Human Security in Africa

A conceptual framework for review

By Jakkie Cilliers

The African Human Security Initiative (AHSI)

AHSI is a network of seven African non-governmental research organisations that have come together to measure the performance of key African governments in promoting human security. The project is inspired by a wish to contribute to the ambitions of the New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). Whereas the APRM process has defined a comprehensive set of objectives, standards, criteria and indicators that cover four broad areas, AHSI only engages with one of the four, namely issues of political governance in so far as these relate to human security. Within this area, each AHSI partner has identified a set of key commitments that African leaders have entered into at the level of OAU/AU heads of states meetings and summits. A "shadow review" of how these commitments have been implemented in practice has then been conducted. Eight countries have been chosen for review, namely Algeria, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa and Uganda. All eight are members of NEPAD and have acceded to the APRM. While not constituting an exhaustive list of human security challenges in Africa, the AHSI Network selected the following seven clusters of commitments: human rights, democracy and governance; civil society engagement; small arms and light weapons; peacekeeping and conflict resolution; anti-corruption; and terrorism and organised crime. The AHSI partners are the South African Institute for International Affairs (SAIIA), the Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa (IHRDA), the Southern Africa Human Rights Trust (SAHRIT), the West African Network for Peace (WANEP), the African Security Dialogue and Research (ASDR), the African Peace Forum (APFO) and the Institute for Security Studies (ISS).

The project is funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID).

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ADF	Allied Democratic Forces (Uganda)
AGOA	African Growth and Opportunity Act
AHSI	African Human Security Initiative
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
AU	African Union
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army (Uganda)
LURD	Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy
MODEL	Movement for Democracy in Liberia
MPCI	Movement Patriotique de Côte d'Iviore
MSF	Medecins Sans Frontières
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
RENAMO	Resistência Nacional de Moçambique
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SPDF	Sudan People's Defence Force
SPLM/A	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army
UNITA	União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola
ZANU(PF)	Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front

"African leaders have learnt from their own experiences that peace, security, democracy, good governance, human rights and sound economic management are conditions for sustainable development. They are making a pledge to work, both individually and collectively, to promote these principles in their countries, sub-regions and the continent."

The New Partnership for Africa's Development,
Abuja, October 2001, para. 71

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Introduction

During his speech to African heads of state and government in Lusaka in July 2001, UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, made it clear that "Africa must reject the ways of the past, and commit itself to building a future of democratic governance subject to the rule of law. Such a future," he continued, "is only achievable on the condition that we end Africa's conflicts, without which no amount of aid or trade, assistance or advice, will make the difference." Earlier, in his report on Africa in 1998, Annan had stated: "for too long, conflict in Africa has been seen as inevitable or intractable, or both. It is neither. Conflict in Africa, as everywhere, is caused by human action, and can be ended by human action."[1]

This monograph sets out a conceptual framework for the review of selected commitments that African leaders have made at the level of the meetings of the heads of state and government of the African Union (AU) and its predecessor, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). It does so within the spirit of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). NEPAD rests "on the determination of Africans to extricate themselves and the continent from the malaise of underdevelopment and exclusion in a globalising world."[2] It is not the first continental initiative to try to do so but the level of political commitment (both from African leadership and its development partners), the manner in

1 K Annan, The causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, Report to the United Nations, April 1998.

2 The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), Abuja, October 2001, para. 1.

which NEPAD acknowledges and feeds into the dominant global process and its domestic roots sets it apart from previous failed efforts.[3]

NEPAD is not primarily engaged with peace and security matters – apart from the recognition that peace, security and democracy are necessary preconditions for attracting investments, garnering growth and development, and reducing poverty. It demands that participating governments commit to a set of targeted initiatives, intended to strengthen their political and administrative frameworks in line with the principles of transparency, accountability, integrity, respect for human rights and the promotion of the rule of law. The purpose of the NEPAD peer review process is to help countries to improve their policy-making capacity, adopt best practices and comply with established standards, principles, codes and other agreed commitments.

While 19 African countries had acceded to the APRM by April 2004, this review is limited to only eight of these countries, namely Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, Algeria, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and South Africa. These countries have been selected on the basis of availability of data, knowledge of the countries concerned, regional representation and relative importance. Apart from the fact that seven serve on the Peace and Security Council of the AU, their economic and political role would indicate that positive developments in these key countries will have important regional benefits, as well as impact in a significant manner upon the continent's broader development indicators. Collectively, they account for 43 per cent of the continent's population and 33 per cent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP). While subsequent sections will comment on Africa in a general nature, it is also important to point to the significant differences in history, culture, social structure, religious composition and dynamics between these eight countries. For example, South Africa only achieved democracy very recently, Ethiopia was never under colonial rule, Senegal and Algeria have very different experience under the common colonial legacy of France while five of the others were previous British colonies. Such rich

3 Examples include the Lagos Plan of Action for Economic Development in Africa (1980–2000), the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation (AAF-SAP) (1989), and the African Charter for Popular Participation for Development (1990).

differences and specificities do not, however, detract from the general overview presented in this monograph.

Table 1: Population and GDP of the eight AHSI selected countries[4]

Country	Population 2001 (millions)	GDP 2001 (US$ bn)
Ghana	20,0	5,3
Nigeria	117,8	41,4
Senegal	9,6	4,6
Algeria	30,7	54,7
Ethiopia	67,3	6,2
Kenya	31,1	11,4
Uganda	24,2	5,7
South Africa	44,4	113,3
Total	**345,1**	**195,9**
Total % of Africa	**42,9%**	**33,2%**

The debate on peer review has opened up considerable space for African civil society organisations to seek out and establish parallel processes to hold African governments and leaders accountable to their stated commitments and decisions.[5] Of all the indicators of the gap between commitment and implementation in Africa, none is more striking than the fact that almost half of the world's child soldiers (120,000 of an estimated global total of 300,000) are in Africa, despite the entry into force, in 1999, of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the only regional treaty in the world that prohibits the use of child soldiers.[6]

With funding from the United Kingdom Department of International Development (DFID), the seven partners to the AHSI intend to take up

4 UNDP, *Human development report 2003*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003, Tables 5 and 12, pp 250–253, 278–281. Africa's GDP is calculated as US$589,6 billion and its total population as 803,6 million.

5 J Cilliers, Peace and security through good governance – a guide to the NEPAD African Peer Review Mechanism, *ISS Paper,* no 70, Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, April 2003, p 14.

6 The charter forbids member states to recruit or use children (anyone under 18 years) in a participatory role in any acts of war or internal conflicts.

Table 2: Partners and clusters in the African Human Security Initiative

South African Institute for International Affairs (SAIIA)	Democracy
Institute for Human Rights and Development in Africa (IHRDA)	Human rights
Southern Africa Human Rights Trust (SAHRIT)	Anti-corruption efforts
West African Network for Peace (WANEP)	Civil society engagement
African Security Dialogue and Research (ASDR)	Conflict resolution (including peacekeeping)
African Peace Forum (APFO)	Control of small arms and light weapons (including landmines)
Institute for Security Studies (ISS)	Combating terrorism and organised crime

this challenge within the realm of selected human security indicators (www.africanreview.org).

This monograph is intended to serve as theoretical background to the common project and following brief discussions on the NEPAD APRM and our view of human security, does so by providing a historical context to Africa's present lack of peace and security. Final sections comment on the role of African élites, the relationship between democracy and security, on the one hand, and the contribution of civil society, on the other. Since the subsequent work by the project partners will focus their analysis on seven themes – democracy; human rights; civil society engagement; anti-corruption efforts; conflict resolution (including peacekeeping); control of small arms and light weapons (including landmines); and combating terrorism and organised crime – this monograph weaves these themes into its explanatory narrative.

NEPAD and the APRM

The five core principles of NEPAD are good governance; entrenchment of democracy, peace, stability and security; sound economic policy-making and execution; productive partnerships; and domestic ownership and leadership. It is to achieve these core principles, particularly the first

three, that the NEPAD document motivated a peer review mechanism, although it was not until June 2002 that its broad outlines were established. The purpose of the APRM is

> "to foster the adoption of policies, standards and practices that lead to political stability, high economic growth, sustainable development and accelerated sub-regional and continental economic integration through the sharing of experiences and reinforcement of successful best practice, including identifying deficiencies and assessing the needs for capacity building."[7]

NEPAD is inherently a state-centric initiative, pitched at the level of African political leadership taking responsibility for the continent's development. The opening text of the Abuja document states: NEPAD is "a pledge by African leaders" to place their countries on a path of sustainable growth and development.[8] Article 47 is clear in the view that "we believe that while African leaders derive their mandates from their people, it is their role to … lead the processes of implementation", while the "appeal to African peoples" is that, "we are asking the African peoples to support the implementation of this initiative by setting up structures for organisation, mobilisation and action."

Clearly, civil society organisations are not invited to sit down with African leaders and shape the agenda of NEPAD, although room for civil society engagement within the APRM is steadily expanding. The burden and responsibility for leadership lies first and foremost with the steadily increasing number of elected African democrats. However, the poor service rendered to Africa by its post-independence leadership demands an important role for African civil society to sustain the recent positive trends regarding democratisation and political liberalisation. Independent thinkers and interest groups will have to prise open space for a supporting, and at times critical, role for themselves in the common interest of African democratisation, development and stability. The various components of civil society at all levels – from grassroots organisations to policy think-

7 African Peer Review Mechanism Organisation and Process, 9 March 2003, para. 3 *ibid*, art. 47.

8 NEPAD, Abuja, Nigeria, October 2001.

tanks, from churches to the private sector – have vital contributions to make towards Africa's key priorities, including:

- strengthening mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution;
- promoting and protecting democracy and human rights;
- extending education and healthcare;
- promoting the role of women in social and economic development;
- building state capacity to maintain law and order; and
- infrastructure and agricultural programmes.[9]

At the same time, the formulation of NEPAD as a "pledge by African leaders" offers a position of critical distance to segments in civil society to play a role in monitoring NEPAD. Perhaps the most important admission of the NEPAD document is the statement that, "post-colonial Africa inherited weak states and dysfunctional economies that were further aggravated by poor leadership, corruption and bad governance in many countries".[10] The promise to change this style of leadership is one that civil society should monitor with enthusiasm – but on its own terms. Senior advisor to the Electoral Institute of South Africa, Khabele Matlosa, spoke for many of the policy think-tanks and independent agencies working in the areas of democracy and governance when he said:

> "there should be a shadow process by CSOs so that if they cannot participate in the formal process, they have their own process to keep it honest. As civil society, agencies must interrogate peer review, conduct research and share information with each other."[11]

The APRM is the most concrete and innovative development of NEPAD to date. Nineteen countries have already signed up to be reviewed, a panel of eminent persons have been appointed and the APRM secretariat is being established – albeit increasingly with donor as opposed to NEPAD member state funds.

9 *Ibid*, art. 49.

10 *Ibid*, art. 22.

11 K Matlosa interviewed in *ePolitics Journal South African Institute for International Affairs*, Johannesburg, October 2003.

