



SHIFTING CONFLICT PATTERNS IN AFRICA: DRIVERS OF INSTABILITY AND STRATEGIES FOR COOPERATION



REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

AUSTIN, TEXAS

APRIL 15-16, 2013

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Background to the Conference

Food and water stress, migration and urbanization, and rapid political shifts are reshaping the sociopolitical landscape in Africa, and with it the incentives and triggers for potential conflict and cooperation in responding to these changes. Within this frame, the Robert S. Strauss Center for International Security and Law, the U.S. Africa Command, the National Defense University's Africa Center for Strategic Studies, and the U.S. Army Senior Service Fellowship Program hosted a two-day conference examining shifting conflict patterns in Africa. The conference gathered multiple actors from academia, the U.S. government, and the development field to discuss how political, demographic, and food shocks in Africa could trigger violent conflict. Discussions during the conference revolved around understanding the root causes of these shocks and stressors and how relevant actors could collaborate to adequately mitigate the affects of shocks. In this context, shocks are underlying stressors that could lead to potential conflict, although not necessarily a direct trigger of conflict.

The conference was held April 15-16, 2013 at the AT&T Executive Education and Conference Center at the University of Texas at Austin.

This report has been assembled based on conference presentations and working group discussions. However, responsibility for the text in the report rests with the CCAPS program, and any errors should not be attributed to participants.

Many thanks to Sarah McDuff and Abigail Ofstedahl who served as rapporteurs during the event and aided in drafting this report.

Conference presentations are available on the CCAPS website at www.strausscenter.org/ccaps.

About the Co-Hosts

THE ROBERT S. STRAUSS CENTER™
FOR INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND LAW



CLIMATE CHANGE
AND AFRICAN
POLITICAL STABILITY



The **Africa Center for Strategic Studies** at the National Defense University is the pre-eminent Department of Defense institution for strategic security studies, research, and outreach in Africa. The Africa Center engages African partner states and institutions through rigorous academic and outreach programs that build strategic capacity and foster long-term, collaborative relationships.

The **Climate Change and African Political Stability Program** is a five-year research program at the Robert S. Strauss Center for International Security and Law at the University of Texas at Austin, conducted in partnership with the College of William and Mary, Trinity College Dublin, and University of North Texas. CCAPS analyzes how climate change, conflict, governance, and aid intersect to impact African and global security. CCAPS is funded by the U.S. Department of Defense's Minerva Initiative.

The **U.S. Africa Command**, also known as U.S. AFRICOM, is one of nine Unified Combatant Commands of the U.S. Department of Defense. As one of six that are regionally focused, it is devoted solely to Africa. U.S. AFRICOM is responsible to the Secretary of Defense for U.S. military relations with 54 African countries. U.S. AFRICOM is committed to supporting U.S. government objectives through the delivery and sustainment of effective security cooperation programs that assist African nations build their security capacity to enable them to better provide for their own defense.

The **U.S. Army War College Fellowship**, a partnership of the United States Army and the University of Texas at Austin since 1992, is a one-year resident fellowship for Army colonels. Military participants attend UT in lieu of The Senior Service College resident program at the Army War College's Carlisle Barracks, PA and receive the award of Military Education Level One, the highest level of formal military education. Through access to the world-class educational assets of a top-tier university, selected officers prepare to meet the demands of strategic thinking and senior-level leadership that will be required of them as they lead the Army into the future.

Conference Agenda

DAY 1: April 15, 2013

8:15am Introduction

8:30am Morning Keynote Address

9:15am Shocks and the Mediating Role of Institutions

What national and international institutions are best positioned to respond to new dimensions of conflict in Africa, and through what mechanisms? Who can play the most effective mediating role in stressed environments? How might this vary for responding to different types of shocks?

11:00am Food Shocks and Social Unrest

When and why do food price shocks and food insecurity lead to social unrest, conflict, or regime change? What are the trends and exceptions? How do large-scale land acquisition and land tenure reform impact social conflict?

12:30pm Lunchtime Keynote Address

1:45pm Demographic Shocks: New Threats in New Spaces

How are demographic trends like urban migration altering the conflict environment? Where is Islamist violence spreading? How do conflict actors' geographic control of territory and aid flows impact conflict risks? How does the current African security architecture meet these shifting demographic stressors?

3:30pm Political Shocks and Conflict

With 2013 elections in Egypt, Kenya, Libya, Mali, Tunisia, and Zimbabwe, and ongoing political reforms across the continent, analysts assess historical patterns and current contexts for conflict related to political events in Africa. What conditions could extend or alter historical trends in the future? What are perceptions of the role of the military in the political reformation process?

5:00pm Conference Day Closing

DAY 2: April 16, 2013

These working sessions will take as their starting point an understanding of the broad range of innovative governmental and non-governmental, local and national, policy and research efforts underway to address the root causes and consequences of conflict in Africa. The sessions will examine how to best leverage new research to support ongoing and new efforts to meet the evolving security needs in Africa.

8:00am Drivers of Africa's Evolving Security Environment

8:45am Working Session on Responding to Food and Demographic Shocks

8:45am Working Session on Responding to Political Shocks

10:30am Discussion and Findings

11:30pm Conference Closing

Report of Proceedings

Food Shocks and Conflicts

Relationship between Food Shocks and Social Unrest

Do food shocks lead to social unrest? This is an especially important question in Africa since 20 of the most populous countries on the continent switched from being net exporters of basic cereals in 1960 to being net importers of cereals post-independence. As net importers, these countries are highly vulnerable to fluctuating prices on the global market, and therefore susceptible to social unrest. Researchers have looked for the relationship between food prices and social unrest, but have found it difficult to distinguish between food prices causing social unrest or other grievances – such as labor disputes, economic pressure, or perceived injustices – causing social unrest. Because researchers cannot easily distinguish the drivers of social unrest, a research question develops: Do sudden increases in local consumer food prices lead to an increase in the likelihood of social or political unrest of any type, violent or not, in African countries? In addition to the difficulty in determining the drivers behind social unrest, it may also be difficult to determine the causality in this relationship, because social unrest can cause local food price changes but local food price changes can also cause social unrest. Large-scale social unrests, in turn, may affect U.S. national security interests, although the links between U.S. national security interests and food security changes is not yet clear.

Looking at variables that affect social unrest and food prices, however, can help unpack the nature of the relationship. International food commodity prices and local rainfall deviations are examples of exogenous variables that affect local food prices, and they can help explain how social unrest and food prices are related. In the case of rainfall, too little rain causes food prices to go up whereas rainfall abundance may cause a bumper harvest, leading to a decrease in prices. Rainfall abundance can, however, also lead to social unrest if flooding occurs. After using statistical modeling incorporating these variables and running regressions, it seems that a rainfall shortage (one standard deviation below long-term mean) leads to a .26 percent change in food prices and that a one percent increase in local consumer prices leads to a 24 percent increase in the odds of unrest. Put another way, the results indicate that a 3.23 percent increase in food prices means that unrest becomes more likely than not. One variable missing from this equation, though, is mobilization for change. The existence of rising food prices may not be the perpetuating factor for social unrest, but how people decide to respond to the price changes could be the spark that causes social unrest. Mass action catalyzed by individuals or organizations can create these shocks.

