

## United States–Africa Relations: Historicising Barack Obama Foreign Policy Achievements in Africa

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### Abstract

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The claim that no US government ever gives Africa a top priority until her interest in Africa is endangered is one story that many people find refreshing. Many academics had assumed that Obama's ancestry in Africa would cause him to emphasize African concerns, particularly because the constitution's presidential power has traditionally been dominant in the area of foreign policy. On the other hand, Obama's administration has also been linked to the US's seeming lack of interest in actually addressing African concerns in its foreign policy. Therefore, this essay explored US-Africa relations with an emphasis on the administration of Barack Obama's foreign policy accomplishments. Government gazettes and reports from several US organizations on international affairs, including presidential archives, provided the majority of the data for the research. The study used historical descriptive research techniques and a thematic approach to interpret the data. According to the report, the Obama Administration achieved significant progress in Africa as a result of its policies supporting regional peace and security, commerce, investment, and development as well as building democratic institutions. The conclusions of this work are as follows: that the US, whose foreign policy is characterized by strong moral and idealistic ethical impulses, should build on Obama's successes to further boost her image abroad. This study considers restricted, measuring Obama's achievements from the US low profile strategy toward Africa. African leaders should build on Obama's legacy by emphasizing robust institutions in opposition to the prevalent anti-democratic trend of forging strongmen, which has slowed regional progress.

**Keywords:** *America, Africa, Foreign policy, Security, Economics, Political ties*

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### **Background to the Study**

Over the years, a range of opinions have been expressed by academics and researchers on U.S.-Africa ties. Researchers like Adekeye and Dawn (2018), studied US-African interactions during the Cold War and found that the two power blocs mostly exploited the continent for their own interests with little benefit to Africa. They stressed how the two blocs utilized Africa to further their own ideologies throughout the conflict. Because of this, Dawn (2018; 2) observed that the superpowers used the African countries to further their ideological agendas. Each of the blocs backed African nations that shared their ideologies. The concern was that African leaders would therefore prioritize what the great powers want above the interests of their own populations. During this time, US policy toward Africa neglected the continent's fundamental democratic values and socioeconomic progress. There was no change in US-African ties after the Cold War, according to researchers. They contended that since U.S. foreign policy did not prioritize Africa in the pursuit of its national interests, ties between the US and Africa did not significantly improve after the bipolar era.

Those who have long contended that US foreign policy has not produced real results in Africa have been drowned out by this surge of public fury.????(Is the final sentence of this statement not what most people think?) Scholars acknowledged the United States' subpar attention to Africa. This seems to be the prevailing viewpoint in this study. Some academics share the opinion or agreement that Africa was never a top focus for US policy. They said that in official U.S. policy circles, Africa has traditionally gotten less time and funding than other regions (Schraeder, 1993). They came to the conclusion that since the United States supported authoritarian governments in Africa that violated citizens' rights and suppressed liberal movements, U.S. policy toward Africa caused issues both during and after the Cold War. These academics claim that towards the conclusion of the Cold War, Africans had hoped for change, but that dream was never realized (Michael, 2014). Furthermore, it has been said that the United States' attitude toward Africa is due in part to the fact that the continent has never been given a significant amount of attention by the country's foreign policy. America would so keep up its indifferent approach toward Africa.

Similar to this, Adekeye (2018:28) argues that US foreign policy is implemented with the least priority in Africa during the Post-Cold War period. He said that the US president was seldom actively engaged in determining US policy toward Africa. The US president prefers to assign such responsibility to USAID, the Pentagon, the Commerce Department, and the Assistant Secretary of State.

One argument put up for the low prominence of US policy toward Africa is that a substantial portion of US decision-making regarding Africa was undertaken by bureaucrats. Although the United States typically makes decisions in three layers, in recent history, due to the President and Congress's lack of attention, only one layer—made up of bureaucrats who want to keep things the same—has been in charge of making decisions regarding foreign policy for Africa. Therefore, the issue of inadequate attention to Africa in U.S. foreign policy lies in the intermediate approach to Africa taken by U.S. administrations. Every time a new American president is elected, he replaces all of the top foreign policy figures in Africa,

including the secretary of state, the national security advisor, and the deputy secretary of state for African affairs. This implies that when each administration implements a new degree of involvement with Africa, U.S. interests in Africa shift. Despite this practice, almost all of them have a lack of interest in Africa. According to these and several other experts, despite the Atlantic Council's insistence that the United States was altering its connections with Africa, Africa continues to be unappealing to U.S. policymakers.