Table 3: NEPAD APRM and AHSI countries (as at April 2004)

Countries that have joined the APRM	Countries selected by AHSI for review
Algeria, Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Uganda	Algeria, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Uganda

The APRM is based on the NEPAD Declaration on Democracy and Political, Economic and Corporate Governance, which is itself anchored in four main components, namely: democracy and political governance; economic governance and management; corporate governance; and socio-economic development. The AHSI initiative is necessarily focused on the first of these components which include as part of its objectives the prevention and reduction of intra- and inter-state conflicts; entrenchment of constitutional democracy; promotion and protection of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights; fighting corruption; and the promotion and protection of the rights of women, children and young persons, and other vulnerable groups.

While civil society should participate in the consultations by the country review teams, they should have realistic expectations of what will come out of this government-to-government exercise in "peer learning". NEPAD does not have the leverage of the Bretton Woods institutions and donors who can offer, withhold or promise direct benefits to affect changes in behaviour. Rather than sanction, the APRM will rely on peer pressure – and it is our belief that public scrutiny is an important component of such pressure. It is this view that underpins the AHSI. In operationalising our role, the AHSI partners have adopted an approach rooted in the thinking on human security in Africa.

The concept of human security and contemporary Africa

While freedom from physical hurt, injury, abuse or the threat thereof constitutes the core of individual security, academic views of how far the communal concept of human security should (or could) be expanded from

this core differ sharply. For some, hunger, disease and environmental contamination represent grave security threats – even worse than physical violence. Thus, conditions of abject poverty or powerlessness are viewed as not qualitatively different from vulnerability to physical violence during conflict. Others have argued that human security should include the notion of "structural violence", referring to the structure of the relevant political-social system (such as apartheid) or the global trading system.[12]

Africa has traditionally followed an expansive approach to the concept of human security. For example, the draft African Non-Aggression and Common Defence Pact states: "human security means the security of the individual with respect to the satisfaction of the basic needs of life; it also encompasses the creation of the social, political, economic, military,

> **Africa has traditionally followed an expansive approach to the concept of human security.**

environmental and cultural conditions necessary for the survival, livelihood, and dignity of the individual, including the protection of fundamental freedoms, the respect for human rights, good governance, access to education, healthcare, and ensuring that each individual has opportunities and choices to fulfil his/her own potential."[13]

For the purposes of operationalising human security for the AHSI we start off with a traditional approach.[14] First, we make a vertical distinction between at least five levels of security, namely: personal/individual, local/community, national, regional and international security.[15] According to the dominant theories of international legal practice, both individual and international security is dependent upon national security. In practice, many factors impact upon local or community security. In much of rural Africa, security

12 The notion of structural violence was popularised by J Galtung, *Essays in peace research*, vols I and III, Christian Ejlers, Copenhagen, 1975 and 1978.

13 Draft text as adopted by the first meeting of the African ministers of defence and security on the establishment of the African Standby Force and the Common African Defence and Security Policy, 20–21 January 2004, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 4(1). The text is to be adopted during the AU summit meeting of July 2004.

14 This discussion of a complex subject is necessarily brief. Much has been written about the subject and the purpose here is merely to provide sufficient context for the subsequent work by the various partners.

is provided by local organisations independent of national structures. Local or community security may be dependent upon traditional authority and allegiances (provided by local militias established by the community to provide security), dependent upon local warlords or politicians with their own armed forces. In selected areas, often in urban areas closer to the locations of state power, local government structures, such as the police, may play a role and citizens may have recourse to the courts and to the law. Elsewhere, private security companies may have largely replaced state structures where richer communities can afford such a service in adjacent suburbs.

State security, in most of Africa, is not threatened by conventional threats of armed attack by other countries but by more insidious measures many of which flow from the very weakness of the state and its absence of control over its own territory. Other factors contributing to insecurity include resorting to extra-legal measures to gain and retain political power – such as support to armed factions in neighbouring countries favourable to its own domestic demands, etc.

Élite dependence upon overseas development assistance, rather than domestic tax revenue, undermines domestic accountability in manners similar to the impact that the World Bank and International Monetary Fund have in removing or curtailing the responsibility for financial and economic management from the national government.

We hold that without the provision of effective national security, neither citizens nor communities can be personally secure in the broader sense of the term. Without secure and stable countries and a body of practice or law – whereby countries regulate their interaction – individual, community, regional and international security remains elusive.

15 Lately human security concerns, based on the emerging body of international law that elevates human rights to a level where it impinges upon demands for absolute state sovereignty and non-interference in the domestic affairs of countries, have led to new expectations for action and standards of conduct in national and international affairs. This has resulted in the call for intervention by the international community (or a coalition acting on behalf of the international community) to protect people from predation, disease or hunger, exemplified by the report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, *The responsibility to protect*, International Development Research Centre, Ottawa, December 2001. In this sense the normative foundations of human security can be found at the international and national level in the legal provision for the protection of human rights, humanitarian law and refugee law.

For all states, national security therefore has two facets – internal and external. States can just as thoroughly be disrupted and destroyed by internal challenges (at either sub-state or national level) as they can be by external forces. The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is a good example of domestic rebellion (such as the repeated secession attempts by Katanga during the 1960s), predatory governance (under Mobuto Seso Seko) and foreign invasion (by Uganda and Rwanda in 1998) – all three of which undermined national security.

Today a number of African states present the "shell" of the territorial state where national security is equated with that of the governing élite – "governing" in the interests of their own preservation and advancement, with limited provision of human security for their citizenry. Such states are variously described as weak quasi-states, intermediate states or, in extreme situations, as predatory – in those instances where the regime literally feeds off the state carcass for its own survival, as was the case in Liberia under Charles Taylor. In these circumstances, the international legal system works to the distinct advantage of warlords, criminals and political thugs masquerading as national leaders and occupying seats at international forums on equal terms with democratically elected, legitimate leaders.

The downside of an international system predicated upon control over national territory is that control of the capital and some approximation of its immediate neighbourhood legally translate into an international legal persona – with all the benefits and powers that accompany such a role, but little automatic recognition of the responsibilities that should accompany it. Recognition by the international community provides the benefits but few of the obligations associated with legal statehood.[16] It does not provide a framework for human security.

The important and key role of stable, accountable state structures (and associated constitutional and legal institutions) come to the fore once we include the notions of predictability (i.e. having a futuristic time dimension) and control (i.e. having the potential for preventive or corrective action when threats emerge) in our understanding of human security.

16 States that accord each other mutual recognition as legal equals lay the foundation for international law, diplomacy, regimes and organisations.

Security is therefore time-bound and malleable. It implies protection against, or safety from, a future risk of severe deprivation, injury or death, and requires rules, order and impartial adjudication and application. Once we accept that predictability and control are part of our understanding of human security, it follows that such security cannot exist without due provision of adequate national security. *Ipso facto*, an outwardly aggressive and inwardly repressive regime can be a major source of human insecurity. Indeed, internal repression by governments is a greater cause of human suffering and abuse than any other.

In organisational terms, national security is therefore about those governmental institutions that ensure the physical protection and safety of their citizens, their equal access to the law and protection from abuse. These are primarily composed of two sets of government systems and institutions. The first component consists of the traditional instruments of national security, namely: the criminal justice system (police, justice and correctional services/prisons), the military and the intelligence community. The second, and more important, relates to the nature of governance, its institutions and the rules, norms and values that underpin it – as well as the efficacy thereof.

Security is therefore time-bound and malleable.

While the concept of national security largely refers to the security of the state against armed attack or insurrection, the "referent object" of the broader concept of human security (which includes overlapping systems of security at individual, national and international levels), is the security of the individual in his or her personal surroundings and within the community – the ability thus of people and communities to pursue a safe livelihood on equal terms with others.[17] While there are many different approaches, one thing is clear – the security of the individual is no longer defined exclusively within the realm of states and as a consequence of national security. As a result, individuals and communities are not only bystanders and collateral victims of conflicts, but core participants in protection strategies and post-conflict peace building, thus opening the

17 Some may argue that this is roughly similar to infusing the debate on security (at all three levels) with first generation human rights.

door to the discussion on the role of civil society in the provision of human security in Africa in a separate section below.[18] We do not therefore follow the approach advocated by Mahbub ul-Haq, Sadako Ogata and others, who see human security as an alternative way in which to view traditional approaches to state security, but view the two in a complementary manner.[19]

If human development is freedom from want (a process widening the range of people's choices), human security can be understood as the ability to pursue those choices in a safe environment and on an equal basis with others. Seen the other way around, human development contributes to human security by tackling the long-term structural causes of conflict and by strengthening the capability of societies to deal with conflict in a peaceful manner.[20] For the purposes of this project, the concept of human security therefore includes an obligation on the state to provide a facilitating environment for equality and individual participation through democracy, adherence to human rights and the participation of civil society. The state can only do so if it is responsive to its citizenry and is efficient – implying that it is not structurally or intrinsically corrupt. An approach predicated upon the provision of a secure environment also implies a commitment to conflict resolution and peacekeeping, control of the means of violence (small arms), controlling organised crime and, in the post-9/11 context, combating terrorism.

Based on the examples of mature democracies, we argue that at least five additions are required to complete the transition from a simple focus on national, personal and community security to human security within

18 C Bruderlein, People's security as a new measure of global stability, *International Review of the Red Cross*, 83(842), International Committee of the Red Cross, Geneva, June 2001, pp 358 & 360.

19 See H ul-Haq, Human rights, security, and governance, *World's apart: Human security and global governance*, IB Tauris, London, 1999, available on-line at www.toda.org/publications/peace_policy/p_p_fw98/haq.html (Accessed 31 December 2002); S Ogata, State security – human security, The Fridtjof Nansen Memorial Lecture, Tokyo, 12 December 2001. While sensitive to those utilising the "new critical security paradigm" (which argues that the reduction in absolute state sovereignty implies the primacy of human security over state or regime security), our approach is more traditional.

20 S Lodgaard, Human security: concepts and operationalisation, undated paper, Oslo, p 9.

the African context. The first is the development of an administrative bureaucracy to manage the state along a rational-legal, as opposed to a personal or patrimonial, basis. The mere existence of such a bureaucracy is insufficient if the state is not in control of its entire territory (including the movement of people and goods) and does not provide public order. The second is the rise of an independent commercial class. This increases the resource base of the state and diffuses power, dividing the sources of patronage between politics and economics. The third is the transformation of subjects into citizens – traditionally through the process of nationalism as an ideology of the state. In Africa, artificial colonial borders have given way to the subsequent awareness by Africans of a national identity in countries as vast as the DRC or as small and violent as Liberia. But national identity does not equate with citizenship and its implied reciprocal relationship of duties and rights between the individual and the state. That is a relationship that most African governments still have to earn. The fourth is the introduction of democracy that institutionalises the transfer of sovereignty from ruler to people.[21] Finally, we hold that the very weakness of African states demands a regional approach to security and development, within which peace is pursued as a collaborative venture and economic growth based on the removal of national impediments to trade and the pursuit of improved individual livelihoods. The motivation for these five additions are inextricably a product of Africa's modern history, to which we now turn our attention.