Even without all the variables, there is convincing evidence that rising food prices lead to an increase in the probability of social unrest of all types, not just food riot unrest. Statistical modeling also shows that sharper spikes have a stronger effect and that price stability is important for political stability. In fact, having stable prices is more important than consistently low prices. For policymakers, this implies a need for more investment in infrastructure, irrigation, transportation, and storage. Maintaining stable prices may also have an impact on U.S. national security, because if food and demographic shocks lead to domestic instability, the U.S. may need to become involved. Food price shocks may also affect the U.S. because of the resentment that other nations feel towards the U.S. as the world's largest corn producer. Other countries may see U.S. corn as a complicit or causal factor if food price increases. If other countries blame the global food system for price changes, the U.S. can then expect some of that blame.

Nevertheless, some argue that food and demographic shocks only marginally affect U.S. interests, if at all, because they happen in low levels of intensity and frequency. The Obama administration has committed itself to allow some levels of 'messiness,' or infrequent, low intensity unrest, especially the type of unrest that does not lead to domestic instability. Some also argue that food shocks could lead to commercial opportunities, known as disruptive innovation. However, one must keep in mind that commercial opportunities could lead to fragile countries depending on imports, which would not lead to optimal outcomes for U.S. national security. There

must be a balance between leveraging opportunities and doing so in a way that is responsible. Shocks may also improve U.S. national security interests, as Somalia has shown. The 2011 drought in Somalia helped delegitimize and marginalize al Shabaab. Since al Shabaab had a leadership role during the drought, this 'drought shock' undermined their authority.

Shocks in Urban Areas

In general, urban areas will require a different response than rural areas when it comes to food and demographic shocks. It is probable that urbanization in Africa could lead to more food security because it is easier to distribute food in small, densely populated areas than to rural villages with little access to major roads. Furthermore, most of Africa has degraded infrastructure and is dependent on trade, whereas urban areas have populations concentrated in narrow areas where they can be served. Urbanization can also provide commercial opportunities for the U.S., because if consumers are concentrated in one place, a U.S. vessel with 50 tons of wheat can stop at just one port as opposed to hitting five different ports, which could drive down prices.

Urbanization may lead to more food security. National governments in Africa generally favor urban consumers over rural producers because urban residents are more likely to engage in social unrest. With the exception of Ugandan President Museveni, who in 2011 did not intervene in the domestic food market to help urban consumers, governments will typically interfere with local markets to shield urban consumers from price increases. Since food shocks are more likely to lead to social unrest in urban areas, authoritarian rulers will actively intervene in local markets to prevent social unrest from happening. In authoritarian countries, leaders are uniquely sensitive to threats from urban areas and they derive policies that are biased towards urban consumers. In democracies, however, this is not the case. Theory argues that in times of high food prices, there is more unrest in democratic countries than non-democratic countries because protestors do not expect to face the cost of repression during popular mobilizations. Political leaders in democratic countries can face removal from office from popular motivation, but also face removal from office from elections, so democratic countries should have more pro-poor policies and less intervention in market places. It is expected that global food prices, therefore, will be positively associated with protests and rioting in democratic regimes but not in autocratic regimes, and democracies and autocracies will vary in the policy tools that they use to address high food prices.

Since urban residents respond differently to shocks and governments respond with different policy tools in urban areas, the U.S. government and international NGOs could do more to partner with local institutions. At the local city level, the international community is barely present. There is a disconnection between international communities and cities, yet focusing on developing institutions at local levels could help cities and countries better prepare for and respond to shocks. In some instances, engaging with local entities and civil society is more effective than working through national governments. But those in the international community must recognize that engaging with partners at every level may influence the internal power balances of a country. The international community must recognize the uniqueness of each country and decide if the constitution gives local governments the freedom to engage with international actors. In Nigeria, for example, the federal government only deals with creating policies while implementation of those policies is left to the states, which sometimes lack the capacity to implement policies properly. In Nigeria, the state government can deal with issues independent of the federal government; therefore, Nigeria is an example of a country where the international community can partner with local government levels. Building the capacity of relevant institutions at the national to local level allows the institutions to better prepare for and respond to shocks. When supporting institutions and building capacity, however, informal institutions must also be considered as potential targets. Many informal institutions serve a purpose and operate efficiently, so the international community must recognize their potential.

A potential direction of engagement for the U.S. government then could be the Sister Cities program, where cities that face similar problems engage with one another. The mayors of these cities talk to their counterparts and have a better understanding of what is happening elsewhere and best practices.

Improving Food Security

The food security model has four elements: physical availability of food; economic and physical access to food; food utility (i.e. nutritional value and cultural acceptability); and stability of the previous three elements of food security in time and space. Food security in Sub-Saharan Africa can change significantly and small changes in access can lead to food insecurity. There are ways that the U.S. government and international development workers can improve food security in the short-term and the long-term.

Land is an important long-term element of food security because 75 percent of Africans are employed in the agricultural sector and dependent on land for food and income. Across Africa, there is an increase in demand for agricultural land, since there is a need for increased food production, biofuels, carbon sequestration, timber and mineral extraction, and wildlife habitat and conservation. Some nonprofit organizations have the objective of securing land rights for the rural poor, as land is at the heart of social economic and political life in most of Africa and is used as a means for food security, an economic asset, access to credit, access to government programs, identity and social status, and political and territorial power.

At the moment, the rural poor do not have land rights and are vulnerable to investors that have the financial resources and political authority to take their land. Investors target high-quality farmland, ideally irrigated and with access to markets. The deals between investors and authorities are taking place behind closed doors and so far 50.7 hectares have been transferred from smallholder farmers. Motivation to act on behalf of the smallholder farmers is lacking because of common misperceptions about these forms of investment. First, there is the belief that there is an abundant amount of empty land in Africa. Second, some believe that the government is the only legitimate party to deal with investors. Third, people believe that most small farmers have clear, secure, legal rights to their land. Fourth, there is the perception that in developing countries large farms are always more efficient than smallholder farms. Lastly, some believe that all large-scale land investments are actually 'land grabs' by irresponsible investors. This may not be the case because, in many instances, information investors need in order to make a responsible investment is not available.

In African countries, insecure land rights facilitate land grabs. Inadequate legal frameworks lead to a lack of expertise or willingness to implement existing framework and vice versa. Farmers are less willing to adopt appropriate technologies and make long-term investments in their land when they have no rights to the land that they farm. Land investments often happen in Africa because of a lack of transparency, a disregard of formal/informal land rights, and difficulties valuing land, which leads to undervaluation of land, little or no investment in infrastructure, and little or no training or employment opportunities for local community members. The displacement of rural populations as a result of land investments threatens food security, leads to a loss of livelihoods, and creates disputes. Few countries have effective and accessible institutions or venues where local populations subject to 'land grabs' can seek relief. Legal reform and implementation, transparency, and institutional capacity can help mitigate these threats and lead to more peace and stability.

