from Russia from 2000 to 2019, ranging from Mi-25 transport helicopters to Mi-28N combat helicopters, Su-34 bomber and Su-30MKA fighter aircraft, surface-to-air missiles (SAM), and Kilo-Class submarines.[277] Egypt, the world's third biggest arms importer in 2015–2019, bought, for instance, Su-35 and MiG-29 fighter jets, Ka-52K helicopters and coastal defence units, from Russia.[278]

[275] Besenyö (2 June 2019).
[276] Wezeman et al. (2020, p. 7).
[277] DW (25 May 2020); Army Technology (23 April 2019).
[278] Khlebnikov (8 April 2019).

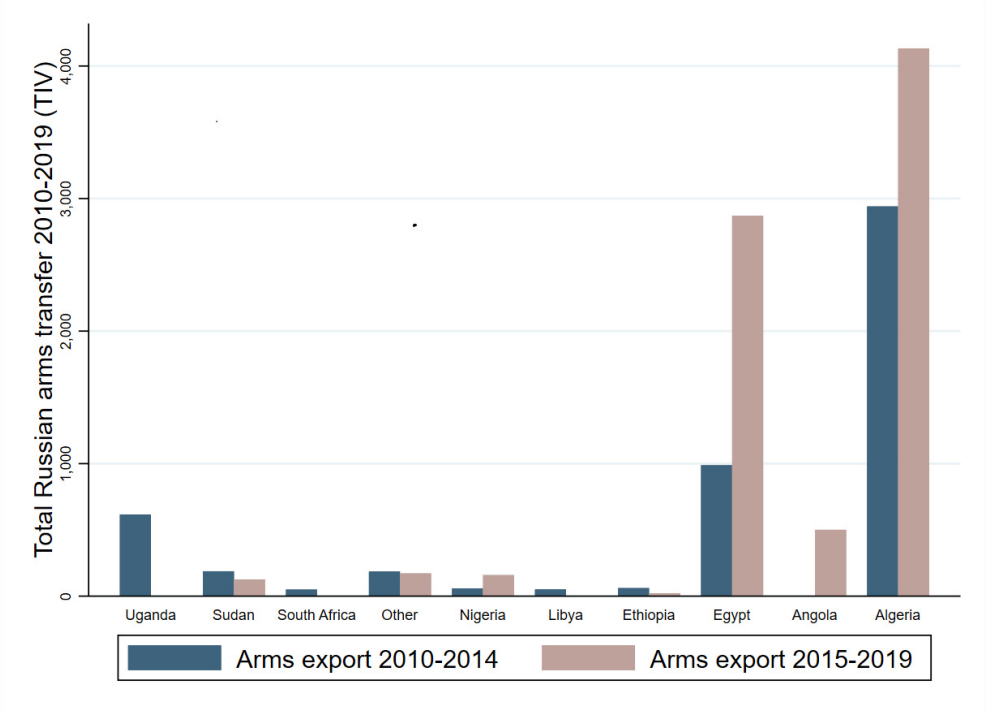

Figure 3.6 Total Russian arms transfers 2010–2019. *Source: SIPRI. Note: TIV stands for Trend Indicator Value, which is not a financial measure, but used by SIPRI as a measure of the volume of arms transferred between each pair of countries. For more information, see www.sipri.org.*

Thus, in terms of heavy weaponry and armoured equipment, North Africa's imports still dominate over those of sub-Saharan African countries, but the gap between the two regions has become less pronounced. Russia has also become the most important arms supplier to the sub-Saharan countries, accounting for 36 per cent of the arms imports of states in the sub-region in 2015–2019.[279] These countries are increasingly willing to acquire new, sophisticated and more expensive types of weaponry, such as Mi-17V-5 (Kenya), Mi-35M (Mali) and Mi-171SH (Burkina Faso) helicopters, Su-30K (Angola), Su-30MK2 (Uganda) and MiG-29M (Nigeria) fighter aircrafts, and Mi-171 transport helicopters (Nigeria), T-90S tanks (Uganda), and Pantsir-S1 air-defence systems (Equatorial Guinea).[280]