State development in Africa

Relatively low population densities in Africa over previous centuries made it much more difficult to establish fixed territorial states than was the case in Europe and elsewhere.[22] Only a few places in Africa, including the Nile river, the Great Lakes region and the Ethiopian highlands, were fertile

21 B Buzan, Security, the state, the "new world order," and beyond, in RD Lipschutz (ed), *On Security*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1995, pp 190–191.

22 J Reader, *Africa – a biography of the continent*, Penguin Books, London, 1998, pp 178, 234–242. B Davidson, *Africa in history – themes and outlines*, revised and expanded edition, Phoenix Press, London, 2001, p 14.

enough to support relatively high densities of people in previous centuries – reflected in the sophisticated and complex urban societies that developed in each.

With its widely dispersed populations, concentrations of people in one area seldom intruded on the security consciousness elsewhere on the African continent.[23] Boundaries between security communities were imprecise and fluid, and it was unclear where one area of authority ended and another began. The result was that pre-colonial African states were exceptionally dynamic. Geoffrey Herbst therefore writes that "[p]olitical organisations were created, rose and fell naturally in response to opportunities and challenges."[24] Naturally low population density also reduced innovation and development pressure. Thus roads were few and far between – too costly to build and maintain over vast distances with low population density and low traffic volumes. Until modern medicine was able to overcome the limitations imposed by the environment on the procreation of humans on the continent, the dominant political structure in Africa was an age-grade system that established gerontocracy as the dominant form of political organisation.[25]

In contrast to the history of Europe (with its high population densities and tight territorial control), power tended to dissipate quite rapidly from the centre in Africa. Clear borders between tribes and kingdoms were seldom evident – a situation exacerbated by the destructive impact of the slave trade. The imposition of the rigid colonial borders that were superimposed after the Berlin conference of the late 19th century thus

23 According to Herbst "[t]he combination of large amounts of open land and rain-fed agriculture meant that, in precolonial Africa, control of territory was often not contested because it was often easier to escape from rulers than to fight them." J Herbst, *States and power in Africa – comparative lessons in authority and control*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2000, p 39.

24 *Ibid*, p 44.

25 Gerontocracy consists of an age-group system that allocates a standard set of social and political duties to age groups. As individuals advance in years they change duties until those surviving have progressed through the entire set. Thus, the system sustains no permanent or hereditary rulers or office-holders. The highly conservative social customs and practices set by gerontocracy laid the foundations of what is known today as the patrimonial nature of African political practice. Reader, *op cit*, pp 258–260. Apart from an attitude that discouraged innovation or change, the "abiding strength of the gerontocratic system was that it functioned on a basis of compromise not coercion, and was disseminated by a process of consent, not conquest." *ibid*, p 260.

represented impressive changes for the continent and its peoples. Although it would appear as if African state formation (in the fixed territorial sense) had been accelerating during the same century, the indigenous process of security consolidation that characterised European state formation was interrupted in Africa[26] by external and militarily superior intervention, as part of the scramble for relative influence between European powers and control over Africa's resources.[27]

In contrast to the history of Europe power tended to dissipate quite rapidly from the centre in Africa.

Subsequent colonialism left an indelible footprint on Africa; despite the fact that the colonial interlude was relatively brief, the number of colonialists few and the methods of control often indirect. In the process, the continent was reordered along the political space concepts prevalent in Europe, derived from a foreign experience and not its own. Borders were drawn and determined by the political interests in Europe based on the occupation of what was, at least initially, only small slivers of African territory. Security was now guaranteed by a foreign, external force – differentiated by its superior organisation and technological advancement, and identified by the ascriptive skin colour of its soldiers and administrators. A thin white line stood between Africa and Europe, imposing the structures of the latter, however superficially, on the former.

Upon independence during the 1950s and 1960s, African governments thus inherited the trappings of statehood, including armed forces that had been orientated to serve a wider, imperial scheme (such as protection of a sea-route or contribution to European forces in select frontiers). Quite

26 This was particularly evident in West Africa, where a number of ancient empires had been very militaristic (such as those of Ghana, Mali, Songhai, Kanem-Bornu and Hausa).

27 Effective colonialism in Africa lasted a relatively brief period of some 80 years, in contrast to the various smaller coastal settlements that had been colonised for much longer. Colonialism, for all its impact, took time to extend over the territories that had so readily been demarcated. It was thus often more an issue of colonising the (coastal) capital city, rather than that of the entire colony, with formal control in the hinterland coming much later. Colonialists undermined existing African state authority by largely (re)locating most inland capital cities to the coast, so that they could be reachable by sea.

literally, the armed forces of the newly independent African states had no clear role comparable to their European counterparts, except to serve as presidential guard. No wonder then that in time, they would aspire to political power. The police forces, previously essentially and practically there "to keep the natives in check", soon served to keep any opposition to the government at bay. Perhaps more importantly, post-colonial administrations had absorbed the thinking of their former colonial masters.

African states, artificial to start with, were subsequently held in place by the superpower rivalry of the Cold War – despite the obvious steady decay of state content that became particularly obvious during the late 1970s. In this manner, the external world served to buttress and maintain the developing states. Incumbent leaders, such as Mobuto Seso Seko in the former Zaire, or Agostinho Neto in Angola, were supported by the United States or the Soviet Union because they aligned themselves to a particular side. In the process, they were provided with the means to survive, irrespective of corruption, inefficiency or the human rights record of their respective regimes. In this manner, the Cold War served to undermine African governance and systems of accountability in a fundamental manner.

As an aside, these (and subsequent) broad generalisations should not obscure the varied relationships that developed between African countries, their former colonial masters (the two superpowers) and their allies, and indeed with others. Thus, France consolidated an exceptional relationship with the governing élites of francophone Africa – beyond those required by its Cold War interests and reflected in an average of one French military intervention in Africa per year from 1960 to 1994. This relationship underpinned France's claim to continue to be considered a world power in the post-colonial era, while African governing élites benefited from a reliable ally that provided economic, political, technical and, when required, military support in a situation where their hold on power was often fragile.[28]

28 T Chafer, Franco-African relations: no longer so exceptional?, *African Affairs, Royal African Society*, 101(402), January 2002, London, p 344. The period after 1994 is generally seen as the start of the normalisation of French-African relationships, with the 50% devaluation of the CFA franc and the subsequent fall-out regarding French assistance to the Hutu government of Juvénal Habyarimana.

The end of the Cold War served to reduce Africa's strategic importance and the unquestioned resources that foreign sponsors were prepared to make available to support politically pliant leaders. With the removal of this external scaffolding, the weakness of the African state was ultimately exposed to a world that was in the middle of a new revolution.[29] In the process, Africa's governing élites lost much of their ability to extract capital and support from the East or the West. Globalisation had the existing trading nations establish high barriers to protect themselves from fair competition at a time when the newly found ability of capital, corporations and technology united the world into a single market. The result, coming so soon after the damage that was caused by the twin oil shocks in the early 1980s, was a very dramatic erosion of the state and supported the creation of weak, and so-called failed, states over time. With little room to manoeuvre, African governments were forced to adopt a series of structural adjustment programmes from the early 1980s. From this time onward, the international financial institutions took effective control of a significant portion of the continent's economy, and imposed comprehensive programmes of currency devaluation, privation, market pricing and macro-economic stabilisation. Power over much of Africa's troubled regimes had passed from the former colonial powers – first to the two opposing ideological superpowers, and now largely to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Although structural adjustment programmes registered some macro-economic improvements (such as the elimination of overvalued exchange rates), these did not overcome the region's troubled existence nor did they pave the way to sustained economic recovery. Improved governance and progress on democratisation have also proven more difficult to effect than macro-economic changes. All this came at a tremendous social cost to Africa, often because domestic political élites resorted to more damaging practices to retain and protect their benefits.

In fact, it soon became evident that the state and society were now often at odds with one another. For the first time, African leaders had to come to terms with their own security and development community – at

29 It is precisely those states that received large amounts of aid during the Cold War, such as Chad, Ethiopia, Liberia, the Sudan and the former Zaire, that have declined the most.

least to the extent that donor conditionality and the dictates of the global economy would allow. Both would initially serve to further weaken the African state and its ability to govern at a time when Africa arguably needed more, not less, government.

> **For the first time, African leaders had to come to terms with their own security and development community.**

Beyond the dynamics of the Cold War, the dominant ideologies also had an impact upon the role that was expected of the state. At independence, African leaders expected the state to play an extensive role in the political and economic life of their countries. Governments in independent Africa therefore assumed a leading and wide-ranging interventionist role. It was generally believed that the way to a better future lay through more and longer-term state planning, with its implementation led by a large and ever-expanding public sector.[30] As a result, politicians and government officials made most important economic and other decisions, and economic allocations were strongly politicised. According to Anne Pitcher,

> "states were expected to be the mechanism that would hasten economic and social development; they would be responsible for making their countries modern. They would bankroll large, technologically sophisticated industrial projects and mechanise agriculture."[31]

The result was massive growth of the state-owned enterprises that were established after independence. By the 1980s, at the time of the twin oil shocks and their devastating impact on Africa, the parastatal sector occupied a pivotal position in the economies of all sub-Saharan countries. Their associated poor performance, and the extent of corruption, set the scene for an extensive period of privatisation and slimming down of government at the behest of the international financial institutions thereafter.[32]

30 R Oliver as quoted by R Tangri, *The politics of patronage in Africa – parastals, privatisation and private enterprise*, Africa World Press, James Currey, Oxford, 1999, p 3.

31 M A Pitcher, *Transforming Mozambique – the politics of privatisation, 1975–2000*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002, p 17.

32 Tagri, *op cit*, p 135.

In time, analysts identified and commented upon the nature of (neo-)patrimonialism in Africa as a subsequent impediment to stability and development. Amongst others, neo-patrimonal systems evidence a high tolerance, and even legitisation, of market and patron–client networks. Since corruption is seen as an integral part of the political order, pervading most aspects of daily life and rewarding individuals according to a condoned social order, it is generally viewed as legitimate. Two examples of the instrumental function that corruption serves illustrate this point. On the one hand, petty corruption ensures the survival of low ranking civil servants and their families and is therefore generally condoned. On the other, paying below-subsistence civil service wages is a powerful means for a ruling group to retain the allegiance of its individual members – "providing both an inescapable economic incentive (access to rents/bribes) and a disciplinary threat (dismissal for corruption)."[33]

The extent of corruption, slow or negative growth and declining standards of well-being had scholars place the African state at the forefront of attempts to find out what went wrong – a process of investigation that soon pointed to the politicisation of decision-making in Africa, itself a function of the internal dynamics and logic of neo-patrimonialism. It is no surprise that the subsequent prescriptions of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund were couched in terms that called for the minimalist state. Within this, the appetite for Africa's strongmen would be curbed by institutionally divorcing them from the means of accumulating wealth.