In addition to land rights, research for improved crops, such as drought and flood resistant varieties, can help improve food security in the long run. Research science institutes, therefore, are one key partner in food security. CGIAR is a natural point of research support and the organization works with domestic players on a variety of issues pertaining to food security. Supporting trade and infrastructure, both the legal rules of trade and physical roads, can help vulnerable groups gain access to food and increase national supplies of cereals. Access to information, such as weather and prices, can help improve farmers' agriculture yields and household food security. Change in U.S. domestic policies concerning the country's agriculture productivity can also affect food security in African countries. Developing countries are concerned with reforming agriculture subsidies in the U.S. and the EU, which could have a major impact on the food security of African countries. Rigorous impact evaluation could also help determine which projects and practices improve household food security the most.

It is important to keep in mind the needs of local farmers and vulnerable groups. Besides the military and policymakers, there is also a need for the U.S. to build civilian capacity in Africa. The best approach, however, depends on data-driven, evidence-based analysis that addresses underlying conflict and grievances. Allocating

resources strategically can help keep costs low and enhance sustainability of the approach. The U.S. should enter countries where they think they can make a difference, and they should go in with partners. Decisions on which countries to enter are based on U.S. national security, the opportunity for strategic impact, sustainability, and areas where operations can be effective. The key is to send the right person to the right place at the right time and engage at the local level. Entry points for engaging at the local level exist through promoting women as peace ambassadors, harnessing local energy, and linking top down approaches within the State Department with bottom-up efforts.

One example of promoting women as peace ambassadors comes from Sierra Leone. The women's situation room at the national level allowed for an entry point into local collaboration at the district level with Family Talk. As a result, the women's situation room commandeered high profile support for peaceful elections, and Family Talk trained women recognized as leaders in cooperation to liaise between their community and security and election officials.

An example of harnessing local energy occurred in Kenya after the last election. The U.S. government wanted to prevent electoral violence in Kenya again, so officials on the ground identified where the local energy was. Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO) focused on conflict prone areas in Kenya to support local initiatives that were ongoing. They harnessed energy towards nonviolent elections through promoting and using youth associations, horticulture societies, and other nonviolent networks to promote peaceful messages for the election. Finally, South Sudan is an example of linking top-down approaches with bottom-up efforts. CSO supported the negotiation efforts by sending out stabilization teams to all 10 states. The teams built relationships with 750 actors in local governments and civil society. These teams were able to deliver top line, USG messages and coordinate stabilization efforts. In this instance, the CSO worked across a broad spectrum of stakeholders, ensuring that analysis was being funneled back and guidance delivered down to the stabilization teams.

AFRICOM's Response to Food Security

The U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) plays a limited and indirect role in food security. AFRICOM works to prevent conflict, which can sometimes cause food insecurity, but the relationship between conflict and food insecurity is complicated. Mali is one example where conflict within the country did not lead to food insecurity. In April, FEWSNET predicted moderate food insecurity in northern Mali but three months later the situation was better than FEWSNET had anticipated because agriculture production had increased, traders could still travel to the north, and people went to Algeria to buy subsidized food to bring to Gao and Timbuktu. Furthermore, food aid agencies had access to the north. When the French came in, though, the food security situation changed. The border with Algeria closed and the threat of suicide bombers led to less trade from the south, rendering those in Mali more food insecure. The Mali example highlights the complicated relationship between conflict and food insecurity, because in this case, conflict led to less food insecurity whereas a lack of conflict led to greater food insecurity.

In situations like Mali, AFRICOM always has to work within its authority and mandates; therefore, it is not the lead agent on food security but it can play a supporting role. When it comes to responding to food security situations, AFRICOM has to juggle U.S. government policies, the preferences of authorities, and realities on the ground. In maritime security, for example, AFRICOM works with the Economy Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Economic Community of Central Africa States (ECCAS) to help these regional organizations create a regional response to protect their waters. These actions aid food security because fish are a prime protein source in Africa, so securing these waters is necessary for foodstuff and livelihoods. Although the strategic importance of performing these actions is clear, a positive externality that arises is an increase in U.S. security.

In addition to maritime security, AFRICOM acts in declared emergencies when civilian agencies and partner nations request their support. AFRICOM, in concert with interagency and international partners, promotes stability and security on the continent and enhances African partner nation's capacity through working with their militaries and civilian authorities to improve disaster response capabilities and coordination. Enhancing the capabilities of partners to respond to emergencies is a benefit to food security.

Finally, AFRICOM has small-scale projects that impact food security, such as water catchment basins. Although the primary purpose of these projects is to support overall the USG and AFRICOM strategy, water catchment basins can help improve agriculture productivity. AFRICOM always coordinates this type of programming with the U.S. embassy and if present, USAID.

Regional Blocs' Response to Food Security

Cooperation on projects among member countries in regional blocs can improve the effectiveness of responses to and prevention of shocks. Water sharing agreements between countries are an example of this cooperation. Agreements can make farmers or workers in one country less sensitive to agriculture developments and dam constructions. One of the primary findings in academic literature on the prevention of water conflict is that of river basin initiatives. River basins can promote stability and watershed management involves multiple countries, so perhaps there is some benefit from focusing on basin initiatives, especially regional rivers. One of the most important features of this type of co-management is the creation of scientific co-management teams. There should be additional funding for these types of teams and scientific resources. Natural resource managers are resource constrained, and even basic GIS software is taken for granted. Supporting these groups should go beyond technology transfer to providing resources for independent commissions of scientists.

Demographic Shocks and Conflict

Youth and Unemployment

Researchers are currently examining whether countries with younger populations are more prone to civil unrest and less likely to sustain democratic institutions. Increased urbanization coupled with a particularly young population could lead to instability in many countries on the African continent. African governments are facing a youth bulge, where 40 percent of the population is under 14 years old and 70 percent of the population is under 30 years old. Many African governments face rapid population growth and unequal distribution of wealth. Because of large populations of young people and limited economic opportunities, unemployed and disenfranchised youth could become agents of instability in the region. These youths might be tempted to join terrorist or rebel groups that provide wages and other benefits.

The Arab Spring is an example of how issues relating to demographic patterns and a lack of employment opportunities, exacerbated by food and fuel prices, led to region-wide social unrest that eventually involved the USG. In Nigeria, for example, there was a study conducted by Harvard University and the British Council that focused on whether or not the demography of youth would lead to social unrest, and found that youth unemployment is like a time bomb waiting to explode. The U.S. government can assist African governments in building capacity by funding economic development programs targeted at youth, especially young men.

Violence in Urban Areas

In addition to an extremely young population, Africa is urbanizing faster than anywhere else in the world. While urbanization may increase access to services and income, without adequate planning and resources, rural-to-urban migration will stress existing infrastructure. Moreover, many urban economies currently fail to provide adequate employment opportunities.

Research shows that political violence, like most of the population in Africa, is undergoing an urban shift. In fact, half of all violence in the Armed Conflict Location and Event Dataset (ACLED) over the last 15 years happened in areas with 50 or more people per kilometer. Though not all types of violence are rising at the same rate, the overall trend is one of urbanization of political violence with the most significant increases occurring in political militia activity and riot/protesting. Urbanization itself, however, is not responsible for increased violence. Rather, the conditions within urbanized and urbanizing spaces are leading to violence.

