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Africa Symposium 2020: Advancing Africa's Peace, Security, and Governance

Introduction

In 2020, Africa celebrates some significant milestones. This year represents 20 years since Africa's regional and continental institutions adopted the principle of non-indifference, paving the way for African states to intervene in cases of political and military instability. It also marks 30 years since Africa's states began to adopt principles of democratic governance. To facilitate a forward-looking conversation on Africa's peace, security, and governance, the Institute for Defense Analyses and the Woodrow Wilson Center Africa Program jointly organized *Africa Symposium 2020: Advancing Africa's Peace, Security, and Governance*, held March 11, 2020, at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. The symposium drew approximately 115 participants from academia, government, and civil society. This summary highlights the major points of the four panels featured at the Africa symposium, as well as the perspectives offered by representatives of the U.S. government. The appendix contains the symposium's agenda.

The symposium convened leading scholars and practitioners to discuss Africa's democratic dividend, conflict-management reforms in Africa, women and youth as stakeholders in the continent's peace and security, and Africa's external stakeholders. In addition, senior members of the U.S. government provided perspectives on Africa's role in the U.S. National Defense Strategy.

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rs), Mr. Pete Marocco (Deputy Assistant Secretary
and Ms. Magdalena Bajll (National Intelligence
que insights. Major General Christopher Craige,
ns at the U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM),

ed America's commitment to Africa's security.
riorities of the U.S. government policy in Africa.
U.S. government representatives was the need to
frica, which is considered destabilizing. Similarly,
importance of developing counter-narratives and
Bajll noted that there could be opportunities where
other external partners in Africa. Second, the U.S.
businesses, aiming to expand opportunities for
frican governments to help level the playing field.
g peace, ending conflict in Africa, and responding
nel, in particular, the United States is part of the
d a special envoy, Dr. Peter Pham, for the region.

In addition to the above, Ms. Baird noted that the youth bulge presented an opportunity, but it could also fuel insecurity, as violent extremist organizations appeal to youth who face poor economic prospects and disenfranchisement. Ms. Baird further noted that the United States supports its partners by investing in their militaries, intelligence capabilities, law enforcement, diplomacy, and economic initiatives.

DASD Marocco assured the audience that the United States was not reducing its commitment to Africa. Addressing concerns that a review of USAFRICOM's posture in Africa may result in a reduced presence on the continent, DASD Marocco assured the audience that the United States is not withdrawing from Africa and the Department of Defense (DoD) was not approaching the review as a wholesale reduction to its commitment to Africa. DASD Marocco explained it is a routine examination to ensure DoD has the right forces, with the right resources, in the right places to best meet the priorities outlined in the National Defense Strategy. In fact, all Combatant Commands would undergo review; USAFRICOM happened to be scheduled first. DASD Marocco outlined the extent of DoD's engagement across Africa, noting that in addition to the U.S. military in Africa, the DoD also provides training, supports dialogues, promotes cooperation, and shares intelligence. DASD Marocco specifically highlighted the National Guard Bureau's State Partnership Program, which expanded its network to 16 African countries with the addition of Ethiopia within the last 12 months.

Africa's Democratic Dividend

Professor E. Gyimah-Boadi, co-founder and CEO of the Afrobarometer, a pan-African research and polling institution, and Professor Jaimie Bleck of Notre Dame University led the discussion on the achievements and challenges of Africa's ongoing democratization projects. The panel was moderated by Mr. Jon Temin, Africa Director at Freedom House. Acknowledging that multiparty elections are the norm across the continent

To reap the promises of democracy, national and international bodies should focus on engaging youth and creating sustainable opportunities. In fact, Professor Gyimah-Boadi noted that youth tend to be more pro-

not paid at all. In 2015, to build the peace fund, as well as develop financial independence, the AU members agreed to impose a .02 percent levy on imports from outside the continent. This has raised \$164 million to date; the target from 2020 is to raise \$400 million annually. Developing the AU's professional staff has also proved difficult. In total, there are 1,720 personnel at the AU Commission, 1,000 short-term contractors; and 193 personnel in the peace and security department—but the AU needs many more.