But the period of privatisation of Africa's bloated state-owned sector that followed the early 1980s had limited success since it threatened the existing patterns of patronage. Many divestiture decisions favoured cronies and supporters of the élite in power and thus helped to enhance the political position of those in control of the state.[34] Despite their impeccable credentials, many of Africa's liberation leaders proved little different to those they had replaced when the choice of the electorate threatened their own hold on power.

33 P le Billon, Buying peace or fuelling war: the role of corruption in armed conflicts, *Journal of International Development*, 15(4), Johan Wiley, April 2003, p 416.

34 Tangri, *op cit*, p 14.

The preceding paragraphs argue that modern African states were created by outsiders and held in place first by colonialism and then, during the bi-polar era, by Cold War rivalry before the external scaffolding was removed (shortly after the collapse of the Berlin Wall). Africa was left to the machinations of the international financial institutions, the vagaries of globalisation and, in many respects, the mismanagement by the continent's own leaders. Much changed in Africa as a result. From the mid-1980s onward, African societies came under stress through rising external debt, structural adjustment programmes, the disengagement of Cold War patrons and the advance of democratisation. These factors combined to challenge the prevailing political order. In many cases, these changes disrupted the stability of the dominant neo-patrimonial systems across much of the continent, increasing competition and criminalisation and drove the final nail into the unsustainable character of the post-colonial social system.[35]

> **Despite their impeccable credentials, many of Africa's liberation leaders proved incapable of inculcating democratic practices.**

Africa and security today

Some characteristics

As Max Weber and others have repeatedly noted, the critical characteristic of a state is its monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force in the territory it claims to control. This is not the situation in most of Africa where it is generally recognised that conflicts are of a regional and unregulated character (more so because state capacity to regulate the amount of weapons in society is virtually non-existent and the existence of a myriad of sub-state groups that increasingly are able to challenge and

34 Tangri, *op cit*, p 14.

35 Authors such as Mark Duffield argue that the criminalisation of African economies can partly be interpreted as the use of and adaptation to globalisation and market deregulation. M Duffield, Globalisation and war economies: promoting order or the return of history, *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, 23(2), The Fletcher School, Tufts University, Medford, pp 19–36.

threaten the authority of the state). In the absence of administration, and the application of any rule of law, the nexus between the legitimate and illegitimate activities of business, government, criminals and conflict triggers are often difficult to distinguish from one another. These flow across national borders and involve numerous national and international actors. Insecurity and instability in much of Africa has become a single, complex and interrelated problem that is an intrinsic part of the debate about the nature and capability of the African state.[36] While there are only a few collapsed or failed states in Africa, most African states are weak, as governance has contracted rather than expanded in recent decades – parallel with the acute economic crises experienced by the continent.

Thus, in Liberia some 250,000 people are believed to have died in war-related circumstances since 1989 – about ten per cent of the country's three million population. Liberia returned to war shortly after the carnage in neighbouring Sierra Leone was brought under control, after free and fair elections in 2002, and at a time when francophone West Africa saw its most prosperous country, Ivory Coast, divided between a rebel-held north and government-controlled south after conflict broke out in September 2003. That widening regional conflict has threatened Guinea and Liberia, and affected Mali, Niger and even Ghana.[37]

In the DRC, an estimated three million people have died during the past three years as a result of conflict. In neighbouring Rwanda, 40 per cent of the population have been killed or displaced since 1994. In Burundi, some 300,000 people have been killed over the past decade and fighting between the government and Hutu militias force about 100,000 to

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36 In a paper for the World Bank, Kwesi Aning described such conflict complexes as "the particular ways in which a group of states' conflict patterns link together sufficiently closely that supposedly domestic or internal conflicts cannot realistically be considered apart from one another. Conflict complexes emphasise the interconnectedness of the threats posed to states and hopefully the efforts at response". Conflict and poverty reduction in West Africa, prevention in a sub-regional framework, paper for World Bank/ECOWAS/UEMOA, November 2003, p 4.

37 The Ivorian crisis started on 19 September 2002 when mutinous soldiers, who failed to topple President Gbagbo, retreated to the north and west, seizing control of vast chunks of the territory. The mutineers formed the MPCI rebel group and occupied several key towns including Bouake, Korhogo, Odienne in the north, and Man in the west. The Economic Community of West African States subsequently deployed over 1,000 peacekeepers, while France, the former colonial power, deployed 4,000 troops.

flee their homes each month. In Uganda, the war with the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) that started in 1986 has displaced an estimated one million people since 1986. To the north, the 20 years of civil war in Sudan have claimed the lives of two million people and caused the greatest displacement of people in Africa. Recently, 110,000 people have crossed the border into Chad to escape the conflict between rebel movements, militias and the Government of Sudan, while an estimated one million people have been displaced inside Darfur. Elsewhere in the Horn, the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea between 1998 and 2000 cost around 100,000 lives. Neighbouring Somalia, with the limited exception of Somaliland and the region of Puntland, has had no government since the abortive UN peacekeeping mission ended in failure in 1993.

Although most contemporary writing on the subject focuses on the international dimensions or manifestations of terrorism, sub-national terror, and even state terror, has been a long-standing feature of Africa. In fact, by any objective standard, Africa is the continent most afflicted by terrorism – albeit not yet by international terrorism. At the one extreme, those figures provided by the US State Department's "Patterns of Global Terrorism" indicate that international terrorism is on the increase in Africa – although from a very low base with only six per cent of international terrorist incidents committed on African soil between 1990 and 2002. Evaluating the costs of international terrorism in terms of human casualties presents a different and more alarming picture. Africa recorded 6,177 casualties from 296 acts of international terrorism during the same period, second only to Asia in terms of continental casualties, with 1998 as the year with the highest number (5,379) due to the bombings in Kenya and Tanzania.[38]

Terrorism in Africa is widespread. It is overwhelmingly of a domestic, sub-state nature that kills, maims and affects millions of people. Many latter-day insurgent movements and government forces have adopted

> **Sub-national terror and even state terror has been a long-standing feature of Africa.**

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[38] A Botha, Background: Terrorism in Africa, Institute for Security Studies, Terrorism Seminar, 18–19 September 2003, Colosseum Hotel, Pretoria, South Africa, pp 5–6.

practices that rely heavily on the use of fear and terror. These included União Nocional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) and RENAMO in Angola and Mozambique, the Mai Mai, the LRA, the Liberians United for Democracy and Reconciliation (LURD), the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL), and so on. The list is almost endless and grows even longer if state-sponsored terror is added.

While Algeria presents the country in Africa most closely intertwined with international terrorism, in much of Africa rebels and governments alike had been terrifying civilians in many civil wars for years. For decades, these had caused much more death and destruction than international terrorism. Databases on international terrorism reflect the reality that shootings – not explosives, assassinations, kidnappings or hijackings – are the dominant modus operandi for terror in Africa. It is a statement of the obvious that small arms and light weapons are not in short supply in Africa, with an estimated 100 million in present circulation.[39]

In the aftermath of the Cold War, large sections of the state-run networks engaged in transport, training, provision of arms and equipment, money laundering and the like were privatised – not only in the hope of a more peaceful globe, but as part of the downsizing of the defence and security sectors that followed the collapse of the Berlin Wall. Not dissimilar to Afghanistan, failed or collapsed states such as the DR Congo, Liberia and Somalia have become free-trade zones for the underworld, where the black market in arms and in diamonds, and also trafficking in human beings, passports, gold and narcotics, connects local players to the global underworld economy.

The legal and illegal, the formal and informal, are blurred in conditions of neo-patrimonialism. The more informal the nature of local political and economic transactions, the easier they can be used for "other" activities – with the result that the distinction between licit and illicit, between legal and criminal, between corruption, business and politics is opaque.[40] Deeply embedded in these informal and hidden networks are the networks that

39 *Small arms survey 2003: Development denied*, Graduate Institute of International Studies (Geneva), Oxford University Press, 2003.

40 Chabal & Daloz, *op cit*, p 79.

supplied LURD, UNITA in Angola, the RUF in Sierra Leone, the Mai Mai, Interahamwe, and others in the DRC, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), the Sudan People's Defence Force (SPDF), and others fighting in southern and central Sudan.

In western Uganda government, the armed rebellion by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) would not have been possible without sympathetic government support and the ability to access arms and supplies. Nor would the LRA have been able to execute its campaign in northern Uganda and southern Sudan without the commodities for war (including food, fuel, arms, ammunition, training, proviant, tyres, clothing, medical supplies and the like), operating with impunity across borders, which are in any case unregulated and uncontrolled. The same mechanisms provide the means to exacerbate and intensify communal violence, such as that between local farming communities and nomadic Fulani herders in Mambilla plateau, north-eastern Nigeria, as well as the clashes between Kenyan Turkana herdsmen and Toposa cattle rustlers near the border with Sudan in north-west Kenya.

In their controversial study "The criminalisation of the state in Africa, Bayart, Ellis and Hibou[41] argued that "politics in Africa is becoming markedly interconnected with crime". Their prognosis for Africa is not optimistic:

> "the multiplication of conflicts, the main political logic of which is simply
> predation and which tend to be accompanied by a growing insertion in the
> international economy of illegality, as in the case of Chad, Liberia and
> Sierra Leone, the spread of a culture of institutional neglect, systematic
> plunder of the national economy and the uncontrolled privatisation of the
> state (for example in former Zaïre, Kenya, Cameroon, Congo, Guinea, Togo,
> Central African Republic, São Tomé, Madagascar and Zambia) all suggest
> that a slide towards criminalisation throughout the sub-continent is a
> strong probability."[42]

41 J Bayart, S Ellis & B Hibou, *The criminalisation of the state in Africa*, The International African Institute in association with James Currey and Indiana University Press, London, 1999, p 25.

42 *Ibid*, pp 30–31.

These linkages represent a global security problem. In a country where flight plans, customs, and immigration and passport control can easily be avoided, crime is difficult to combat – and subversive activity hard to detect. Thus, the terrorists that bungled an effort to down a commercial airliner with a SAM 7 surface-to-air missile in Mombassa earlier this year could smuggle their arms into Kenya with impunity.

These are trends that have long been noted but largely ignored by the leaders of the rich nations – until the events of 11 September 2001 brought into stark focus the threat the global backyard could have on the affluent suburbs of New York, London and Paris.

Poverty, security and neo-patrimonialism

According to some, the political behaviour of people in the majority of African countries is distinctly derived from the continent's material poverty. Where resources are scarce, as is the case across much of the continent, the object of political contestation is to secure economic consumption – which in turn is best guaranteed by capturing state power or replacing the state in a particular region, such as in the Kivu's in eastern DRC. Thus, politics easily degenerates a life-and-death struggle over private access to limited public resources. The zero-sum nature of the struggle compels would-be political leaders to obtain material benefits in order to wield influence over followers and competitors. Accordingly,

The political behaviour of people in the majority of African countries is distinctly derived from the continent's material poverty.

> "what all African states share is a generalised system of patrimonialism and an acute degree of apparent disorder, as evidenced by a high level of governmental and administrative inefficiency, a lack of institutionalisation, a general disregard for the rules of the formal political and economic sectors, and a universal resort to personal(ised) and vertical solutions to societal problems."[43]

43 P Chabal & J Daloz, *Africa works: disorder as political instrument, African issues*, Villiers Publications, International African Institute, in association with James Currey and Indiana University Press, London, 1999, p 19.