Urban residents require employment to gain access to difference resources such as land, food, and fuel. Therefore, varying degrees of demographic and economic growth can be destabilizing for national security. Additionally, black markets and private armies threaten urban security. When examining different hypotheses for the rise in urban violence, several surprising results have emerged: first, neither male unemployment nor slums or democracy are statistically significant factors in explaining violence; poverty depth and vulnerability, on the other hand, are strong predictors of political violence. Disasters are poor predictors of communal violence but are generally positively correlated with refugee rates. Finally, environmental security as an explanatory factor is weak, but has potential.

Islamist Groups

Violence orchestrated by Islamist groups, those who proactively promote or enforce Islamic ideologies, laws, policies, and customs, is not only increasing in absolute and proportional terms, it is also emerging in new areas. Therefore, it is important to understand the conditions under which identity leads to conflict. Using the Armed Conflict Location and Event Dataset to explore various hypotheses, researchers found:

- There is no relationship between total violence and levels of Muslim population. However, there is a strong positive relationship between size, dominance and Muslim population majority and violent Islamist events as well as Muslim-identified events.
- Overall, there is a negative relationship between religious diversity and total conflict events. There is also a negative relationship between Islamist events and diversity, except if a society is diverse but has a Muslim majority or Muslim dominance. In fact, societies are twice as likely to experience Islamist violence in diverse, but Muslim majority, districts. Moreover, Muslim-identified militia and rioting are more common in diverse societies.
- Greater divergence in population growth between Muslim and non-Muslim populations is positively related to Islamist events.
- There is no relationship between socio-economic marginalization and higher rates of violence, though perhaps this is due to the difficulty in measuring marginalization.
- There is a strong relationship between state corruption and Muslim-identified militia, riot, and protest events.
- Strong ethnic diversity in Muslim-dominated areas is strongly correlated with higher total events and higher Islamist events. Ethnic diversity is also positively related to protest activity.

It is important to differentiate between Islamist and Muslim categories and the different groups, ideologies, and actors within these. By studying localized data, researchers can begin to distinguish the discrete patterns that drive total violence, Islamist violence, and Muslim-identified violence.

Geographic Control and International Aid Flows

As international actors intervene on the African continent, it is important to examine which forms of intervention lead to which outcomes. To date, international aid has been one of the main tools used by international and bilateral donors to promote development. New research examines potential adverse effects of international aid by asking whether or not aid flows fuel violence. By attempting to map territorial activity and control, researchers hope to answer whether aid flows to areas controlled by combatants and areas of interest experience more violence as measured by fatalities.

One of the key challenges in answering these questions is collecting the data. Researchers geo-referenced aid data to the local level and areas were categorized dichotomously as either being under government or rebel control. Yet difficulties arose when trying to classify certain zones because current methods for identifying control fail to capture situations where there are more actors. Moreover, control data is only available for certain countries. Preliminary results show that more aid led to a 10.8 percent increase in fatalities by the controlling actor. However, aid to areas of interest had no effect on fatalities.

Additional Shocks

Climate-related events such as floods, famine, sea level rise, drought, and desertification could lead to increased migration and climate refugees. African governments also face the threat of illicit activities in the form of drug trafficking, small arms trafficking, and terrorist activity. Guinea Bissau is an example of this threat. Roughly one-fourth to one-third of narcotic drugs run through this state to Europe. There are maritime threats, especially in the Gulf of Guinea, where the situation is deteriorating and two billion dollars in drugs is transshipping that area.

Political Shocks and Conflict

Changing Nature of Shocks and Conflict in Africa

Since the end of the Cold War, civil conflict has decreased from 20 conflicts in 1992, to 7 in 2006 according to Uppsala conflict data. At the same time, there were approximately 75,000 deaths in 1990, and in 2009 that number was down to 10,000. Wars in West Africa have decreased significantly and countries in Central Africa remain unstable but the region is not experiencing the same levels of conflict as before. In addition, conflict still remains in the Horn of Africa but it exists at a lower intensity.

There has been a changing nature of conflict in Africa since the 1990s. After the Cold War, civil wars continued but there was no longer any support from non-African countries. Today, conflict patterns mirror the Lord's Resistance Army, whereby forces do not aspire to control the organs of the state. Instead, these organizations function on the periphery and are sometimes funded by mining and trafficking or other African states. Since the end of the Cold War, the U.S. is now focused on violent extremist organizations. Al Qaeda has taken over parts of Africa and will continue to spread its influence and take control of ungoverned spaces. Al-Shabaab, al Qaeda, and Boko Haram will continue to coordinate on attack planning wherever possible, looking to exploit demographic divisions and strike U.S. personnel.

It is important to understand the aims of these organizations in order to respond appropriately. For example, scarce resources could lead to competition and conflict or it could provide a foundation for the economic growth of the country. Environmental degradation is part of these scarce resources. Lake Chad, for example, has continued to shrink and fishermen are catching only one-fourth of the tons of fish that they were previously catching. The fishermen that depended on Lake Chad are now farming land that was once covered in water. In this instance, there was no direct causal link between environmental change and conflict, but climate change may amplify stresses. Impact of environmental degradation is most felt in areas that are only marginally workable in the first place.

Shocks can serve as a forcing function for governments to change. Populations may be able to hold their government more accountable to responding to environmental degradations and underlying stressors as access to information increases with the use of mobile phones. This increase in access to and sharing of information may help citizens expose mass atrocities and pressure governments to respond to their needs. Technology has improved communication between donors, implementing agencies, and individuals so that these actors can use crowd sourced information and engage with individuals. Getting this feedback from individuals is important for understanding and dealing with shocks.

Elections and Social Conflict

The world today is more peaceful and more democratic than any period of time previously. After reaching a peak in 1990 at the end of the Cold War, armed conflict and civil conflict have both declined. Since then, the spread of democracy and democratic institutions has been highly correlated to increasing peace. Yet Africa is still one of the most authoritarian regions of the world. International development efforts in Africa have tended to focus on voting and elections without putting as much emphasis on building strong, democratic institutions. Real

democracy requires a comprehensive set of institutions such as a strong judiciary, checks to executive authority, respect for human rights, and respect for rule of law. Such genuine democracy cuts the frequency of violence in half.

Using new data from the Social Conflict in Africa Database (SCAD), researchers can now examine the conditions under which elections become violent and why some elections are more violent than others. Preliminary results show that elections during civil war are more conflict-prone and relatively poor countries experience more conflict. However, post-conflict elections do not lead to greater violence, perhaps due to conflict fatigue. Other results show that elections that are very close are more conflict-prone and that allegations of electoral fraud lead to more conflict. Moreover, monitored elections experience more conflict, although it is not clear whether this is due to a causal relationship or whether monitors tend to oversee more vulnerable elections. These findings have important implications for democratization efforts. First, the international community should not push for elections prior to the establishment of other democratic safeguards. Second, elections can be a tool for resolving civil war, but should only be pursued after a peace settlement.

Building Resilience

International development efforts are now trying to bridge the gap between emergency response and long-term development. In this context, “resilience” has become a popular term, frequently used by both academics and policymakers. However, there is still much discussion about what the term actually means. If different actors wish to study, explain, and build resiliency, then they must be very specific about stating their understanding of the definition and what it encompasses.