According to Ayam (2010), there are two distinct fundamental perspectives or elements that have shaped U.S.-Africa relations. First, because the United States places little attention on or value on Africa; as a consequence, it is incorrect to associate the United States with nations that have fragile economies or unpredictable political systems. Second, that "liberal interventionist" brings ethical and humanitarian issues at the forefront of the debate by taking into account Africa's significance beyond strategic and economic goals. Scholars who hold this perspective agree that, despite the fact that the United States places less importance on Africa than it does on the rest of the globe, the connection between the two continents has important political and economic benefits if both sides work to strengthen it. This is appropriate since the two regions depend on one another for mutual gain (kia and Enyindah, 2022).

Obama's administration has also been connected to the United States' seeming reluctance in putting African concerns at the top of their list of priorities in their foreign policy. Given Obama's African heritage, his victory was met with optimism and high hopes, especially across Africa. The hope and anticipation were also influenced by the broad and general nature of his personality attributes as a liberal, with tolerance and experience in international affairs. Many anticipated a change in direction where African concerns would have been given priority by his administration given all these characteristics, the clauses in the US constitution, notably presidential dominance in the sphere of foreign policy.

It is true that no country in international relations holds a bazaar for another country since every country conducts its foreign policy in accordance with its own national interests. It is a well-known reality that certain interests must always be protected, while others should only be protected in specific situations and yet others, no matter how desirable, can practically never be protected. In this view, the work of international policy, which entails defining the nation's hierarchy of interests, scale, and ideals, as well as the execution of State foreign policy, may contribute to indifference in policy toward another. Even when national leaders abstain from creating interest hierarchy, the difficult challenges of practice often recall underlying conceptions of crucial interests.

### **The Continent of Africa**

Africa is too strategically important for the United States and growing nations to ignore. The Bab El Mandeb Strait, which links the Indian Ocean, the Red Sea, the Suez Canal, and the Mediterranean Sea, and the Gulf of Aden are both nearby to Africa. A vital location connecting the markets of three continents—Europe, Africa, and Asia—the Strait facilitates 5% of worldwide commerce. Many nations throughout the globe are interested in this

strategic location. Africa, which has a wealth of natural resources, is now a major supplier of energy for the whole planet. Therefore, it seems sense that the United States would view this region as a prime target for exploitation.

After Asia, Africa is the second largest and most populous continent, with China and India having respective populations of 1.33 billion and 1.14 billion. The estimated population of Africa in 2005 was 0.92 billion. More than 14.2% of the world's population resides in Africa, which also occupies 20.4% of the planet's land area, or 30.2 million km<sup>2</sup> (Bakut, 2010:94). The Mediterranean Sea to the north, the Suez Canal and the Red Sea to the east, the Indian Ocean to the south, and the Atlantic Ocean to the west encircle the continent of Africa. Due to its advantageous geographic location, Africa is readily reached by water from Asia, Europe, and the Americas. Africa also boasts a wealth of natural resources, which are essential for world growth. Africa is "rising [its] geopolitical importance and burgeoning economic dynamism—the latter driven, in part, by political reform and improvements in governance," according to the report. The main economic powers of the world are thus looking for ways to safeguard their interests in this developing economy. The U.S. has also attempted to strengthen its influence in Africa, perhaps due to its strategic relevance and the presence of competitors like Russia and China in the continent's economic sector. However, many stories focus on the declining significance of US foreign policy's success in Africa.

For instance, after the Webster-Ashburton Treaty, Africa has largely been eliminated from U.S. politicians' strategic considerations. Up until the Cold War, when two superpowers attempted to establish bases on the continent, this persisted. In order to defeat the Soviet Union during the Cold War, the United States sponsored African tyrants that committed human rights violations. Following the end of the Cold War, both Clinton and Bush said that the U.S. did not see Africa as strategically important. Clinton said that "America's security interests in Africa are very limited" and that there is "very little traditional strategic interest in Africa"? (The United States' Sub-Saharan Africa Strategy, 1995). In order to serve its own interests at this period, the U.S. implemented a selective engagement policy with Africa. This attitude of disregard persisted. According to George W. Bush, "while Africa may be important, it doesn't fit into the national strategic interests as far as I can see them" (Bush, 2000).