Sometimes, weapons are part of a larger deal. For example, Zimbabwe reportedly granted cheap platinum mining concessions to Russia in exchange for helicopters. In the Central African Republic, there are suggestions that Russia may have secured profitable access to the country's mineral resources in exchange for shipments of donated weapons.[281]

There are many reasons why African leaders would want to buy Russian arms. Russian arms are comparably cheap and generally reliable. In contrast to many Western states, Russia does not make its arms sales or military cooperation contingent on adherence to democratic norms, nor does it mind dealing with even the most extreme human-rights violators in Africa, such as Sudan, Equatorial Guinea and South Sudan – all three at the bottom of Freedom House's *Freedom in the World* ranking.[282] In some cases, Russia has managed to fill the gap where European or American suppliers stepped out, or when African states have hesitated to buy from Western suppliers.

[279] Wezeman et al. (2020, p. 7).
[280] Sukhankin (2020a).
[281] Russel and Pichon (2019).
[282] Freedom House (2019).

3.7 Analysis

Russia's approach to Africa is based on both geo-economic interests, such as securing rare natural resources possessed by African countries and expanding Russia's export capabilities in non-raw materials, and geo-political calculations, such as great power rivalry, using the votes of African states at the UN, or showing that Russia is not isolated on the international stage. While Russia's foreign policy goals tend to be persistent, the foreign policy implementation is flexible.

Russia's political leaders tend to treat foreign policy as a zero-sum game, where one state can only make gains if others lose. With its military campaign in Syria, Russia has expanded its influence in the Middle East. Using limited resources, it has managed to increase its influence and compete with the United States directly. Africa has become yet another area in Russia's geopolitical contest with the West, and particularly the United States, for global influence and competition, and where the Russian leadership sees a chance to weaken the West.

Geographically, Russia's interests in Africa can be divided into three main directions. The first is North Africa, which Russia sees as part of the wider Middle Eastern and Mediterranean regions. North Africa is closer to Russia and its perceived sphere of exclusive interests – the post-Soviet area – and its vital security interests, such as Syria. Russia's focussing of greater diplomatic attention on North Africa is clearly visible in its official visits, arms exports, trade and other official channels.

Second, within sub-Saharan Africa, one prioritised sub-region is the Horn of Africa. This region represents an opportunity for Russia to secure a springboard for projecting power into the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. Russia has been engaged in anti-piracy operations in the waters outside Somalia since 2008, has signed an agreement on a naval logistics support centre in the nearby Sudan. The region is close to Iran and Saudi Arabia, the regional great powers and rivals, with both of whom Russia cultivates good relations.

Third, another sub-region in sub-Saharan Africa that has seen a tremendous increase in Russian interest in the last two years is Central Africa. Since 2018, Russia has been deeply involved in the Central African Republic and has also expanded its engagement by signing military-cooperation deals with the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of the Congo. Russian state companies, oligarchs and private mercenaries are increasingly involved in the extraction of Central African mineral riches.

Furthermore, the Sahel region is a sub-region that is potentially becoming more important for Russia. Moscow has the potential to benefit geopolitically from Mali's political transition following the August 2020 military coup, since the coup's plotters are aligned to Russia. In addition, Moscow has in recent years signed military cooperation agreements with Mali, Chad, Burkina Faso and Niger. These countries are all increasingly interesting for Russian companies and recipients of Russian counterterrorism training and importers of its arms.

Nevertheless, sub-Saharan Africa is generally of lower priority for Russia than North Africa, although it has started to receive more attention as trade flows, particularly arms exports, have increased during the last decade. Sub-Saharan Africa lacks a strong connection to Russia's global strategy and does not represent a direct security threat to it. Nor do the conflicts in this sub-region have any general connection to Russian interests; they are, therefore, handled more via unofficial links, such as mercenaries and oligarchs. Russia's approach to sub-Saharan Africa is more privately-driven and opportunistic. One exception, however, is South Africa, which is one of the countries Russia prioritises most in all of Africa.