Generally, all definitions of resilience include aspects of mitigation, adaptation, and response. A recent report about how investments in conflict resolutions can bolster broader resilience defined resilience as coping, managing, and transforming. In this context, people coped by slaughtering a cow; managed by sharing water and land; and transformed by moving to the city when a pastoralist lifestyle is no longer viable. In the context of conflict, resilient governing institutions can mitigate the causes of violent conflict. Investments in conflict resolution mechanisms can strengthen resilience to other types of shocks. The Sahel and Horn of Africa are particularly vulnerable to an array of factors including drought and famine, epidemics, state fragility, armed conflict, and climate change.

Building Capacity of African Militaries

African militaries are not always an effective unit of analysis because each is a unique institution. However, there are ways that the U.S. government can partner with African armies to help build military capacity. One of the key factors in helping to build capacity is identifying whether the partner military needs to address internal or external challenges, or whether the military needs training for expeditionary forces such as peacekeeping missions. U.S. government planners determine military institutional capacity based on size; weapons systems; communications; intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities; funding; civilian control; and corruption levels. The U.S. government builds partner capacity by focusing on four key areas: promoting collective security objectives, building on existing activities, helping the partner country achieve its own goals, and promoting goals that are acceptable to the U.S. government and its people.

Potential Areas for Political Conflict

Several countries in Africa are vulnerable to political uncertainty. In Sudan the loss of revenue after the separation of South Sudan has had serious repercussions on President Al-Bashir including a coup attempt in November 2012, led by a self-described Islamist regime that had fought with the North. Lacking strong democratic institutions, the military is the main support of the president. Thus far, President Al-Bashir has been able to play the intelligence and military against each other, but this has led to increased rivalry between the two. The military will likely hold power whatever change comes. Sudan is vulnerable to several shocks including another coup attempt, instability

associated with the 2015 elections, change in military stalemate, and possible international arrest of President Al-Bashir for charges by the International Criminal Court (ICC).

South Sudan is also vulnerable to political conflict. Common goals and a common enemy leading up to the referendum for independence held South Sudan together. Now, with those two factors diminished, the country faces instability as people try to create new meaning for what it means to be South Sudanese. In the meantime, ethnic divisions are coming to the surface, and tensions exist even within ethnicities. There are also divisions between those who are loyal to the president and those who are loyal to the deceased leader. South Sudan is vulnerable to several shocks including future elections, failure of the government to deliver dividends for secession (i.e. provide basic services such as trash pickup, water, and health), and a vice-president who has aspirations for the presidency and is not a very trusted man in government.

Somalia has overall been a success, yet there are many similarities to South Sudan in that people are looking to receive the dividends of political progress. Within Somalia, several states are trying to form their own federal region. Events in Jubaland, in particular, raise questions about what federalism means. Though Somalia has been a success, the country is vulnerable to political shocks arising from the government's inability to deliver services and the withdrawal of countries involved such as Ethiopia.

Overall, African governments and the international community should not underestimate the importance of basic service delivery as a measure of good governance. Moreover, outside actors should not push for elections when the situation is not right. Elections under the wrong circumstances can lead to further instability.

Institutional Capacities to Respond to Shocks

Mitigating Shocks

There are many underlying causes of instability, and one way to approach instability is to manage conflicts better as opposed to solving them. Population growth, land, and food security are some of the underlying causes of shocks because sustained high global food prices threaten the stability of areas dependent on imports. Water security is also an underlying instability since it affects human and national security. Finally, disaster resiliency is important since some of the richest nations have higher economic losses, but less loss as a percentage of GDP.

Understanding the nature of shocks is important when trying to determine appropriate preventative and response measures. Events that happen in Africa have an immediate effect on diaspora populations, which are highly connected in the U.S. In order to keep one country from impacting the world, the USG looks at the same thing day after day to assess subtle shifts, which can signal if something is wrong. The USG also distinguishes between two types of shocks. The first is a discontinuous event that can be a change of pace, as is the case in the technology field. The second type of shock is a change in direction, as was the case with the Arab Spring. Demographic shocks, for example, may be less short-term and disruptive than food and water shocks, which are typically more sudden.

In terms of demographic shocks, focusing on women's health and family planning, education, and land rights can lead to positive family outcomes and a decrease in vulnerability to external shocks. Educational exchanges, whereby U.S. water specialists train Africans in water conservation practices, can also be shock prevention solutions. Turning education exchanges into trainer-of-trainer programs can help enhance sustainability in agriculture and natural resources. Education and trainings can also build capacity: capacity to prepare for a shock and to assess the shock and response after the event. Greater focus on resource efficiency could also prepare countries for shocks. After the Arab Spring, most money has gone to democracy promotion and helping civil society but less has gone to clean energy, energy efficiency improvements, and improved access to water. Focusing on energy efficiency may help demographic pressures in the long run.

Mitigation approaches can include long- and short-term responses. Short-term responses that build the capacity of dispute resolution mechanisms or institutions at national and local levels decrease violent conflict. If dispute resolution mechanisms are created, there will be a short-term increase in conflict, as people have a safe place to discuss issues that they encounter. Randomized control trials have shown that an increase in conflict results, but not necessarily violent conflict, when creating dispute resolutions. There are current methods in the USG to address instabilities. Approaches include promoting democracy, addressing corruption, increasing economic development and recognizing that security underpins all of these approaches. To keep a situation stable, there are military operational phases, the most important of which is getting engagement right because doing so means that the overall operations will be cheaper and the U.S. will not have to engage in war fighting.

National Constitutional Design

Shocks do not necessarily produce violent conflict. Constitutional design, influenced by democracy, governance, and other factors within a country, mediates the outcomes of environmental, demographic, and political shocks. If constitutional design can help mitigate shocks, then perhaps one type of constitutional design lessens shocks and another exacerbates them. It is, however, difficult to determine which constitutional design is better overall because different states face different challenges: even if some states have poor constitutional designs they may still be peaceful.

To determine which constitutional design is generally preferable in Africa, researchers performed case studies on seven countries in Africa, focusing on the shocks and the hard times in each country and the outcome of those stressors. The study defined shocks as situations arising from economic, demographic, environmental or political dynamics. In any country, shocks create winners and losers, exacerbate grievances, can increase insecurity, or weaken or strengthen the state. Although the hard times were not comparable across countries, the study was able to look at how constitutional design mediated the outcome and whether there was violence as a result.

There is a spectrum of constitutional design that ranges from accommodation to integration, with many options existing between the two extremes. Accommodation includes quotas, vetoes, or autonomy. Integration, on the other hand, tries to merge different groups together into an integrative constitutional design. In each of the seven case countries examined, researchers looked at two to four shocks. Burundi, for example, has a constitutional design of accommodation. Two shocks were examined in Burundi and one shock led to genocide, while the other led to peace. Ghana, on the other hand, has an integrative constitution design, and the country has experienced no violence as a result of shocks. Kenya and Nigeria have partial accommodation designs and have experienced violence, Senegal has integration design with minor violence, Sudan has an accommodation design and experienced civil wars from escalation in violence, and Zimbabwe has an integration design and has had violence. Out of all the case studies, the researchers found that accommodation does not necessarily decrease violence and integration does not necessarily increase it. From these case studies, the researchers learned that accommodation can work but only if properly implemented. Burundi is an example of trying to implement an accommodation design too fast in 1993, and violence broke out in the country. Integration, on the other hand, can also work but is used best if there is some check on the central power. A survey of the African states showed that a vast majority of states in Africa are centralized constitutional design.