Obama, unlike Bush and Clinton, changed the language and declared that "Africa is more important than ever to the security and prosperity of the international community, and to the United States in particular," in his administration's 2012 policy guidance on Sub-Saharan Africa (2016 Democratic Party Platform, 2016). Obama has a distinct vision of Africa, which is the key argument here. According to the theoretical framework, perception is important in the development and implementation of a country's foreign policy. It follows that his conception of Africa would undoubtedly inform his stance on international affairs. The research makes an effort to historicalize Obama's accomplishments in Africa given his position.

### **The Study Methods**

The project, which aims to comprehend and maybe record Obama's accomplishments in Africa, would inevitably rely on subjective interpretation techniques rather than rigorous scientific research procedures. Discourse analysis is the approach used to produce this study via qualitative critical examination of secondary sources. The term "discourse" is used in the context of this work to refer to a particular set of representatives and activities that are used to make meanings, form identities, establish social relationships, and clarify results. A subjective assessment of the circumstance under inquiry serves as the motivation instead of fresh ideas or objective information. The research also used information from first-hand sources. The United States Department of Foreign Relations and White House views are the initial key sources for information on US foreign policy. It also contains information coming from other parts of the US Government. When doing original research on US foreign policy, researchers should also look for archival materials from other cabinet-level departments. These may be found online and were carefully used in this work. The research also made use of the relevant presidential archives, many of which now make old records accessible online.

### **Theoretical framework**

The decision-making theory was used in the investigation. In essence, the decision-making theory is a conceptual framework that provides a thorough and helpful checklist of the variables that should be taken into consideration in any effort to study policy decisions. The idea helps to find a variety of factors and suggests potential connections between those that are important. The study of individual choices provides much of the fundamental information on the scientific analysis of politics, and decision-making theory offers insightful perspectives on policy and serves as a useful guide for certain forms of research. Instead of focusing on macroanalysis, decision making theory may be more accurately discussed as a kind of microanalysis. Instead of the whole political system, a much narrower subject is the emphasis. Contrastingly, a lot of research on international relations focuses on the nation state as the primary player in the global system.

Instead, the goal of decision-making theory is to concentrate on the actions of the people who make decisions that affect governmental policy. DMT aims to guarantee that the focus of policy analysis is clearer and more precise by limiting analysis to a smaller number of people who are in charge of making decisions. The decision-makers act in the framework of a perceived environment that incorporates the key elements of his country's strategy for conducting foreign policy. Psychology plays a significant role in the decision-making theory. The "definition of situation" serves as a guide to the actual facts. The psychological environment has an impact on how the policy maker views the possibilities for action. The issue of rationality in the decision-making process is crucial to decision-making theory. The national interest of a country is a highly important factor by which decision makers strive to evaluate the world situation and design policies suited for them, according to Kissinger (1999).

Pushpech (2015), argues that the factors that decision-makers must take into account before making judgments are outlined in the decision-making theory. The following are examples of

clusters of forces:

- (a) The distribution of forces in a situation, including both those that a single state can influence and those that it cannot.
- (b) The actions taken by other states involved in the matter.
- (c) The decision-makers' capacities to implement diverse policies in the context of the overall situation.

The study's topic and the decision-making theory are closely related. This is so because the policy-makers have the most influence on and ultimate control over how the government formulates its foreign policy. The study of the actions of human decision makers who influence governmental policy defines the decision-making theory. This is particularly relevant to the topic of this study effort. The attitude a country takes toward foreign policy is heavily influenced by the view of the president as the head of the executive and command-in-chief. While the president may consult before making a choice about foreign policy, he or she may also consider his or her own viewpoint and the national interest (a key component of the decision-making theory) while making such a decision. The social construction of actors' interests and identities is emphasized, and this theoretical approach's proponents are noted for their belief that even the most enduring practices and institutions in international politics are subject to change. This approach is valuable because effective leaders follow constructive principles for interaction and decision-making. As previously said, Obama revised the continent's positive approach, saying: "I view Africa as a crucial part of our linked globe - as partners with America on behalf of the future we want for all of our children. According to Julier (2014), "That collaboration must be built on mutual respect and accountability. This was an intentional policy move, and it had a significant impact on his judgments towards Africa. Therefore, Obama's foreign policy in Africa was governed and directed by his decision-making framework, which served as the ideological perceptual, motivating, and behavioral rules.