Other analysts point to the essential continuity in Africa, from pre-colonial to colonial and post-colonial era's, and the recent trend towards re-traditionalisation. Both schools of thought agree that contemporary African politics is best understood as the exercise of neo-patrimonial power.

As a consequence of systematic clientelism, the reliance on the award of personal favour in return for political support, and the use of state resources for this purpose, neo-patrimonial regimes demonstrate very little developmental capacity, and do not provide security. Accordingly,

> "the real institutions of politics in Africa are the formal relations of loyalty and patronage established between 'big men' and their personal followers. The unwritten rules of neopatrimonial politics shape the decisions of leaders, engender compliance from citizens, and pervade the performance of bureaucratic organisations. Formally, the domination of political patrons and the subordination of their clients is expressed in the monopolistic political organisations of military oligarchies and civilian one-party states. The constitutional and electoral rules decreed by personalistic leaders, as well as the systems of party and civic organisations that they permitted, embody and express the constrained expectations of the African political game."[44]

At the extreme level, some state and sub-state actors may have a vested interest in continued war and disorder, since it allows them additional opportunities to extract and conceal rewards and thereby serve the various patrimonial networks that provide their legitimacy. In the absence of any other viable means to sustain neo-patrimonialism, there is inevitably a tendency to link politics to realms of greater disorder, be it war or crime under conditions of resource constraints. Violence is necessary to secure or maintain a slice of the pie. In this manner, disorder becomes a necessary resource and opportunity for reward while there is little incentive to work for a more institutionalised ordering of society.[45]

44 *Ibid*, pp 44–45.
45 *Ibid*, pp 5–6.

The use of violence and terror is a logic consequence and necessary requirement with the built-in escalation dynamic of basic survival politics. Since resources decline and competition is increasingly fierce and violent, few have any choice but to side with larger groups – and protect their interests through force of arms.

Unrecognised by many is the extent to which the provision of development aid inadvertently supports the development of patronage politics, and undermines state capacity and sustainable development in Africa. Where a country, such as Malawi, receives the vast majority of its funds from donors, not through taxation of its citizens, accountability moves offshore. Since there is no incentive to build a functioning accountable state, based on mutual accountability between rulers and the ruled, it comes as little surprise that it does not happen.

Underpinning Africa's security crisis is, of course, the continent's severe developmental failure. Undeniably the common denominator of civil war and conflict in Africa is poverty, and much of that poverty the result of bad policy and poor governance. As economic and social conditions have steadily worsened, so insecurity and instability have increased – thus affecting the general populace.[46] A dramatic reduction in agricultural output, upon which much of Africa is dependent, is but one factor that illustrates the failure of economics and politics in much of the continent. Manufacturing output has fallen, and balance of payment difficulties followed shortly thereafter. Almost all sub-Saharan countries have been confronted with an endemic financial and debt crisis – leading to external indebtedness and high debt–service ratios. Physical infrastructure has been crumbling and public services have broken down. Unemployment has escalated, while skilled professionals emigrate to seek a better life abroad. Private capital has been disinvesting and substantial amounts of private wealth transferred overseas. Although GDP is no accurate indicator of human development, the severity of the African crisis is reflected in the static levels of GDP per capita in Africa, compared to that of other regions in the world.

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46 R Luckham, S White, I Ahmed & R Muggah, Conflict and poverty in sub-Saharan Africa: An assessment of the issues and evidence, *IDS Working Paper*, no 128, Brighton, Sussex.

Table 4: GDP per capita annual growth rate (1975–2001)[47]

DR Congo	-5,2%
Djibouti	-4,6%
Sierra Leone	-3,3%
Angola	-2,3%
Zambia	-2,2%
Niger	-2,0%
Madagascar	-1,6%
Central African Republic	-1,5%
Rwanda	-1,2%
Burundi	-0,8%
Nigeria	-0,7%
Cameroon	-0,6%
Mali	-0,4%
Gambia	-0,2%
Senegal	-0,1%
Ethiopia & Chad	0,1%
Malawi & Zimbabwe	0,2%
Kenya, Tanzania & Guinea-Bissau	0,3%
Benin	0,5%
Burkina Faso	1,3%
Guinea	1,4%
Mozambique	1,8%
Uganda	2,6%

Africa's share of global trade in 1950 was seven per cent and, in 2002, it was two per cent. Africa's share of global capital in 1950 was six per cent and, in 2002, it was one per cent. Left behind in international investment and globalisation, Africa's share of global foreign direct investment in the

47 UNDP, *op cit*, Table 12, pp 278–281

1980s was 30 per cent and in 2002, it was 7 per cent – in spite of its oil and gas output. One export that Africa can ill afford is people. According to the Geneva-based International Organisation for Migration, Africa has been losing 20,000 doctors, university teachers and other professionals each year, since 1990. The continent is producing expertise it badly needs, at considerable cost, without getting the benefits.

While African countries have generally failed to diversify and attract investors, their terms of trade have worsened. Average output per head was lower at the end of the 1990s than it was 30 years earlier, when Africa was widely thought to be on the way to new prosperity.

Sub-Saharan Africa's disappointing performance is even worse when compared to that of other regions of the world over time. The Middle East and North Africa, and East Asia and the Pacific – both of which were poorer than Africa in the early 1960s – have long since surpassed continental indicators. South Asia, a region that was significantly poorer than Africa in the early 1960s, has now almost caught up, and will probably surpass Africa in the near future.

Recent years have seen a limited turn-around in previous trends – largely through improvements in macro-economic policy. The picture in 2004 is, therefore, necessarily a mixed one. Recently Omar Kabbah, president of the African Development Bank, categorised Africa in three groups.[48] About 20 countries were raising average income significantly and tackling poverty; a similar number growing more slowly and failing to reduce the number living below the poverty line; and the remainder stagnating or falling back through bad government or war. Thus, half of Africa's population now live on less than US$1 per day, and the absolute number of Africans in this category has increased from 241 million in 1990 to 314 million in 1999 – reflecting the decline in the average African per capita income over this period. Yet the average rate of economic growth has accelerated since 1995, and some 16 African countries grew at more than four per cent a year over the last decade. Amidst these harsh circumstances, primary school enrolments have improved from a low of 56 per cent in 1991 to 59 per cent a decade later – admittedly far short of the millennium development goals set in 1990.

48 D White, More signs of peace but progress is slow, *Financial Times*, London, 21 January 2004.

Broad statistics obscure more complex realities, for example: Gambia, with almost 60 per cent of its citizens in absolute poverty, is one among five countries in the world to reduce child mortality; while Senegal and Uganda have dramatically reduced HIV infection rates through education and prevention programmes. While overall levels of international aid per head has almost halved in real terms in the last decade (and stabilised at about 1990 levels), about US$7 billion per annum is flowing into Africa, as direct foreign investment.[49] Nigeria alone will stand to benefit from an estimated US$110 billion, and Angola from US$40 billion, in oil income over the next six years.[50] African countries that have taken advantage of the provisions of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (Agoa), notably Lesotho and Swaziland, have enjoyed an enormous increase in formal employment.[51] Perhaps most significantly, tenuous democracy continues to hold in Nigeria (124 million people), a peace agreement is in place in the DRC (50 million people), while resource-rich Angola is preparing for elections and Sudan is on the verge of an agreement that will end Africa's longest running war.

The role of African political élites

These changes in Africa's fortunes, admittedly tenuous and confronted by the impact of the HIV/Aids pandemic, underlie the fact that while poverty and insecurity in Africa remains informed by the colonial and Cold War

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49 J Wolfenson, Africa getting it right, *Sunday Times*, Johannesburg, 19 October 2003.
M Fleshman, Africa lagging on millennium goals, *Business Day*, Johannesburg, 29 December 2003.

50 S Morrison, CSIS, during a talk at the Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, on 14 October 2003. Africa's FDI inflows declined to US$11 billion in 2002 after a surge to US$19 billion in 2001. As a result the continent's share in global FDI inflows fell from 2,3% in 2001 to 1,7% in 2002. UN World Investment Report, 2003.

51 It is estimated that Agoa raised African exports to the US by 1,000% in the first two years, created 60,000 jobs and brought another US$1 billion worth of new investment. According to the US commerce department, Agoa imports to the US last year totaled US$9 billion, or half of total imports. G Mills & T Hughes, African growth and opportunity Act, *Business Day*, Johannesburg, 20 October 2003. As from October 2004 (when Agoa II starts, lasting until 2008), African countries may not use materials from third party countries, and must use locally produced cotton for the manufacture of textiles and garments destined for the US market.

legacy, political choices by African élites is an important factor that has determined the present state of the continent – reflected in the progress made in a country such as Uganda, which today has only slightly more than a million people living with HIV – reflecting a decline in prevalence rates from 30 per cent in the 1980s to around 6 per cent today.[52] African leaders have committed themselves to common, global standards of democracy; human rights; constitutionalism; and the rule of law. They have done so repeatedly, and readily.[53] In this way they have implicitly rejected the argument, advanced by some, that Africa is somehow "different" – that our history justifies the argument of African exceptionalism. African history, and its subsequent insecurity and lack of development, is no excuse for poor governance. What are lacking are not paper commitments, but commensurate action and application.

Leadership is a key determinant in the future of Africa, and the impact of such leadership is demonstrated not only in Uganda, but also in the extent to which African leaders have sought to end conflict – a quest exemplified by the dedication to peacemaking of South Africa and Ghana in the Great Lakes Region; Comoros; Liberia; Ivory Coast; Sierra Leone; and elsewhere.

Political choices, by African élites, is an important factor that has determined the present state of the continent.

Explanations about Africa's woes have tended to be presented in two analytically distinct ways: one emphasising domestic factors, the other, stressing external considerations. Although domestic and external factors are intimately linked, scholars have tended to view them as mutually exclusive alternatives.

Those favouring exogenous causes have attributed Africa's economic stagnation to the impact of various adverse features on the international political–economic environment, such as the relative decline in world commodity prices.[54] These scholars seek to credit international actors, and

54 Tangri, *op cit*, p 2.

52 P Busharizi, Uganda has learned to help itself in the war against Aids, *Pretoria News*, Pretoria, 29 December 2003.

53 J Cilliers & K Sturman, *Commitments by African heads of state to peace, democracy, human rights and associated issues*, paper 58, Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, July 2002.

their associated ideology and policies, with the primary responsibility for much of what happens on the continent. The blame for Africa's developmental and security crisis is, thus, largely placed on Africa's position in the world economy. This dependency theory argued that poor terms of trade for primary commodities, and low levels of industrialisation, left African governments chronically short of funds to finance development projects. The current view is often that international financial flows, and the rapidity of transport and communications, further weaken the capacity of African states to effectively manage their economies. Thus, the African state is generally viewed as soft, weak or underdeveloped, while entirely dependent on international financial institutions for its limited role.