The AU has outperformed the OAU in terms of responding to conflict, but it falls short of having achieved its objectives or addressing the root causes of conflict. Several challenges remain. Importantly, the AU must address the changing nature of responses to conflict and other threats that Africa faces. The G5 Sahel Joint Force and the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) represent the rise of ad hoc coalitions in response to conflict. These coalitions lie outside APSA's framework, which emphasizes a regional response to conflict. The AU must more clearly address whether and how to support the G5 Sahel and the MNJTF and manage the precedents they set. Coalitions like the G5 Sahel and MNJTF are also outside the traditional concept of a peacekeeping mission; with these new missions, the host state provides troops; accountability and compliance structures are weak; and peacemaking initiatives are vague. In a related challenge, the AU must also respond to threats besides those posed by armed conflict—such as organized crime, pandemics, environmental stressors, natural disasters, and cyber crimes—which also threaten security. These other threats will require the AU to go beyond deploying land-based soldiers and police officers. For example, organized crime requires law enforcement, police, and anti-corruption measures; preparing for pandemics, such as Ebola, entails shoring up health infrastructures.

Stakeholders in Africa's Peace and Security: Women and Youth

Women and youth are increasingly considered critical to sustaining peace and security in Africa. Moderated by Dr. Ashley Bybee, of IDA's Africa Program, and comprising Ms. Sandra Pepera, Director for Gender, Women, and Democracy at the National Democratic Institute, and Dr. Marc Sommers, an internationally recognized expert on youth and conflict in Africa, this panel emphasized strong linkages between including women and youth, realizing democratic dividends, and peace. Youth are often subjected to violence by the state, violence against women is common, and both groups remain excluded from democratic processes

groups. By aggressively targeting youth, states thus threaten to undermine their own security, Dr. Sommers warned. In addition, the lack of opportunities for youth makes it challenging to attain expected adulthood milestones, such as marriage, when poor employment prospects make it difficult to pay a bride price. These unmet markers of adulthood invite public humiliation. To recruit adherents, violent extremist organizations counter these realities with gender-specific recruitment strategies, including male youths' fears of emasculation, and fears of failed adulthood, and, sometimes, anger at the state.

Africa has the largest numbers of youth on the planet. Dr. Sommers noted that in spite of their demographic dominance, many youth

Citing Georgetown University's Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Index, Ms. Pepera maintained that a higher gross domestic product (GDP) does not translate into less violence against women.⁴ To this point, she noted that Rwanda sits at the top of the WPS Index, while countries with higher GDPs rank much lower. According to Ms. Pepera, other factors

similar to the relationship Africa has with other countries in the global north. But China distinguishes itself from Europe by emphasizing its non-colonial history. It signals a different power dynamic that is less overtly predatory.

Intervention in Africa by China extends beyond humanitarian concerns. Diplomatically, Africa is important for support in the UN, where African nations comprise the largest regional voting bloc. Relatedly, Africa helps China strategically, providing opportunities for China to build legitimacy as a responsible and significant global player. Moreover, the appearance of competition between China and the West contributes to China's global strategy.

Economically, Africa is a source for consumer goods, not just extractive- and service-sector products. Africa also faces challenges in harnessing its economic potential, as the continent must expand its infrastructure and provide more and more jobs for its rapidly growing population. These potential consumers create additional opportunities for Chinese companies to launch new products and build new markets for old products. Africa's more intricate connection to the international community also means that insecurity in Africa affects countries outside the continent.

Professor Benaballah emphasized China's investment in Africa's human capital.
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Madagascar and Mozambique. And as the Somali security situation continues to remain intractable, Somalia receives humanitarian assistance from Arab countries.⁶

Security challenges in Africa have drawn in a broad set of international actors. Mr. Devermont recounted that the rise of violent extremism and subsequent migration crisis have influenced Europe's politics; the Ebola epidemic in West Africa affected peacekeepers, in particular Filipinos; drugs trafficked from Latin America pass through Guinea-Bissau and the Sahel, en route to Europe, creating law enforcement challenges; and piracy in the Horn of Africa required the arming of commercial ships and the creation of many task forces. The United States must keep innovating and thinking of new ways to connect with African nations. Both presenters noted that while few people remember which countries built which roads, many remember personal interactions and connections.

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