### **The Concept of Foreign Policy**

For a long time, the study of international relations and global politics has focused on the idea of foreign policy. It has evolved via global politics and diplomatic drive to the knowledge of the tools used in managing foreign relations, among many other forms. Although there are several definitions of the term offered by experts in international relations, none has yet managed to come up with one that is accepted by everyone, and it is likely that no one will ever succeed in doing so. This is so because the definitions are based on the views of the academics who provided them.

According to Charles and Abdul (1979), a state's foreign policy often refers to the guiding concepts that direct how the state responds to the international environment. According to Frankel (1963), foreign policy is a dynamic process that involves the interplay of changing internal needs and support with shifting external conditions. And according to Akinboye and Basiru (2020), a state's foreign policy is often the course of action it takes while engaging with other states. Three components make up foreign policy; the first is the general direction and policy aim of one government toward another. The purpose or objective that a nation intends

to achieve in its interactions with other nations is the second component, and foreign policy is the strategy used to accomplish that specific goal or objective. According to Agaba and Ukhamsi (2015), foreign policy may also be defined as the course of action taken by a country to promote the welfare of its citizens. Foreign policy focuses on how and why a country chooses certain objectives, builds up its own governmental policy-making apparatus, and uses its own natural resources and human capital to compete with other countries in the international system. In other words, we may see the crucial definition of foreign policy as deliberate, planned decision-making that influences what a country does in the international arena in relation to other countries.

According to Carlsnaes (2008), high diplomacy views foreign policy as being primarily concerned with other states, with international stability and the rules of the international system, as well as with advancing the national interest through the development of positive relationships with other governments and the negotiation and upkeep of international agreements. To put it another way, foreign policy may be thought of as the sum total of all choices, overtures, and interactions between governments, whether they are motivated by or based on economics, politics, cultural differences, or the promotion of understanding or cooperation.

According to Goldstein and Pevehouse (2011), foreign policy is basically the tool used by governments to exert influence on or attempt to exert influence over the outside world in order to achieve goals that are consistent with their perception of the national interest. In conclusion, foreign policy continues to be the collection of distinct concepts and practices that define the aims and objectives of states to pursue under a controlled impact of safeguarding and advancing an interest in the global political sphere. Simply said, policy is what a country intends to do with regards to friendly ties with other countries from a political, economic, cultural, etc. perspective. In essence, it is the duty of every sovereign state to fully regulate its foreign policy within the framework of the international community. The exact aims and objectives that a country intends to pursue in the international system are, as we have learned, reflected in its foreign policy. Even if these aims and objectives are admirable, they must be evaluated by the international system for approval or condemnation. The key idea is that every country's foreign policy results from its own national interests. Therefore, a state's national interest serves as the cornerstone of its foreign policy and determines the direction in which it will go.

Additionally, Akinboye and Basiru (2020), assert that foreign policy is not carried out in a vacuum. The promotion and pursuit of national interest is always the primary tool of policy in the conduct of foreign policy. The entirety or aggregate of people's interests inside a particular nation state is referred to by academics as national interest. When seen from a classical viewpoint, national interest includes all of the many tactics that states use to protect the proclaimed objective of society in their relations with other nations. Territorial integrity and the advancement of a liberal international order are the main goals of US foreign policy.

## **Obama's Foreign Policy Achievements in Africa Leadership and Democratic Institutions**

Obama's administration achieved some observable progress in Africa, according to an analysis of numerous US government programs. The administration's position on solid institutions in the exercise of democracy is one of the topics that is explicitly discussed. Obama's denunciation of anti-democratic trends in Africa serves as proof of this. Furthermore, the President's Young African Individuals Initiative, the Obama administration's long-term effort to engage these individuals who are actively advocating good change in their communities, actually expanded U.S. involvement with Africa's next generation of leaders. The President's Forum with Young African Leaders in 2010 marked the beginning of this relationship. In June 2011, the Young African Women Leaders Forum hosted by the First Lady was held in South Africa, and in June 2012, the State Department sponsored a summit connecting young African leaders with mentoring opportunities in the US called the Young African Leaders Innovation Summit and Mentoring Partnership. More than 2,000 initiatives for young leaders in sub-Saharan Africa have so far been included in the President's Young African Leaders Initiative, which aims to provide resources to assist leadership development, encourage entrepreneurship, and link young leaders with one another and the United States. In six weeks, 1,000 African young leaders under the age of 35 received rigorous executive leadership training, networking opportunities, and skill development from U.S. institutions (Nwanji, 2014). No matter what steps you take to boost the economy and the supply of energy, they can never be fully effective if the people who stand to gain from them are not given the necessary power. The youth-focused initiative encourages young people to contribute to bettering the future of Africa and gives them access to a network of other young people throughout the continent. They may access leadership training and opportunities in Africa via YALI, as well as discussions on the continent's aspirations for the future. Obama has personally put a lot of time on the initiative and has held a summit for it almost every year since its establishment in 2010, despite the fact that it is mostly overlooked by western media.