This explanation would have African leaders at the mercy of slavery, imperialism, colonialism, capitalism or socialism and, recently, globalisation. By implication, if globalisation and the pressure to adopt neo-liberal policies, such as privatisation, have made already weak governments irrelevant, it serves little purpose to hold African leaders accountable.

One important shortcoming of the external argument is that it does not enable us to understand why some African countries, confronted with the same difficult international economic environment, have fared better than others.[55] Furthermore, in recent history, adverse developments in international trade only critically affected African countries in the 1980s, when they were already in economic decline.

Eventually, it would appear that domestic factors such as the choices and actions of local political élites, compounded rather than moderated the external factors in Africa's economic decline. Thus, according to Roger Tangri:

> "African governments have done little to minimise or mitigate the deleterious impact of exogenous facts on their economies. Instead this external impact has been exacerbated by domestic factors. … Domestic economic and political practices are central to any explanation of Africa's economic troubles."[56]

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55 *Ibid*.

Nothing illustrates this alternative argument better than the history of oil income in Africa – where massive misappropriation and corruption has accompanied the discovery of oil in countries such as Nigeria and Angola. As the *Financial Times* recently wrote:

"Nigeria, is a prime example of oil-fuelled failure. Since the 1960s it has earned perhaps $300bn from oil but has little to show for it. It has acquired an unenviable legacy of military dictatorship, a towering foreign debt and an enduring reputation for corruption …. Most of its people have stayed poor, receiving little in public services or benefits other than access to subsidised fuel products. … African oil producers provide no examples of good governance."[57]

These examples have increased external conditionality and interference in the internal affairs of African countries. For example, the World Bank only agreed to support the recent US$3,7 billion Chad oil venture with a guarantee that most of the government's extra income – a 50 per cent increase on its annual budget – would go into "real" development projects, and not the pockets of its governing élite.[58]

Obviously, international influences shape the context within which African governing élites make decisions about economic policy and political transition. For example, the change from a bipolar to a unipolar world impacts upon ideological orientation, policy choices and domestic priorities. This does not, however, mean that African élites are powerless – simply that their degree of influence of international factors varies over

56 *Ibid*, p 3. Thus virtually all West African countries had become dictatorships within a few years after gaining their independence, including Ghana, Togo and Niger. Literally only Gambia did not. The same tendency to one-party rule and abuse of power was evident in Kenya, Tanzania, Kenya, Malawi and Zambia.

57 Editorial Comment, See-through oil, *Financial Times*, London, 8 October 2003.

58 The facilities include a 1,000 km pipeline designed to carry oil from Chad to the Atlantic coast of neighbouring Cameroon. Chad expects to receive US $80 million annually in royalties while Cameroon expects US$20 million annually from the operations of the pipeline over 25 years. The pipeline, which will transfer 225,000 barrels of oil a day, is a joint venture between US oil giants ExxonMobil (which holds 40 per cent of the private equity) and Chevron (25 per cent), and Malaysia's state oil company Petronas (35 per cent). According to World Bank figures, the companies stand to gain some two-thirds of the estimated US$13 billion in revenues over 25 years.

time, in relation to external and domestic changes, and that the strategies employed by élites to maintain their sources of patronage adapt according to the specific constraints that they face.[59]

In retrospect, Africa's post-independence leaders, unlike east Asian state élites of the same period (where independence had followed a different trajectory), appear to have been overly concerned with their own uniqueness as liberators. Having often fought for or otherwise brought their countries to independence from colonial rule, many have assumed a self-gratifying and imperial right to rule these newly independent countries – as if their contribution to liberation implied that the country owed them an immeasurable, but massive, debt. Thus, in time, political leaders appeared to be more concerned with staying in power, and building an economic base for themselves, than in economic and social development. In the process, leaders were virtually deified for their commitment to the struggle for independence, and spent their latter years embroiled in an undignified fight for political power at the expense of their countries. This trend is epitomised by President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, whose ruinous policies have caused his country's GDP to shrink by roughly 40 per cent during 1999 to 2003, inflation to rise by 526 per cent by October 2003, and left two-thirds of the population in need of food aid in 2002/3.

Often, African leaders appeared distracted by the benefits of office since "power also brought with it many opportunities for attaining wealth in an African context of extreme scarcity and poverty as well as limited private accumulation."[60] Since most other avenues to wealth were restricted, with the larger private enterprises being in non-African hands, political power and the benefits associated with state control became the focus of intense struggle. Thus,

> "patronage politics has been integral to post-colonial efforts to maintain political control in poor, ethnically diverse peasant societies. Yet, although valuable in helping to consolidate ruling coalitions, the dynamics of patronage relations have proved economically highly damaging."[61]

59 Pitcher, *op cit*, pp 12–14.

60 Tangri, *op cit*, p 9.

61 *Ibid*, p 11.

As a result, economic decisions were often placed at the service of political and personal ends.

Since patron–client ties have constituted the primary means of maintaining power in many African countries, liberation leaders, and many of their successors, have rarely been held accountable for their actions. State élites have used public institutions to dispense an array of public benefits – jobs, credit, contracts, subsidies – to select clients and ethnic constituencies to build political support, and consolidate themselves in state power (demonstrated by the corruption and nepotism that engulfed post-colonial Kenya under Jomo Kenyatta and were taken to new levels of sophistication by his anointed successor Daniel Arap Moi).

Patronage politics has been integral to post-colonial efforts to maintain political control in poor, ethnically diverse peasant societies.

The AHSI partners hold that the contradictions inherent in the externally imposed state, and the subsequent edifices that maintained these states after independence, were compounded by the choices and options adopted by Africa's post-independence élites. The choices affected by these leaders, and Africa's political élites, play an important role in where the continent presently finds itself today.

In time, most Africans, the majority of whom still reside in rural areas, sought to avoid the state – which in any case did not cater for nor recognise indigenous social systems. The result of this, compounded by state contraction, has been characterised as the growth of the informal nature of both politics and the economy in much of Africa. Thus many Africans, the vast majority of whom do not benefit from the patrimonial state, necessarily resort to escapist strategies to survive in this harsh environment. This is a trend that is not only most evident in West and Central Africa, but also part of the African reality from Cape to Cairo. In many African countries, the size of the informal economy is several times that of the formal economy, and the small formal economy now often serves as an adjunct to the much larger informal economy. It should, thus, come as no surprise to realise that the vast majority of Africans experienced the state, both colonial and post-colonial, as a foreign and predatory

organisation that was there to exploit and to terrorise, not to serve and to protect. A smaller group, those that benefit from the state, see it as a resource to be milked, to be used to extract the maximum benefit. Few, if any, see the state serving the interests of the populace.

Liberation wars, and Africa's role during the Cold War, had already created a continent awash with arms – a situation compounded by the privatisation and outsourcing of arms providers (during the latter years of that war) to allow for support to proxy forces, such as UNITA in Angola and the SPLM/A in southern Sudan. As arms flooded into Africa thereafter (driven by the oversupply of these weapons following the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and restructuring of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)), a second trend became evident in the growth of quasi-militarisation of the continent, at local and regional levels. In tandem with the steady erosion of state security agencies, communities could readily arm themselves with small and light weapons. Soon, the continent came to be characterised by a balance of forces between the state and community. In the process, the military and police agencies lost the monopoly on organised violence as arms, particularly small arms, flooded into the continent. This had an impact at various levels. At the national level, Yoweri Museveni set the new trend in January 1986, when he became the first leader to go back to the bush, form his own army and seize power in Uganda. Previously, military takeovers had originated in the national army and were essentially palace coups. Soon after, others with a taste for power, and a grievance with which to mobilise followers, found that there was an under-policed and incomplete controlled space in rural areas where forces could be assembled and mobilised.[62] Museveni would, in time, suffer the same consequences – with an estimated 22 different rebel groups ranged against Uganda by 2003.[63]

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62 In Chad, Congo (Brazzaville), Ethiopia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone and former Zaire, competing armies were able to seize power. In others, such as Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau and Liberia, the result was mass destruction. The conflicts in Angola and Sudan pre-date the others. J Herbst & G Mills, The future of Africa: a new order in sight? *Adephi Paper,* no 361, International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, 2003, p 23.

Since physical security is one of the most basic of human needs, alternative sources of collective security have experienced a boom in the absence of the provision of state security. The result is a rise in the use of private companies for those that can afford it in cities such as Luanda, Nairobi and Johannesburg, a resort to vigilantism as a crude alternative form of local justice in poor shantitowns such as in the sprawling suburbs of Lagos, and a return to traditional sources of security evident with the Mai Mai warriors in the Kivu provinces in the eastern DRC. In the process, a vicious spiral gains momentum. As alternative sources of security develop, they make security provided by the state ever more irrelevant and distant, further undermining the traditional role of the state in the provision of security.

Today, with Africa located on the periphery of the global international order, there is a real danger that a number of states will dissolve, with extreme destabilising impacts on their neighbourhood. In the recent instances of Liberia and Sierra Leone, two such states, it was only international intervention that has staved off such a possibility. In parts of West, Central and the Horn of Africa, state boundaries today are held in place less by their local roots than by the conventions of international society about the sanctity of borders and the personal benefits that accrue to small groups of African leaders in keeping, what is in some places, a myth of sovereignty alive.[64] Despite the identification of Africans with colonial borders, it is largely the engagement by core countries of the global system, particularly the former colonial powers, that maintains the division of state power. In some instances, only the promise of rapid and

63 According to the Amnesty Commission Report, December 2003, Kampala. The groups are: the Allied Democratic Forces, the Uganda National Rescue Front II, the West Nile Bank Front, Action Restore Peace (ARP), Citizen Army for Multi Party Politics (CAMP), Force Obote Back (FOBA), Former Uganda National Army (FUNA), Holy Spirit Movement (HSM) – which was replaced by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) – the National Union for the Liberation of Uganda (NALU), National Federal Army (NFA), the Ninth October Movement (NOM), the People's Redemption Army (PRA), the Uganda Democratic Army/ Alliance (UDA/F), Uganda Federal Democratic Front (UFDF) and Uganda Freedom Movement (UFM). The 34-page report says that the majority of the estimated 40,000 rebels are based in southern Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and some are living in Kenya and Europe.

64 D C Bach, Revisiting a paradigm, in DC Bach (ed), *Regionalisation in Africa – integration and disintegration*, James Currey, Oxford, 1999, p 8.

intrusive regional integration promises a reversal of the present trends towards dissolution and decay, particularly in West and Central Africa. These weak states face problems that can ultimately only be addressed at a regional level.[65] At the other extreme, it seems more difficult for larger, more populous African countries (such as the DRC, Ethiopia and Nigeria) to institute good governance procedures than smaller ones,[66] and the continent faces what some have termed "diseconomies of scale".

Africa's security challenge, and to some degree its developmental problems, are primarily linked to the lack of state institutionalisation and political leadership.