If international donors push countries towards high accommodation, they are going to get resistance from national governments and the states might end up in a constitutional design that does not lead to peaceful outcomes. For international aid donors, there are two options: promote accommodation, which is difficult and risky or encourage integration, which is less risky. Aid donors should promote liberal reforms of existing integrative design, not overhaul the constitution to accommodative design.

USG Role in Mediating Shocks

The role that the USG plays in mediating shocks is diverse. The USG has a hierarchy of documents that determine its role, some of which include language on climate change. The 2010 National Security Strategy and the 2010 quadrennial defense review both include discussions of climate change. The USG looks at ways in which climate

change acts as an instability accelerant. Climate change and instability are not part of a linear equation, but a matrix. In 2011 there was a national military strategy that discussed climate change prevention but there is a need to further articulate to Congress the need to adapt to a rapidly changing environment and the joint allocation of resources.

U.S. Military in Africa

Africa is a geographical, cultural, economic, and politically diverse place, meaning that one cannot make generalizations about Africa because they will not be applicable to the entire continent. Projects and programs that work successfully in one part of the continent will not always work in another part. Africa remains a challenge to the U.S. because of its geography and infrastructure. There are, however, key focus areas in Africa. Egypt, for example, is an important player in North Africa. Nigeria is also an important regional player, as it is home to the seventh largest population in the world and is the largest contributor to peacekeeping missions in Africa. Mali and South Sudan are some of the biggest causes for concern. Mali is the weakest state in the West African region at the moment and South Sudan has a contracting economy, which plays a role in the country's instability. The USG recognizes the diversity in economies and cultures across Africa, and uses AFRICOM to help understand which approaches should be used in each context.

Within the Department of Defense (DoD), there are several agencies that play a role in the shifting conflict patterns in Africa. In general, however, the DoD's role is to focus on military strategies, plans, and policies for Africa. The Department supports the Joint Chief of Staff, and as threats facing Africa's security evolve, the DoD seeks AFRICOM's inputs. AFRICOM itself is guided by many documents, including the President's Policy Directive towards Sub-Saharan Africa that calls for the strengthening of democratic institutions and facilitating economic growth among other objectives. In theory, these policies should be less reactive and more focused on proactive long-term growth.

This has not always been the U.S. government's approach to Africa. Prior to 2007/2008, AFRICOM did not exist. Instead, the U.S. military in Africa consisted of the European command, Central command, and Atlantic command. Yet this changed in 2007/2008 and now there is an African Commander who only looks at African issues. For the U.S., having AFRICOM on the continent may be both positive and negative. Positive, because the U.S. does not have the baggage of being a colonial power, but negative because the U.S.' understanding of Africa is underdeveloped. It will take about a decade until the U.S. has troops in Africa that have understanding of and experience in African affairs. An example comes from the Special Forces team that's partnering with Ugandan forces to track down Joseph Kony. When these soldiers move up in the ranks, they will have the experience of partnering with local forces and operating with limited tools.

When working bilaterally, AFRICOM works with each country team to prioritize resources. DoD looks to build the capacity of African military forces so they can take on these issues themselves, and so that the military abides by humanitarian norms. Since its inception in 2007, AFRICOM is focused on building capacity in the African context and marshaling its resources to build African capacity. AFRICOM seeks to contribute to a security foundation that is necessary for promoting peace and security. In addition, AFRICOM supports countries in transitional conflicts, such as in the case of Somalia and South Sudan. As Somalia begins to stand up and build institutions, DoD will have a role building institutions in emerging Somalia.

A recent study supports the argument that this kind of professional military education is dollar for dollar the most effective way to provide support for the African nation, when compared against tactical formation trainings. In the case of the latter, as soon as the military exercises stop, the African military's capabilities degrade. Professional education, on the other hand, has a cumulative effect over time. Knowing this, the U.S. brings other nations' military leaders to U.S. schools.

Challenges Confronting the USG in Africa

Although AFRICOM is working to educate African military forces, AFRICOM is under-resourced. There are more opportunities for military engagement and security than there are resources. Because of this situation, the cultural style in AFRICOM has become doing more with less. AFRICOM is overcoming the financial limitations by working with other actors that have dollars, including other departments within the USG, the EU, NATO, France, UK, and potentially China. Other offices in the USG working on mitigating shocks in Africa are also under-resourced. The USG does not have infinite resources to hedge against all shocks. Sometimes a specific department may not be the best tool to respond, so it is important to realize what other tools need to go in the toolkit. With scarce resources, the USG has to decide whether to allocate their resources to prevention or response, to bilateral or multilateral organizations, to one African state over the other, etc.

Lack of resources is not the only issue facing U.S. agencies in Africa. The lack of infrastructure, high levels of corruption, and bureaucracy are other challenges encountered. USG activities follow laws that provide limitations to engage in military conflict with other nations, so departments are often forced to patchwork resources. In general, however, the USG will only be a supporting actor in the African context and never a lead as they are in other parts of the world. As engagements in Africa increase, the USG listens and learns from African partners. Some nations need minor assistance like training, equipment, mobility support, etc., while others need a generation of persistent engagement so that they can build the foundations before they can maintain their own security forces, as is the case in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo where military forces are not as professional and reliable.

The USG encourages professionalism in African military and, in 2011, assisted in training different African countries' militaries to respond to peacekeeping and counterterrorism missions. Increased professionalism among military officials then creates conditions for nonviolent political change. One example is Kenya's military. The USG was concerned that the military would be used as a tool to shape the presidential elections, but in both cases the military has stayed out of political turmoil. Another example is Malawi. When the government was transitioning, the military had opportunities to take over the government but it never did. Instead, the Malawian military swore to defend the constitution for the female president that stepped in.

Regional Blocs in Africa

Regional relationships are critical to reducing conflict. The DoD looks at Africa differently than other government agencies that work bilaterally. Although the DoD and AFRICOM conduct some bilateral agreements, the DoD recognized early on that most of the challenges confronting Africa are regional and trans-border issues. Part of the reason for these cross-border issues goes back to the 1814 Berlin Conference when the heads of European states drew borders across the continent without understanding what was happening on the ground. The DoD, therefore, takes a more regional approach to Africa. Somalia and Mali are examples of how conflicts can transcend the borders. In the case of Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda cobbled together forces to fight Somali militants. In Mali, regional cooperation is needed to defeat al Qaeda. The DoD understands the importance of regionalism, and engages with Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in Africa. Although there are eight RECs, the U.S. only engages with three: The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the East African Community (EAC), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). At this time, the U.S. only engages with these three because they meet the U.S.'s legal requirements.

Several regional blocs are developing military capability. Military capabilities among the regional blocs are growing at varying levels, and those with militaries that started off stronger might be seeing a decline in their military might. This is one of the challenges for the African Union (AU): how to improve capacity and coordination to respond to local and regional challenges. Most of these regional communities began as economic communities and the military is a byproduct. In the EAC, for example, the community is starting to take apart the boundaries of the Berlin Conference. Small countries can now have an economy that stretches beyond their borders. Military components will become a useful resource if the capacity can be built up.