While the media has mostly overlooked YALI, there has been some coverage of President Obama. Even though it wasn't a program, this event had many of the same objectives: to improve US diplomatic and economic connections with Africa for the sake of everyone. The media covered this event, which demonstrated to Americans that Africa is not only about famine, illness, and death but also a rising force that needed to be addressed seriously on the international scene. For the first time, a president hosted a summit with African leaders and highlighted the advancement of the continent. It is significant in the history of ties between the United States and Africa as a result. In fact, we at Africa Agenda were so taken with the concept that we hosted our own Denver-Africa conferences in 2014, 2015, and another in 2016. Similar to this pattern, the Obama administration of the United States has pushed to enhance democratic institutions in sub-Saharan Africa via high-level diplomatic engagement, institution building, and initiatives that increase the ability of judicial systems, legislatures, media outlets, and civil society. He encouraged Africans to hold their governments responsible for upholding democratic values and their duties under international human rights standards, and he spoke out when democratic processes were undermined. For



instance, the Obama administration made a strong effort to end the situation in Cote D'Ivoire in order to promote democracy. After the official declaration of the election results in December 2010, President Obama personally informed former President Laurent Gbagbo that he had two options: resign or risk further isolation. When Gbagbo refused to step down, the United States moved quickly to impose sanctions on him and his associates. It also led efforts with European allies through the UN and with African organizations like ECOWAS to put pressure on Gbagbo and support a democratic resolution that allowed the elected leader of Cote d'Ivoire, Alassane Ouattara, to take office. Following his inauguration in May 2011, President Obama invited the leaders of Benin, Niger, and Guinea, as well as two other newly developing democracies in Africa that have made significant strides, to the White House. As the nation emphasizes reconciliation, economic recovery, and security sector reform, the United States continues to collaborate closely with the Government of Cote d'Ivoire and all Ivoirians (White House Press, 2009). In a similar vein, the Obama-led United States spearheaded a global initiative to help Kenya's ambitious reform program, which was created in the aftermath of the post-election violence of 2007–2008. The Vice President's 2010 visit to Kenya and the President's outreach to the Kenyan government and people in August 2010 both helped pave the way for the historic approval of a new constitution. The United States still backs initiatives that advance justice and reconciliation while deepening reform.

In order to enhance government openness and accountability globally, he established the Open Government Partnership (OGP) in 2011, with significant support from African countries and CSOs. Ghana, Liberia, Tanzania, Kenya, and South Africa are among the original members. All of these programs aimed to strengthen Africa and make it better. It's noteworthy that his programs were progressive, upbeat, and focused on a brighter future for Africans. He understood that leaders with little or no awareness of the fact that strong leadership qualities stay steadfast in the region's ability to take the lead and appropriately conduct activities that would drive growth on the continent could not address Africa's challenges. Thus, emphasis was placed on strong institutions and leadership. Policy cannot be inferred directly from representations or from representations, according to post structural discourse analysts. Both must be discovered and connected experimentally. After seeing how weak the democratic institutions are in Africa and what benefits democracy can bring to the populace, Obama focused his programs on developing morally responsible leadership. Its objective was to help Africa get beyond its past and force it to face fresh problems.