Taking a very broad brush to issues that deserve detailed analysis beyond the length limitations of this monograph, this analysis has thus far argued that Africa's security challenge, and to some degree its developmental problems, are primarily linked to the lack of both state institutionalisation and political leadership. In the course of this explanation, a number of key human security concerns have already been flagged as deserved of further analysis – such as the proliferation of arms on the continent, the pervasive impact of corruption, organised crime and the threat of terrorism.

With limited exceptions, we have further argued that the choices made by African élites have compounded, rather than alleviated, African security failure and, therefore, any exercise that seeks to hold political leadership to account, such as that of the NEPAD APRM, serves a useful purpose.

Democracy and security

The notion of national sovereignty has changed since the boom period of the newly industrialised countries in east Asia during the 1960s and

65 Buzan, *op cit*, p 201.

66 Thus the 13 African countries with populations below two million (but with only 1,7% of Africa's total population) grew by 21% between 1981 and 1999. In contrast, the per capita income rates of the DRC, Ethiopia and Nigeria collectively accounting for 37% of Africa's population, declined by 18%. Herbst & Mills, *op cit*, pp 17–18.

1970s. Instead of being perceived as a means of isolating the state against external involvement or scrutiny, sovereignty is increasingly defined as a normative concept of responsibility. Thus, national sovereignty now requires a system of governance that is based on democratic and popular citizen participation, constructive management of social diversities, respect for fundamental human rights, an equitable distribution of national wealth, and opportunities for development. According to Severine Rugumamu, "for a state to claim sovereignty, it must establish legitimacy by meeting minimum standards of good governance or responsibility for the security and general welfare of its citizens, and indeed, all those under its jurisdiction."[67] Although the constitution of every African intergovernmental body dutifully reflects the desire for non-interference in the internal affairs of its member states, globalisation and the steady advancement in international humanitarian law, reduce the ability of countries to adopt political and economic trajectories that run counter to established minimum norms of governance and behaviour.

Africa is replete with examples of the provision of élite or regime security (represented by these élites as equivalent to state security), but an absence of human security. In the extreme case of a country such as Liberia under Charles Taylor, government is a direct source of insecurity – adopting policies that undermine the livelihood of the majority, using state instruments to the benefit of the presidential circle of patronage, deploying the armed forces in pursuit of commercial gain in neighbouring countries, and subverting the judicial process in the interests of the manipulation of contracts and tenders to partisan benefit. Leaders, acting in the name of national security, have often directly posed profound threats to human security, or, as is the case in a number of African countries, simply abdicated their responsibility and used state security resources to pursue personal or partisan objectives.

Since the start of colonialism, regimes in Africa were initially foreign, but always anti-developmental, often personalised and patrimonially orientated. Mahmood Mamdani has argued that colonial powers often

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67 S Rugumamu, State sovereignty and intervention in Africa: nurturing new governance norms, paper submitted to the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty Roundtable, Maputo, 10 March 2001, p 2.

divided the societies they ruled by supporting a small group of urbanised élite – who were educated, controlled by a written code of law and allowed some carefully constrained, independent political organisation.[68] After independence, this élite took over power – shutting out the vast majority of the population, gathering virtually uncontrolled executive power, and limited only by the capabilities of the coercive instruments at their disposal. Even today, many of the institutions and mechanisms of nominally democratic governance are too weak to control the executive power, partly because they are not well developed, and partly because they are not independent of government influence. The situation in most sub-Saharan countries is one of a dominant executive and a weak legislature. Similarly, legislative and judicial oversight of the conduct of government is limited. Thus, political power remained personalised in the hands of a single ruler, or a small oligarchy, who exercise considerable unencumbered discretion over access to public resources – as well as employing various coercive measures to maintain their hold on state power.[69]

Even today, many of the institutions and mechanisms of nominally democratic governance are too weak to control the executive power.

Since the late 1980s, the international financial institutions have, therefore, contended that in Africa democratic systems are essential for improved economic performance, since state economic decisions are driven pre-eminently by political and personal, rather than economic and technical, considerations. Operating within the rubric of "good governance", the World Bank and others thus advocate greater openness and transparency in bureaucratic procedures, processes, appointments, contracts, procurements and investment decisions, as well as seeking to strengthen accountability measures – including scrutiny by the legislature and prosecution by the courts.[70] While there are many features of

68 M Mamdani, *Citizen and subject: contemporary Africa and the legacy of late colonialism*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1996.

69 Tangri, *op cit*, p 141.

70 *Ibid*, p 139.

structural adjustment programmes that have caused immense harm to Africa, this is a view we share. Ramesh Thakur, therefore, recently wrote:

> "World history suggests that the market democracies have the best record of sustained prosperity. This is not surprising, as both democracy and capitalism put faith in the ability of citizens to decide what is best for them economically and politically. Governments can be fallible and markets are often imperfect; thus it's better to let the people decide and face the consequences of their choices. … Both liberal democracies and market economies rely for their long-term success on similar attributes of good governance: healthy competition, access to free and full information, secure property rights, the sanctity of contracts enforceable by an independent judiciary, a multiskilled and well-educated workforce and citizenry, an efficient and transparent legal system, prudential regulatory systems, merit-based recruitment and promotion, and executives who are accountable to shareholders for the mistakes they make as well as answerable to the courts for the legality of their actions. Markets require governance; good governance is not possible without democracy and civil society. Democracies also facilitate the achievement of the necessary social compromises between capital and labor, efficiency and equity, and growth and equality."[71]

This relationship between democracy, security and development presents Africa with immense challenges, since democracy is difficult to establish amidst pervasive poverty, and almost impossible to sustain in the absence of economic growth. Wealthy democracies do not die and, while wealthier countries are no more likely than poorer ones to effect a transition from authoritarian to democratic rule, wealthier countries are far more likely to maintain democratic rule. Poor countries can, however, increase the prospects of democratic endurance if their economies grow steadily, and if they

This relationship between democracy, security and development presents Africa with immense challenges.

71 R Thakur, *op cit*.

reduce inequalities. These linkages do not even consider the immense challenges from the most deadly of pandemics to confront Africa, namely that of HIV/Aids – based on the potential impact that the disease would have on the professional class and civil service upon which governance depends.[72]

Despite these difficulties and challenges, we have no option but to conclude that democracy, development and security are closely linked in Africa. Africa's lack of democracy simply increases African insecurity. This is, we have been glad to note, a view rhetorically (if not practically) shared by African heads of state when they stated in 1990 that "… democracy and development should go together and should be mutually reinforcing."[73]

Leaving HIV/Aids aside for the moment, the major security challenges in Africa in the 21st century are essentially thus both internal and regional, and developmental and democratic – within which the state occupies a key role.

The necessary democratic nature of the African developmental state, and the argument for the key role of the state against the predatory characteristics often evident, presents African civil society with a unique and important role.

The important role of civil society

The notion of civil society has a long pedigree in Western political philosophy; amongst others, in the writings of John Locke, Thomas Paine, Alexis de Tocqueville and Antonio Gramsci.[74] It resurfaced as an important

72 R Mattes, *Healthy democracies, the potential impact of AIDS on democracy in Southern Africa*, Paper no 71, Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, April 2003, pp 2–3. For the relationship between democracy and development A Przeworksi, M Alvarex, J Antonio Cheibub & F Limongi, *Democracy and development: political institutions and well-being in the world, 1950–1990*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000.

73 Declaration of the assembly of heads of state and government of the OAU on the political and socio-economic situation in Africa and the fundamental changes taking place in the world, Addis Ababa, July 2002.

74 T Bergdall, Civil Society Strengthening in Africa, MAP Consultations, no date. <www.careinternational.org.uk/resource_centre/civilsociety.htm> date accessed: 2 June 2004.

concept in democratic theory towards the end of the Cold War, when ordinary citizens embarked upon mass movements for change. Examples include the Solidarity Movement in Poland, the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia, the United Democratic Front against apartheid in South Africa, protests in Tiananmen Square in China and the Greenbelt Movement in Kenya.[75]

In the Western definition of civil society, autonomous and active voluntary associations are regarded as a counter-balance to state power, a training ground for democratic practices, and as a necessary consequence of increasingly differentiated structures of governance that have increased the distance between citizens and the state. In these countries with their ever more complex systems of social, political and economic interactions, governments can satisfy only a small and diminishing proportion of the needs of their citizens – and the latter look more and more to civic associations to channel a growing range and variety of social interactions. These, in turn, need a framework of governance outside the jurisdiction of the state. In Africa, it is rather the absence of governance that necessitates and fuels the growth of civil society. In both instances, civil society refers, broadly speaking, to the social and political space where voluntary associations (distinct from the automatic, binding and compulsory membership of statehood) attempts to shape norms and policies to regulate public life in social, political, economic and environmental dimensions. These are seen to include: religious organisations; social clubs; social movements; free press and independent media; trade unions; professional associations; and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

> **In Africa, it is rather the absence of governance that necessitates and fuels the growth of civil society.**

There has been an exponential growth in the number of civil society actors, and in the volume of transnational networks in which they are embedded. At the international level, their increased impact is reflected in the role that civil society played in the establishment of the International Criminal Court; the adoption of the Ottawa Treaty on the prohibition on

75 *Ibid*.

anti-personnel mines; the focus on the linkages between diamonds and conflict through the Kimberley Process; and to ease the debt of the highly indebted poor countries through Jubilee 2000, to name but a few. Undeniably, they play an important and growing role as an information channel, a fount of legitimacy and a catalyst for accountability and transparency. The net result of expanding global citizen action has been to extend the theory and deepen the practice of grass-roots democracy within borders.[76] While states are the primary actors in the international system, civil society has become an important secondary actor – influencing the agenda of the primary actors.

Clearly, the multiplicity of these unofficial actors also presents new problems, such as lack of co-ordination of efforts and of clear accountability. This is generally not a problem in established and mature democracies, where governments accept that even the most open and transparent system should allow for voluntary and non-profit associations to pursue specific aims. In developing societies, including Africa, the situation is different, however. On the one hand, membership organisations (such as trade unions and professional associations) are readily perceived as posing a potential political threat to incumbent élites – borne out by the political movements that had their origins within organised labour and eventually deposed Kenneth Kaunda in Zambia, and the close association between the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions and the Movement for Democratic Change in neighbouring Zimbabwe. On the other, issue-based and advocacy organisations (necessarily funded by foreign governments, development agencies and philanthropic foundations) are readily questioned on issues of accountability and representivity. NGOs working for democracy, human rights and transparency are therefore often lambasted by governments on the basis of "whom do they represent?", or as organisations acting at the behest of some foreign conspiracy for political or commercial gain. While governments point to the reliance on foreign donor funding of NGOs to delegitimise them, the NGOs, in turn, point out that most African governments (and intergovernmental organisations such as SADC, ECOWAS, IGAD, the AU and NEPAD) are themselves heavily dependent

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76 R Thakur, UN voice for "civil society", *The Japan Times*, Tokyo, 28 December 2003.

on foreign aid, and that their agenda's are determined not in Kigali, Accra or Lilongwe, but in the boardrooms of bilateral donors – the IMF and the World Bank – reflected in Table 4.