Despite Russia's increased presence in Africa, particularly after 2015, Moscow has yet to develop a comprehensive and coherent strategy towards it. Overall, Africa is not high on Russia's foreign policy priority list. When granting of a significant role in Russia's

engagement in Africa to a private person (the businessperson Yevgenii Prigozhin), it means that Africa is not among Putin's highest priorities. Even if the establishment of the Russia-Africa Summit and the Russia-Africa Partnership Forum indicates a gradual strengthening of state policy and state institutions in Russia's African engagement, this has yet to be proven over time.

Security issues – such as the arms trade, anti-terrorism, military cooperation – are the core of Russia's relations with Africa, while economic exchange lags behind. Again, North Africa dominates. More than 80 per cent of the trade between Russia and Africa takes place between Russia and five African countries: Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Nigeria.

The limited resources Russia can divert to Africa indicates that the two-track policy, with separate overt and covert tracks will continue. Russia has different approaches in different countries. For stronger states, such as South Africa and Egypt, Russia plays a supporting role. It promotes these countries as regional leaders, for instance by acting with South Africa in BRICS, or engaging Egypt in the 2+2 format, thus engaging both countries' ministries of foreign affairs and defence. Military exercises and official state visits flourish. With weaker states, such as the Central African Republic, Libya, Mozambique, and Madagascar – countries with internal conflicts – Russia uses more alternative methods, such as private mercenaries, political technologies and media disinformation campaigns, preferably using non-state actors. The use of private mercenaries (such as the Wagner Group), however, has proved to be far from only a success story for Russia, and contains weaknesses, too. In Libya, in 2019, the Wagner Group demonstrated the extent of their poor training when faced with a technically superior adversary, such as the Turkish air force. In Mozambique's Cabo Delgado region, also in 2019, they disclosed their inefficiency in counterinsurgency operations in tropical environments. Both occasions led to substantial losses.

So far, Russia's overall policy in Africa has revealed both strengths and weaknesses. Among the strengths is that Russia has managed to achieve much with relatively few resources. Where it expands its influence, Russia picks its battles carefully and tends to avoid direct confrontation with stronger actors such as the United States. Russia's efforts overlap with China's and they share a common interest in anti-US actions. Therefore, one can expect an expansion of cooperation between Russia and China in Africa, as part of their joint anti-US activities.

The weakness in Russia's policy, as mentioned, is the limited and targeted financial and human investment. Russia's policy remains personalised, the number of officials and executives assigned to cover all of Africa is small. Investments are relatively sparse and Russia is thinly stretched over large parts of the African continent. Russia prioritises scale over depth. In relation to other foreign actors, including Western countries, China and India, Russia's engagement in Africa is still relatively small.

Russia's approach is Africa on the cheap and is likely to remain so in the future. Given the complex and at times even contradictory challenges Russia sees in its perceived sphere of interest, i.e. the post-Soviet space, such as the political unrest in Belarus and Kyrgyzstan, the unstable Ukraine and the second Karabakh war in the South Caucasus, engagement in far away Africa will continue to be a second priority for Moscow.

4 Conclusions

The objective of this study has been to survey how US and Russian political, economic, and military-security relations with African countries, and their geographical priorities on the continent, have evolved over the last two decades.

The main observation is that in recent years great power competition has re-emerged as a national security interest of both the United States and Russia. Both countries place increasing emphasis on maintaining and ensuring access to strategic locations and natural resources, as well as restoring influence and projecting power. While the United States views China as its main competitor, it is also concerned with Russia's "corrupt economic dealings" and that Russia's involvement in countries such as Libya will affect US access and ability to operate militarily. Russia, on the other hand, sees the United States as its primary adversary and China as a potential ally against the United States. In practice, however, Russia's actions more often target former European colonial powers, in particular France, which Moscow regards as being incapable of withstanding Russia's involvement. In fact, Russia often avoids messing too closely with bigger actors, such as the United States.