### **African Security Priority**

The research found that there has been notable progress in this area. The United States has contributed significantly to peacekeeping operations on the continent, including the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). We continue to push initiatives to increase women's role in establishing peace and safeguarding women from sexual and gender-based violence in armed conflict via the U.S. National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security. U.S. assistance for peace and security examples include: By mobilizing international support for the Comprehensive Peace Agreement's (CPA) implementation, the Obama Administration

has capitalized on American leadership in efforts to negotiate the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement that put an end to decades of civil violence. The President gave the go-ahead for the United States to start a vigorous multilateral effort to keep the parties on the road of peace, which finally resulted in a timely and peaceful vote on southern independence and the creation of the Republic of South Sudan, the world's newest country. In order to encourage investment and gain support for the Republic of South Sudan's economic ambitions, the United States held an international conference in December 2011. To realize the international goal of two nations coexisting peacefully, the United States is firmly committed to assisting Sudan and South Sudan in coming to a definitive resolution on the unresolved post-CPA problems.

AMISOM has received considerable assistance from the US, which has trained its soldiers and helped it expand from 12,000 to 17,731 men in recognition of its continued victory against al-Shabaa. The United States is committed to helping AMISOM handle the force's expanding operational, security, and humanitarian challenges as it works to deliver genuine peace and stability to Somalia. This commitment is made as AMISOM broadens the scope of the Transitional Federal Government.

African security is really a priority for the Obama administration. President Barack Obama's administration in the United States gave \$7 billion to the US-African Command, which committed itself to battling piracy, oil bunkering in the Gulf of Guinea, and narco-trafficking in West Africa (Steve, 2015). He also enacted legislation to disband the Lord's Resistance Army and sent American Special Forces to Uganda. In collaboration with the African Union and the United Nations, the United States is still pursuing a comprehensive strategy under the Obama administration to support the governments and people of central Africa in their efforts to put an end to the LRA's threat and deal with the consequences of its atrocities. This entails protecting local residents, encouraging LRA defections, and deploying a limited number of American personnel to the area to provide assistance to the local military chasing the LRA's senior leaders. The United States is also providing funds for initiatives that will assist impacted communities in implementing plans to meet their security requirements and communicate with one another using communications technology.

The greatest military incursion into Africa was supervised by the Obama administration. All throughout the African continent, small military outposts and bases were built. US Special Operation Forces in the Central African Republic, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (CAR), Ethiopia (Camp Gilbert), Burkina Faso (air base for surveillance planes), Ghana and Senegal (military usage of Tema and Dakar Ports), Uganda (Surveillance aircrafts from Entebbe). Once again, the Obama administration sent thirty US warships to assist operations in Africa and set up a military base in the capital of Chad that closely cooperated with France. The 22,000-strong African Union Mission in Somalia received \$355 million from the Obama administration's US government as well (Adekeye, 2018). He trained 2000 national soldiers and a powerful national police force in Liberia to promote peace. In July 2011, the Obama administration helped to secure South Sudan's independence from Sudan. Between 2009 and 2012, the U.S. government once again spent

\$41 billion on training the Mali military. Positively, the Obama administration contributed 22% of the UN's estimated contributions to peacekeeping in Africa. In Fiscal Year 2011, the United States contributed \$262 million in aid to help African military become more professionally equipped and better able to tackle issues including peacekeeping, maritime security, and counterterrorism.

**Table 1:** Africa's peacekeepers trained by the Obama's Administration

<b>Country</b>	<b>Total Peacekeepers Trained</b>
Mali	8800
Mauritania	284
Mozambique	868
Namibia	817
Niger	1,041
Nigeria	9,463
Rwanda	4789
Senegal	7829
South Africa	211
Tanzania	775
Uganda	4149
Zambia	563

**Source:** US Government, 2012

Additionally in 2011, the US government sent over \$2 billion in humanitarian aid to Africa in order to alleviate food crises, food shortages, and other natural and man-made calamities. The United States Government, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, and the international development community are working together to strengthen country drought preparedness, enhance resilience, and promote long-term solutions in order to help break the cycles of famine and the shocks from drought, particularly in light of the 2011 crisis in the Horn of Africa.

### **Economic Growth and Development**

The United States is funding partnerships for development throughout Africa in an effort to battle climate change, advance food security, speed up sustainable economic growth, and strengthen nation and community response to illness. These investments in smart development support national goals, include the commercial sector and civil society, and carefully use aid funds for maximum effect. These include the country-driven strategies that

Feed the Future supports in order to deal with the underlying causes of hunger and poverty. Through this Presidential initiative, the United States under the Obama administration invested in 12 African focus countries to promote inclusive agriculture-led growth, which includes improved agricultural productivity, expanded markets and trade, and increased economic resilience in rural communities that are at risk. In support of Africa's Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Program, U.S. initiatives under the then-Obama administration attempted to unleash the demonstrated ability of small-scale agricultural producers to create outcomes on a broad scale.