Regional Security Architecture

In order to help build regional security architecture in Africa, the U.S. government is looking at the drivers of political instability in Africa and the current capacity of African national governments to respond to threats and mitigate risks. Regional stability in Africa is threatened by factors relating to politics, demography, equality, climate, and illicit activity.

It is important for the U.S. to understand stressors in Africa besides the traditional ones. If the USG understands them, then it is better positioned to identify at-risk populations. External factors like climate change and market forces exacerbate stressors and can have detrimental effects. For example, when there were droughts in Russia and China that disrupted food harvests, food-importing countries could not react. The role of extreme climate events can indirectly lead to conflict, as changing weather patterns can threaten food and water security. In addition, climate change can create conditions for political shocks and just-in-time intervention reduces our ability to mitigate the shocks. Frequent and local events can create regional problems and worldwide events.

Understanding why people fight and how regions destabilize is important to address future threats. The effects of climate change create pressure on global markets, agriculture, and access to resources. Normal seasons are not arriving in the way that they should be. In an interconnected world, globalized markets are a double-edged sword. The least resilient, or those that are net food importers, are exposed to the climate change threats to food exporting countries.

Building Resilience

Stability is important in economic growth and expansion. Climate change and shocks affect underserved populations that are removed from government support or justice systems. Populations need to adapt to the new normal and it is important for governments to have mechanisms for positive change. Africa faces a host of problems already, and adding on the effects of climate change could create a catalyst for conflict. Change is important but how it occurs and how militaries respond can help improve resilience. In general, all actors want to see more money go towards development and diplomacy, which would allow more success at the front end, and less need to provide defense.

The U.S. needs to encourage smart growth and development, and build resilience in communities. This is the only way to ensure rapid development. If not, climate change will only serve to intensify stressors. Can Africa be ready for that?

Data Collection and Sharing

Key to gaining a better understanding of the drivers of conflict is access to accurate, timely, and localized data for analysis. Not only could there be improved data sharing between government agencies, but the capacity of partner countries to collect their own data must be improved. Datasets such as the Armed Conflict Location and Event Dataset (ACLED) and the Social Conflict in Africa Database (SCAD) are shedding light on important policy topics, but researchers can also study the linkages between the absence of regular data sources or “black holes” and conflict.

It is the role of the intelligence community to synthesize sensitive data and present an abridged report to policymakers and military personnel. However, it is easy for policymakers and military personnel to become overwhelmed by the vast array of information that is available on innumerable topics. The academic community, meanwhile, struggles to make their research accessible to the policy community. There is a need for increased collaboration between policymakers, academics, and non-governmental organizations. In general, NGOs and academics work within different timeframes and different constraints than U.S. government actors. The processes of data collection, analysis, and findings would be better served if the academic community could analyze non-

sensitive information that is currently classified. This would reduce the media bias in current academic research and allow researchers to provide key takeaways for the policy community. Bringing together diverse stakeholders for similar conferences could leverage information sharing further.

There are many opportunities for researchers to harness new sources of information and pursue new avenues of research. Advancing our understanding of these topics can help the USG to better anticipate and/or respond to political shocks. Several key areas are:

- Use perception data to understand how people view their government, their current situation, and what they want to see in the future;
- Gather data about institutions in ungoverned spaces;
- Make use of big data, including “black holes” of data—trends in radio silence, for example, may signal episodes of conflict;
- Identify factors that are present at the time of political shocks;
- Identify which political shocks are most influential at driving conflict; and finally,
- Analyze how subnational, national, and international responses impact situations on the ground and how they impact each other.

These goals could be achieved by harnessing information sources that are not always connected. For instance, DoD might benefit from information gathered by academic researchers, who do field research that the DoD might not be able to conduct. Furthermore, African experts have insight into the complex realities of their home countries. Bringing together diverse actors can help bridge the divide between research and policy. Academics who look for macro trends but struggle to identify triggers must be more willing to provide policy prescriptions. Policymakers who need “rules of thumb” to guide quick decision-making must understand that a problem may have multiple solutions. NGOs can help by sometimes acting as an intermediary for academics and policymakers. Generally, NGOs conducting fieldwork on these issues are in much better touch with policymakers than academics and can help by dispersing new research. NGOs could also contribute to the study of these topics by submitting their data to a clearinghouse. This would allow diverse actors to gain a better understanding of aid and collaboration opportunities, while avoiding double counting.

Lastly, the DoD needs to do more to tap into expertise of academics that focus on issues that have yet to be incorporated into the centerpiece of DoD’s analysis. To aid African countries in responding to and preparing for shocks, partnerships among national and local governments, international NGOs, academics, armies, the private sector, and local organizations are important. The military, for example, should have army-to-army relations and encourage this form of partnership. The USG and Coast Guard can collaborate with coastal countries on issues related to piracy and maritime security. The private sector can help mitigate shocks through strategic investments and skilled workers. Partnering with international institutions like the African Union and various departments of the United Nations can enhance shock resistance. Support from academics and research and quantitative analysis is important to the policymakers. In the end, success depends on identifying barriers to collaboration between all stakeholders, including the private sector. One key question is how to remove barriers to business and channel the private sector to do positive things. Trade and investment could do some good, yet private investors are sometimes considered contractors instead of partners.

Political Situation in the U.S.

At the moment, policy decisions and budget pressures in the USG privilege prevention over response when dealing with African affairs. For the USG to improve at preventing conflict, it still needs to understand drivers of conflict and read the landscape better. Yet resources within the U.S. government, especially those pertaining to work in Africa, are limited. Federal budgets are inconsistent from one year to the next, so short-term projects are easier to implement than long-term projects. In addition, policy agendas may switch when administrations change,

as each government brings in different priorities. Programs like the Minerva Initiative can take a more long-term approach since they last for several years, but they are still subject to budget cuts. Although there are issues of resource constraints, sometimes disengagement can be just as costly, if not more so, than engagement. Overall, policymakers face a legal system and incentive structure that favors short-term over long-term objectives. This often leads to actions taken in the short-term that undermine long-term objectives such as pushing for elections in an unstable environment, supporting autocratic governments, and prioritizing short-term stability over long-term peace and stability.

Another chief barrier for tackling issues in Africa is the lack of cooperation and inter-agency collaboration in Washington, DC. Figuring out why agencies are not cooperating and taking steps to solve them can improve responses to shocks and lead to improved partnerships with numerous national governments in Africa. Unconventional departments within the U.S. government have technical, cultural and functional skills that are not always considered in defense, diplomacy, and development objectives. One recommendation is to bring together different federal organizations.

U.S. government agencies face various barriers to successful information sharing. Despite efforts to improve information sharing, U.S. government agencies are still prone to stovepipe information. Moreover, there are no mechanisms currently in place that proactively cycle through various regions to identify trends and potential sparks to conflict. Further research is needed to identify not just what causes a spark, but also determine what circumstances are the “tinder” that are more vulnerable to a spark. Research could be better leveraged to build a case for prioritizing long-term peace and stability efforts.

To enhance collaboration and cooperation, agencies could ask for and share information, like geospatial pictures. For example, the U.S. Corps of Engineers has been doing a lot of work on the African continent, but the data that they have collected are not available. Making these data more available for all agencies could dramatically improve the effectiveness of policies, projects, and plans, and decrease the amount of time spent by other agencies performing similar projects on the same groups of people as well as decrease the number of gaps from overlooking other groups of people.