Thus far, however, the emphasis on great power competition has not translated into any substantial shifts in US policy and activities in Africa. The US military approach and its main policy programmes for advancing economic relations and providing foreign assistance exhibit a great deal of continuity from past administrations. Promoting trade and investment, democracy, human rights, and peace and security remains important US policy objectives. For Russia, it is not until recently that great power competition has been reflected through its activities in Africa, even if re-establishing itself as a great power has been its primary foreign policy objective under President Putin. In these efforts, Moscow has drawn upon its experience in other arenas of power competition (such as Syria), and begun to use Africa as a testing ground for disinformation campaigns. In addition, Russia's engagement in Africa is motivated by the desire to secure support from African countries in international organisations, and to promote its export of arms and security cooperation.

To achieve these objectives, both the United States and Russia use political, economic, and military means. A strength of the United States, in addition to its strong soft power (benefiting from having a globalised culture), its large foreign assistance budget (including transfers of defence equipment) and preferential trade agreements, is its large network of military outposts. This allows the United States to attain operational flexibility and quickly respond to crises on the continent. Russia, on the other hand, being less constrained to act in accordance with democratic norms and human rights, maintains a certain flexibility in using both overt and covert means to achieve its objectives. Regarding bigger and more stable countries, such as Egypt and South Africa, Russia legally exports arms and provides military cooperation and exchange. In less stable countries, such as the Central African Republic and Mozambique, Russia depends more on mercenaries and other non-state actors who act behind the scenes, carrying out various tasks for dictatorial regimes, including suppression of both public revolts and anti-governmental protests.

In terms of geographical priorities, both countries regard North Africa as the most important region. Overall, Egypt stands out as the single most important country in Africa. Prioritised for its importance for stability in the Middle East, Egypt has been the country in Africa most frequently visited by US and Russian presidents. Moreover, Egypt is an important military, security and trade partner, and stands out among African countries as the main destination for both Russian and US arms exports. In terms of great power competition, the Horn of Africa is attracting more attention from both countries. East Africa is another prioritised region for the United States, whereas Central Africa is a greater priority for Russia. With the potential wavering of US interest in the Sahel, the region may attract more attention from Russia in the future.

To summarise, this report shows that great power competition in Africa has become increasingly important for the United States and Russia. The report identifies that the United States and Russia are motivated by similar national interests, but differ in their policy objectives and activities. The fact that the United States possesses significantly greater financial resources means that it has a larger presence and ability to exert influence in Africa than Russia. At the same time, Russia's growing interest in Africa means that the United States may find it more difficult to secure its political and military interests there. This in turn may strengthen the rivalry between the United States and Russia in Africa.