In order to significantly accelerate agricultural growth across the continent and assist more than 50 million people in escaping poverty over the following ten years, the United States led the G-8 in establishing the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition in 2012 (Thomas, 2014). This partnership involves the G-8, African governments, the African Union, international partners, private investors, and civil society. In addition, the Obama administration introduced the Partnership for Growth (PFG). The PFG puts into action the President's Policy Directive on Global Development's guiding principles by elevating sustainable, broad-based economic growth, reshaping American partnerships with nations that show initiative and dedication to their own development, and making investments in the newest emerging markets. Ghana and Tanzania are two of the four nations chosen for PFG that are in Africa. In order to combat poverty via economic development, the Obama Administration has negotiated multi-year grant agreements with five nations in sub-Saharan Africa totalling over \$1.3 billion since entering office (Adekiye, 2018).

For the first time in its history, the Export-Import Bank of the United States authorized projects totalling more than \$1 billion in 2011 to boost the exports of American businesses to sub-Saharan Africa. Sub-Saharan Africa is home to South Africa and Nigeria, two of the nine nations chosen by Ex-Im Bank as important strategic markets for American exports. Over one-third of its total commitments for the fiscal year, or over \$1 billion, in private sector projects in Sub-Saharan Africa were backed by the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC). This comes on top of OPIC's approval of \$367 million for four private equity firms, which may raise an additional \$1 billion for investments in the small- and medium-sized business, agricultural, and health sectors. Examples of initiatives to encourage investment and commerce with sub-Saharan Africa include: 40 nations in sub-Saharan Africa were chosen by President Obama to be eligible for AGOA incentives in 2012.

The United States has Trade and Investment Framework Agreements (TIFAs) with 11 nations or regional economic communities in sub-Saharan Africa, including Angola, Ghana, Liberia, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, the EAC, and the West African Economic and Monetary Community. These agreements provide strategic frameworks and principles for dialogue on trade and investment issues. Bilateral investment treaties (BITs) were another instrument the Obama Administration utilized to support African nations looking to implement change (Han, 2012). The United States proposed a new collaboration with the EAC during the June 2011 AGOA Forum in Lusaka, Zambia, to include the investigation of a regional investment

treaty, formation of trade-enhancing agreements in areas including trade facilitation, and development of greater commercial involvement.

Steps to help Least Developed Country (LDC) members of the World Commerce Organization (WTO), including a number from sub-Saharan Africa, gain more from international commerce were announced by the United States in December 2011. In order to encourage private financing to investment funds and organizations that made debt and equity investments in small- and medium-sized firms that engage in agricultural value chains in West Africa, the United States employed a Development Credit Authority guarantee and public-private partnerships. In order to improve Africa's ability to produce and export competitive, value-added goods, including those that could enter duty-free under AGOA, and to address supply-side constraints that impede African trade, the United States announced the new African Competitiveness and Trade Expansion (ACTE) Initiative in June 2011. This initiative will provide up to \$120 million over four years. Finally, the United States has contributed over \$9 million in support of LDC WTO admission since the start of the Aid for Trade effort (Michael, 2014).

President Obama announced the Obama administration's five-year Power Africa Initiative Program in 2013. The initiative seeks to produce 30,000 megawatts and 60 million additional electricity connections. It would increase the amount of power now produced by the continent of Africa and provide electricity to millions of people living in rural areas (US Government, 2012). The speed of the initiative has drawn criticism for being too sluggish. The program, according to U.S. officials in response, is not an assistance initiative; instead, it seeks to achieve self-sufficiency through working with African governments and energy investors. The American administration has actually enlarged the project and claims it is on track. Additionally, some claim that although the project may be on track, it is incorrectly addressing the problem of energy in Africa. Projects using electricity might take up to 10 years to complete. They contend that since solar electricity would be more efficient and require much less time, it would be. However, the strategy for locating energy investors may be fruitful in the long term since it demonstrates that Africa is a region worth investing in. In the end, the program's effectiveness can only really be assessed once it is over and the findings are made public. However, the project was for Africa's benefit. The Electricity Africa Act is related to the Power Africa Initiative. It was introduced in October 2015, approved by Congress in February 2016, and then made law by the president. By 2020, 50 million people in Africa should have access to dependable energy, according to the law. By signing the legislation, the United States has now formally included sub-Saharan Africa in its foreign policy with regard to energy access (Toluse, 2016).