Table 5: Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) as a proportion of GDP in selected African countries (2001)[77]

Country	2001
São Tome & Principe	80,8%
Sierra Leone	44,5%
Eritrea	40,7%
Guinea-Bissau	29,4%
Mauritania	26,0%
Mozambique	25,9%
Malawi	23,0%
Ethiopia	17,3%
Rwanda	17,1%
Uganda	13,8%
Ghana	12,3%
Senegal	9,0%
Kenya	4,0%
Nigeria	0,4%
South Africa	0,4%
Algeria	0,3%

It should come as no surprise to note that the relationship between African leaders and civil society (in particular, independent NGOs) has thus been characterised by mutual suspicion and, in some cases, outright hostility – except where Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are prepared to work as an extension of government, propagate its policies and sometimes serve as an alternative conduit to gain additional income for innovative leaders. In South Africa, a country that provides extensive space for civil society, the partnership and collaboration that characterised the post-apartheid era has since given way to an

77 UNDP, *op cit*, Table 16, pp 291–293.

instrumentalist view of the relationship between CSOs and government. For the ruling party, "civil society" has achieved political power and a growing sense of irritation evident with those that criticise government policy or practice.[78]

Nevertheless, rhetorical recognition of the need for popular participation in governance is growing at the level of the AU and the impetus is on civil society organisations to use and expand the space created for their involvement. When the "third wave" of democratisation hit African shores in the early 1990s, this was as much a home-grown movement, as it was part of the global chain of events. As Gyimah-Boadi notes:

> "External developments, such as the fall of communism and pressure from foreign donors were important for laying the groundwork for formal democracy. But it was often the resourcefulness, dedication, and tenacity of the continent's nascent civil societies that initiated and sustained the process of democratic opening and political liberalisation. In late 1989, civil servants, teachers and traders in Benin were the first to bring an end to autocracy and economic mismanagement. In Zambia, the Congress of Trade Unions followed suit by successfully challenging the three-decade incumbency of Kenneth Kaunda. In Sierra Leone, the irrepressible resolve of the Women's Forum thwarted the designs of the incumbent military regime to forestall that country's return to democratic rule in 1996. And the damning pastoral letters of such Christian leaders as Bishop Isodore de Souza of Benin, and Archbishop Fanoko Kpodzro of Togo proved highly successful in undermining the authority of the old regimes." [79]

Issues of development, security and defence now go beyond the state system. Globalisation involves the sharing of power between state and non-state actors, with the result that the state is no longer able to monopolise the concept and practice of security, or indeed of governance.

78 This relationship is partly informed by the fact that the ANC government has been most vocally criticised by civil society in three areas: policies on HIV/Aids, its arms purchases and the support that the government provides for President Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe.

79 E Gyimah-Boadi, Civil society in Africa: the good, the bad and the ugly, *Civnet Journal*, 1(1), May 1997.

The information revolution has helped to end state-imposed isolation and allow for networks to grow beyond national borders. For example, it has been argued that the fax, photocopier, personal computer and desktop-publishing software was central to the pro-democracy movement's campaign to discredit the Banda dictatorship in Malawi in 1992–93. The growing use of e-mail and the internet in the past ten years have strengthened this phenomenon – best reflected in the extent to which information on the suppression of democracy and abuse of power by ZANU(PF) in Zimbabwe in recent years is still able to reach the outside world, despite the assault on the independent media in that country.

Two arguments have thus far been made that provide for an important role by civil society in African security.[80] The first is that the majority of poor African countries suffer from a concentration of political, economic and social power in the executive branch of the state. In a situation where the state is both the dominant economic actor and largest source of employment, and where economic choices are highly politicised, civil society often provides the only check on the untrammelled power of the executive. This is, however, inevitably a confrontational relationship.

Issues of development, security and defence now go beyond the state system.

Secondly, we have earlier argued that the notion of human security has impacted upon traditional notions of national security. Today, non-state actors benefit from closer involvement with the local community during internal conflicts and have greater potential for local conflict resolution than other mechanisms. Organisations such as the International Committee for the Red Cross, Oxfam and Medecins sans Frontières act as relief agencies when governments are unable or unwilling to do so. Elsewhere NGOs, such as the inter-religious councils in Sierra Leone and Liberia and the Community of San Egidio, facilitate negotiations between warring parties. In many instances these entities function without the constraints (and without the legal and other powers) of state institutions.

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80 We adopt the basic distinction between the public sector, private sector and civil society in this section. Civil society, therefore, includes political parties; non-governmental organisations; religious movements; academic communities; the media; cultural communities; trade unions, etc.

We have also hinted at a third argument for a role by civil society in developing countries. The capacity constraints, experienced by both national governments and intergovernmental organisations, have opened up a view that civil society organisations can complement official structures – adding capacity where those of mandated structures are lacking. Their presence in the field can be a vital link in providing early warnings for dealing with humanitarian crises. Their specialised knowledge and contacts can be important components of the post-conflict peace building process. They can mediate between the peace and security functions of intergovernmental organisations, and the needs and wants of local civilian populations. They can exert a positive influence on the restoration of a climate of confidence for reconstruction; and they can bring additional expertise and comparative practices to bear in the process of policy development, monitoring and reportage.

Civil society is not a substitute for the state, nor can it claim to be thus.

Civil society is not a substitute for the state, nor can it claim to be thus, but is well positioned to play two crucial roles in relation to weak states in Africa. The first is to augment the capacity for development and security. The second is by holding the government and leaders accountable to the citizenry in Africa, while simultaneously exerting pressure in cabinet offices and the boardrooms of the rich countries to respond to the special needs of developing countries. The debates regarding the NEPAD APRM has opened up a particularly important opportunity for African CSOs to engage in what some view as a "shadow" system of peer review.

Conclusion

Despite the dramatic changes in the notion of exclusive sovereignty in recent years, the world system retains a natural tendency towards state formation – even in the 21st century. Today, states still provide the basis for the international system and, collectively, for the regulation of those relations and issues that fall outside, or between, the control of any single state. There is no clear alternative to geographical states as the basic

building block and prerequisite for domestic safety and a stable international system. There is an emerging global consensus on the norms that apply to acceptable state behaviour.

The legacy of colonialism and the Cold War is an Africa divided along boundaries within which Africans today define themselves as Nigerian, Congolese, Zambian or Kenyan. For the most part, the borders carved out by the colonial powers are here to stay – although some will eventually fade away in the efforts to create viable national units where they do not presently exist, possibly most evident in parts of Central and West Africa.

Despite the weakness and problems in many regions of the world, the state remains the most effective instrument for the redistribution of wealth in society, and will remain so for the foreseeable future. As is the case in East Asia, state intervention can be beneficial to economic growth, and its role in this respect may be critical – although the weakness of African governments mean that few can implement a state-led approach to development.

> **Above all, the state is the key provider of security.**

Above all, the state is the key provider of security. While there has been considerable outsourcing of some of the security functions of the state in different forms across the world, there are clear limits to the extent to which a state can parcel out its most basic function to commercial companies. In an increasingly global and interconnected world, investment capital seeks the highest returns – and since predictability is a key consideration in such a calculus, security is a prerequisite for development that needs to attract more than risk capital.

In West and Central Africa[81] there is discernable trend towards regional approaches to crises of governance reflecting the acute crises affecting the countries of these regions. These approaches are most evident in measures to counter the proliferation of small arms; efforts to deal with the fragility of security sectors; combating cross-border movement of weapons, drugs and armed groups; ameliorating the mass movements of refugees, development,

81 See, for example, the interim report of the multidisciplinary assessment mission to the Central African subregion (S/2003/1077), mandated by the UN Secretary-General, submitted to UNSC on 10 November 2003.

widespread poverty; and weak state institutions. These cross-cutting challenges transcend national boundaries and require an integrated and holistic sub-regional approach to augment national solutions.

Today, most Africa governments have jettisoned direct state management of factories and farms for greater reliance on the private sector – and seek foreign investment, as opposed to development assistance. African leaders, at least those that ascribe to NEPAD, have committed themselves publicly to social democracy rather than democratic centralism. Governments attempt to practice "good governance" and capacity building, and to foster partnerships with the private sector to pursue mutually beneficial goals.[82] The question to ask, is if these parrot to the requirements of international donors, or if they reflect a genuine commitment to change?

We believe that the state and the actions of political élites are critical to the future of Africa. NEPAD has done much to change the context of African engagement on the continent, between Africa and its development partners, and the international debate about Africa. African ownership is demonstrated in the debates about development and security by Africans for Africa.

For perhaps the first time in a generation, Africa presents a picture of hope – although it differs from region to region. There is an end to a number of the "hot" wars of some years ago and a greater sense of African ownership in conflict mitigation. Scant years ago, much was made of the arc of conflict that stretched across Africa – from Angola to neighbouring DRC, across Rwanda and Uganda to Sudan and Somalia. The timely death of UNITA leader, Jonas Savimbi, and subsequent end of the war in Angola, and the ongoing peace process in the DRC has now seen the installation of an interim government in Kinshasa and there is hope that even the armed conflict in the Kivu's may be winding down. Elections in neighbouring Kenya swept away one of Africa's most corrupt leaders, Daniel Arap Moi, and elections have been held in Rwanda less than a decade after the 1994 genocide. The peace processes in Sudan present signs of hope; progress is being made in Somalia; and a comprehensive peace agreement appears to

82 Pitcher, *op cit*, p 3.

be within grasp in Burundi. In West Africa, the removal from power of Charles Taylor, and the commencement of reconstruction of Liberia, inspires similar hope. Through the mobilising efforts of leaders such as President Mbeki, NEPAD and the reconstituted African Union have gained a prominent position in the discourse on African ownership and participation in conflict resolution and mitigation – reflected in the collaborative efforts between Africa and its development partners to fund the proposed African Standby Force; the decision to establish the Peace and Security Council of the African Union; and related measures, such as those of ECOWAS in West Africa. Does this mean that Africa – wracked by years of international strife and civil war – will in time look forward to peace, and that such stability will attract investment by Africans and the international community alike?

Indeed, the restoration of a degree of stability in large, key countries such as Sudan, Angola and the DRC could reverse the regional disintegrative effects in their respective regions – as will the reversal of the corruption that was haemorrhaging Kenya in East Africa. West Africa, and the steadily increased levels of inter-communal violence in Nigeria present the most worrying future trend. Nigeria is slowly disintegrating, and the implications for West Africa are alarming and, as yet, unrecognised.

Civil society, and research NGOs in particular, has an important role to play in this regard – not as an adjunct to government or as principled hostile interlocutor – but as independent and responsible player. In the AHSI project, the seven NGO partners listed earlier in this paper will seek to contribute by defining and measuring the extent to which African leaders in the eight selected countries adhere to their stated commitments to democracy, human rights, engagement with civil society, control of small arms, anti-corruption, commitment to counter organised crime and terrorism, and conflict resolution. In doing so we hope to play a constructive role in relation to NEPAD and the AU in our common endeavour to improve Africa. Subsequent publications by the partners will therefore analyse and interrogate each of the sets of commitments in the eight NEPAD ARPM countries under review.