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6 Appendix

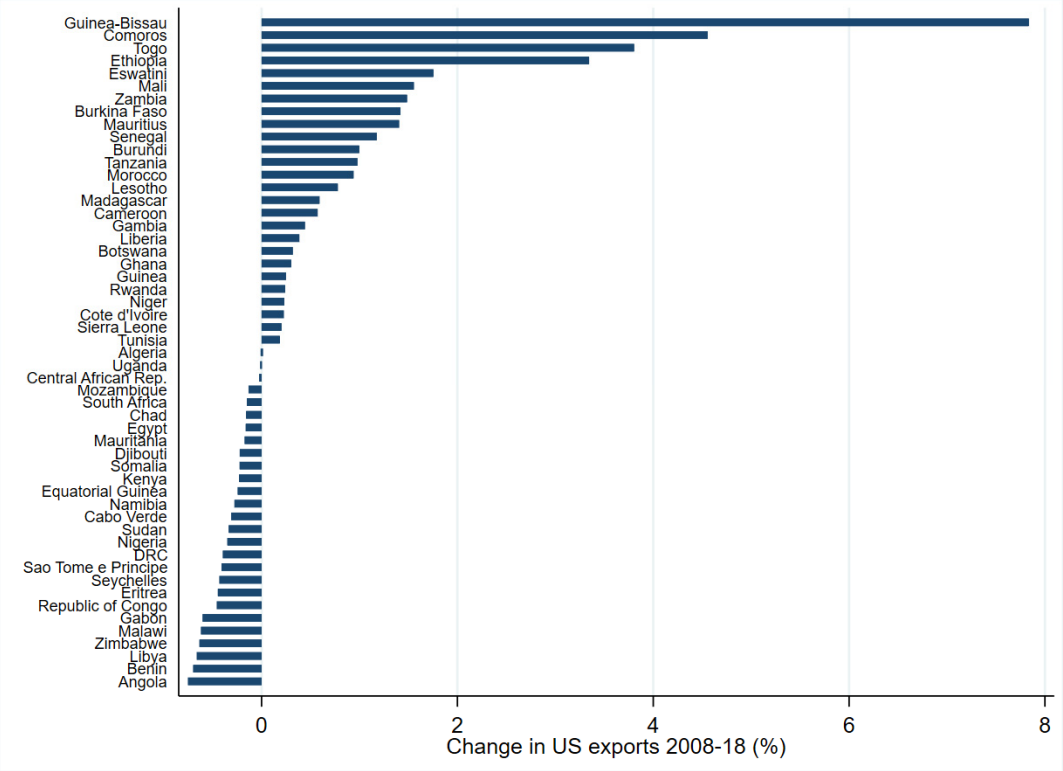

Figure 6.1 Percentage change in the nominal value of US exports to African countries between 2008 and 2018. *Source: IMF DOTS (last updated March 2020).*

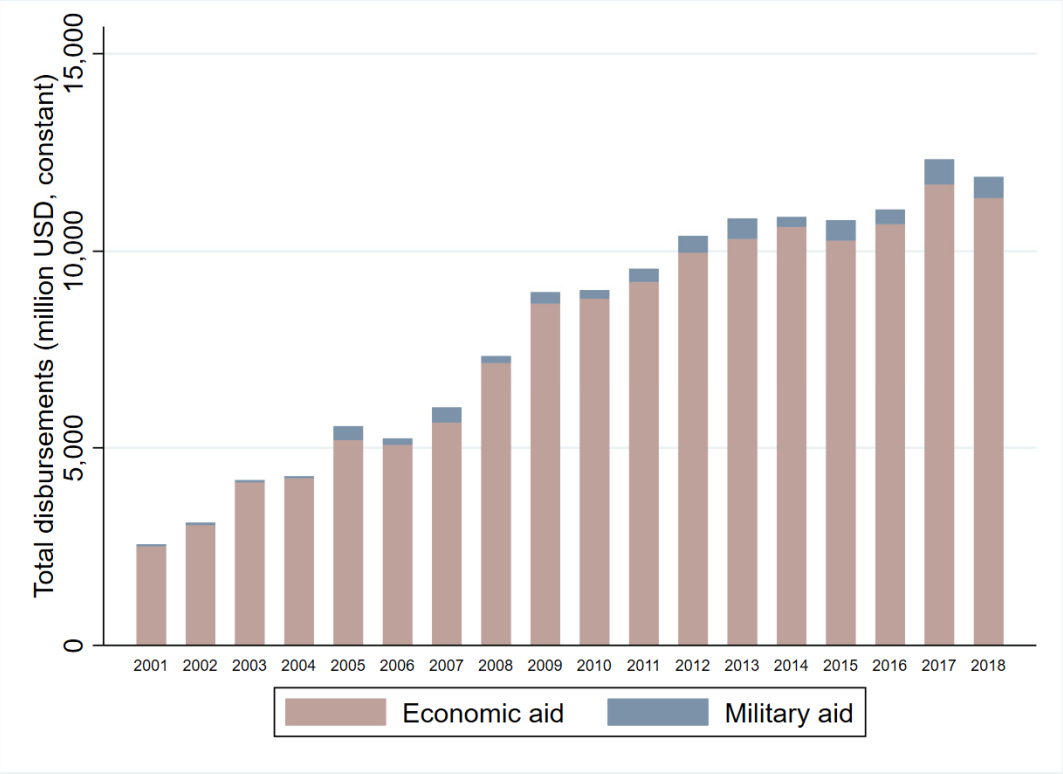

Figure 6.2. Disbursement of US economic and military assistance to sub-Saharan Africa 2001–2018 (constant 2018 prices). *Source: Foreign Aid Explorer. Note: Includes both regional and bilateral programmable aid.*