### **Global Health Initiative (GHI)**

The GHI is enhancing and expanding the U.S. government's current international health initiatives in order to develop integrated, coordinated, and sustainable health systems with our partner nations. The bulk of American investments in the battle against HIV/AIDS, malaria, and the enhancement of maternal and infant health are made in Africa. The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), which is in charge of prevention

efforts and treating more than 3.8 million people in Africa, has significantly reduced HIV infections and raised life expectancy there. By the end of 2013, the administration had also provided life-saving treatment to more than 6 million people. The historic reductions in child mortality that have been seen in Senegal, Rwanda, Kenya, and other African nations are a result of U.S. efforts to combat malaria and improve child survival (including financial support for the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations). Through the GCCI, the Obama administration assisted African nations in developing sustainable and inexpensive energy systems, lessening deforestation in the Congo Basin and elsewhere in Africa, and better preparing for catastrophic weather and climate events (Toluse, 2016).

A quick review of U.S. policy under Obama showed that the country's anxiety about losing market share in Africa is unimportant. It is true that, despite an increase in American military involvement in some African nations, American commerce with Africa has decreased recently. Although the United States is the continent's top investor with 5 billion dollars in direct foreign investment, it seems that the country is not worried about losing its market dominance. According to Gilbert (2011), the United States has more businesses engaged in production and service than any other investing nation on the continent. As a result, American businesses have several chances to increase their domestic investment. Therefore, it is not entirely accurate to state that Obama's reinvigorated U.S. Grand Strategy in Africa was a result of the U.S.'s global position, threat perception, and sense of power rivalry. As military operations on the continent focused on counterterrorism, stability initiatives, and counterpiracy training, the reality is that U.S. actions in Africa are undoubtedly influenced by governments' assessments of security threats and economic interests. Geopolitical factors have substantially shaped U.S. foreign policy toward Africa, although this does not wholly or solely explain the countries' successes. It would be unfair and absurd to claim that all US participation in the area ignores the distinctive situations in Africa, especially under the Obama administration. Like previous American presidents, Obama gave it his all. Let's not forget that national interest, not feeling, is the primary motivator of all countries' international policies. As a result, Obama's African heritage is irrelevant since he was elected to follow the US constitution while doing his duties.

This is not to imply that all of Obama's programs had a beneficial effect on Africans; there were certain areas where Africans were let down. Obama's backing for neocolonial French operations in Mali, Libya, and Cote d'Ivoire was one of the worst disappointments of his foreign policy toward Africa (Adekrye, 2018). Obama personally acknowledged his error in the Libya case and called the consequences of NATO's involvement in Libya in 2011 his "biggest foreign policy regret," stressing that much more work has to be done to reconstruct communities. It was said that Obama misused a resolution designed to protect people in order to further his goals of regime change in Libya. This strategic choice was made because the United States had long seen the leader of Libya, Muammar Gaddafi, as a traditional foe who had, next to Osama bin Laden, the most American blood on his hands (Stephen, 2013). The assassination of Gaddafi and the ensuing anarchy that defined the post-Gaddafi period was never a wise move by the Obama administration in terms of its foreign policy toward Africa.

## Conclusion

The study of Obama's foreign policy accomplishments in Africa comes to the conclusion that all of the programs were designed to remake Africa, making his accomplishments in the areas of democracy and leadership, economic growth, and security particularly noteworthy. Despite the fact that his measures may not have altered the trajectory of US foreign policy towards Africa, his accomplishments were not entirely a horrifying nightmare and failure, as some academics have theorized. It is important to remember that Obama's role was guided by the national interest of the United States. Obama's links to the continent as a member of his family allow one to label his administration's approach to the region as one of malicious neglect and to highlight a penchant for ignoring the role that the national interest plays in international relations. Obama did accomplish certain things, even if the study disagree with some of his foreign policy behaviours towards Africa. For this reason, according to Jones and Gowan (2009), Obama's dedication to and success in international collaboration exceed expectations made by foreign policy specialists. On the continent, notable accomplishments have been acknowledged, and they should be valued. However, it is imperative that subsequent US presidents build on his achievements and guarantee the survival or successful execution of the Obama administration's programs that have the potential to spur regional growth.

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