Table 6.1 Russian military cooperation agreements in Africa (since 2015).

Country	Date	Content
Botswana	August 2018	Joint peacekeeping operations and joint military training.
Burkina Faso	August 2018	Counterterrorism cooperation and exchange of peacekeeping experience.
Burundi	August 2018	Counterterrorism and joint training of troops.
Cabo Verde	June 2018	Simplified procedure for port calls.
Cameroon	April 2015	Military-technical cooperation.
Central African Republic	August 2018	Joint training of armed forces.
Chad	August 2017	Anti-terrorism cooperation and joint training exercises.
Democratic Republic of the Congo	July 2018	Military-technical cooperation. Revitalization of a previous military-technical cooperation agreement from 1999.
	May 2019	Military-technical cooperation. Technical specialists.
Republic of the Congo	May 2019	Military-technical cooperation, weapons supply, and technical training.
Equatorial Guinea	April 2016	Military cooperation. An agreement on Russian access to ports in Equatorial Guinea was signed in July 2015.
Egypt	November 2017	Military-technical cooperation and counterterrorism operations.
	October 2019	Strategic cooperation.
Eswatini	February 2017	Supply of weapons, maintenance and other military assistance.
Ethiopia	April 2018	Training and cooperation on peacekeeping, counterterrorism and anti-piracy operations.
The Gambia	September 2016	Training of armed forces, deliveries of military equipment.
Ghana	June 2016	Military-technical cooperation, including weapons supply and joint training.
Guinea	April 2018	Cooperation in peacekeeping, counterterrorism, search and rescue at sea.
Guinea-Bissau	June 2019	Training of military personnel.
Madagascar	September 2018	Information-sharing, training, military engineering, military education, military medicine, peacekeeping, counterterrorism, anti-piracy operations and cooperation in UN peacekeeping missions.
Mali	March 2019	Military engineering, peacekeeping and security under the UN, military medicine, education, anti-terrorism.
Morocco	October 2017	Intellectual property protection in the framework of bilateral military-technical cooperation.
Mozambique	January 2017	Deliveries of military equipment, spare parts and components.
	August 2019	An agreement on mutual protection of classified information.
Niger	August 2017	Working meetings of military experts and cooperation on military education, weapons supply.
Nigeria	August 2017	Cooperation on military training, peacekeeping and counterterrorism efforts, and anti-piracy operations.
	October 2019	Contract for 12 Mi-35 attack helicopters to fight the Boko Haram terrorist group.
Rwanda	October 2016	Military-technical cooperation, including weapons supply, military specialist exchanges, joint training, joint development and production of military equipment, and other military-technical assistance.
Sierra Leone	August 2018	Supply of weapons and other military equipment, military-technical assistance.

South Africa	July 2018	Joint declaration on strategic partnership and call for greater cooperation on counterterrorism and counter-proliferation of weapons-of-mass-destruction.
Sudan	February 2018	Joint information exchange, training, counterterrorism, anti-piracy operations, and UN peacekeeping missions.
Tanzania	January 2018	Arms shipments, joint training, and military research and development.
Zambia	April 2017	Supply of weapons and delivery of spare parts.
Zimbabwe	October 2015	Supply of weapons and joint military production.

Sources: Hedenskog (2019); Institute for the Study of War (2020); Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (28 September 2018); RIA Novosti (14 April 2016); Krasnaia vesna (2019); Interfax (25 June 2019); Defenceweb (27 June 2019).

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