Ongoing Challenges in Africa

Even though real improvements in governance have been made across the continent, many African governments remain weak and corruption is a problem. When engaging with different partners it is important to understand their motivations. The national governments in Africa are managing a huge basket of issues and U.S. strategic concerns and interest are not at the top of these governments’ lists. Instead, urgent concerns of the population have a tendency to crowd out long-term issues that are of concern to the international community. For instance, African national governments may be concerned with reducing poverty through giving people access to goods and services such as clean water, health, education, and energy. If the USG says that national governments need to democratize, the USG will need to explain why democratization is more important than poverty reduction. The inability to align interests can hinder partnerships and shock alleviation. In the case of land rights, approaching the issue as enhancing economic livelihoods as opposed to increasing agriculture productivity gains more traction. Rules of law had a harder time gaining traction but economic arguments are stronger with African countries’ national governments. Corruption is an issue where the USG needs to understand their partners’ motivations. For example, if treasury employees in a partner country are benefiting from corruption, then they are not interested in decreasing corruption. Sometimes if the USG stands firm behind their commitments and interests by implementing diplomatic sanctions or instruments to show their commitments, their partners might end up aligning with the USG. Yet in some cases, if the strategic interests are so misaligned, it may be best to walk away from unwilling partners. There is a growing influence of transnational threats that undermine governments and corrupt them. Most importantly, drivers of conflict will remain present if African governments cannot accelerate peace dividends, strong institutions, and good governance.

African military capabilities are very limited and the degree to which African military can engage in peace and stabilization is low. Some North African countries have more ability, but in Sub-Saharan Africa, most of the countries lack key capabilities. Many are overtaxed by existing conditions, like Nigeria.

Recent discoveries suggest that additional oil exports will flow out of Africa from countries like Ghana, Mozambique, and Liberia. Increasing number of resources will mitigate competition but will likely not drive major changes in U.S. oil imports. The countries that have recently gained access to oil are looking to avoid the fate of Nigeria, instead looking at Norway for best practices.

There are, however, positive trends. Growing regionalization is one of these trends. Member states of the AU are not likely to formally subordinate military personnel, but regional communities can operationalize responses to member countries. The AU is a key source of political legitimacy, but the international community fills in funding and military support gaps. Because of this, missions are reactive and do not necessarily have resources to tackle core issues.

Governments in Sub-Saharan African are unprepared to tackle the threats mentioned above. Many governments suffer from poor border security infrastructure and lack equipment and adequate training, adequate judicial framework, regional architecture, and regional intelligence sharing.

Some identifiable strategies for the USG are:

- Identify and isolate people on the ground who want to take the country in a positive direction;
- Create institutional structures that reward actors for positive public service;
- Develop African governments' capacity to collect data and incentivize trust and data-sharing between governments, which aligns with broader U.S. government goals of supporting open data;
- Link top-down and bottom-up interests such that international actors and local people work together to change the course of reluctant governments;
- Find ways to build resilience and promote good-governance;
- Continue to build judicial capacity and support judicial and law enforcement reforms;
- Support regional fusion centers that facilitate intelligence-sharing;
- Support the establishment of regional transportation hubs; and finally,
- Continue to work with regional trade organizations to address security issues.

There are two potential paths for Africa. If African countries can harness economic growth for resources, and enshrine good governance and open business, they will rise. But there remain many threats that could undermine Africa's potential. Outside actors cannot determine the fate of Africa but they can provide assistance targeted to capable and willing partners, foster stability, and encourage economic growth. By building resilience and resolving many of the conflicts between short-term and long-term objectives, the USG and other international actors can increase the limits of what shocks partner countries can absorb.

Speaker Biographies

Dr. K. Jun Bando's interdisciplinary professional experience includes work in natural resource conservation, international affairs, and national security. As the Special Advisor to the Commander, U.S. Africa Command, Dr. Bando is charged with conducting independent, cross-cutting analysis to support the development of innovative solutions to particularly sensitive and complex strategic, operational, and budgetary issues. She also assists with outreach, the development of strategic partnerships, and Combatant Commander public communications. Previous to joining the U.S. Africa Command staff in late 2009, Jun served with the U.S. Department of State. As the Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, she guided the execution of improvements in the operational effectiveness of a regional bureau responsible for U.S. relations with 48 Sub-Saharan African countries and the African Union. From 2007-2009, she served as a Foreign Affairs Officer in the Bureau of African Affairs, where she held responsibilities for the coordination of U.S. policy efforts to address African maritime security challenges, including piracy in the Horn of Africa, and issues associated with the establishment of the U.S. Africa Command. Prior to joining the Africa Bureau, she served as the primary advisor to the Department of State on environment, science, technology, and health issues in the Americas. Before joining the U.S. Government, Dr. Bando held adjunct faculty positions at the University of San Francisco and San Jose State University and was a post-doctoral researcher at the University of California-Davis Genomic Variation Laboratory. She holds a PhD in Ecology from the University of California-Davis and a BS in Environmental Studies from San Jose State University. She is a former American Association for the Advancement of Science Fellow and Switzer Environmental Fellow.

Ms. Cynthia Brady is a Senior Conflict Advisor with USAID's Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance in the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation (DCHA/CMM). She is the Agency's technical lead on natural resources and conflict. Her recent applied research has focused on climate change, water resources, and food security. Ms. Brady also leads CMM's Field Support Team, with responsibility for managing the office's direct support for USAID's overseas missions. Ms. Brady's primary responsibilities include identifying and analyzing sources of conflict and instability, supporting early responses to address the causes and consequences of fragility and violent conflict, and integrating conflict mitigation and management into USAID's analyses, strategies, and programs. Previously, Ms. Brady served as a Foreign Affairs Officer with the U.S. Department of State. She has also worked for the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Ms. Brady holds a MA in International Affairs from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University. She also received a BA in Political Science from Denison University.

Dr. Nancy E. Brune is a Senior Policy Analyst at Sandia National Laboratories where she works on issues of natural security, energy security, the water-energy-food-security nexus, climate change-human impacts, and regional security. She is also a Non-Resident Senior Fellow at the Center for a New American Security. Dr. Brune has consulted for the Harvard School of Public Health, the World Bank, JPMorgan Chase, and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation on issues of international development, trade and investment, market reforms, governance and globalization, and human security. Her work has appeared in the Journal of Energy Security, Americas Quarterly, IMF Staff Papers, Social Science and Medicine, and World Politics Review. She has worked and traveled in Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America. Dr. Brune served as part of the National Democratic Institute's election monitoring team in Nigeria in 2011. Dr. Brune received her PhD from Yale University and her Master of Public Policy and BA degrees from Harvard University.

Dr. Kent Hughes Butts is a faculty member in the Department of Homeland Security at Pennsylvania State University, Harrisburg and was formerly the Professor of Political Military Strategy and the Director of the National Security Issues Group at the Center for Strategic Leadership at the U.S. Army War College. His group leads the Center's Combatant Command support efforts. He is a retired Army officer and was United States Defense and Army Attaché and Security Assistance Officer in Uganda, Tanzania, and Malawi. Dr. Butts has organized and conducted international conferences, workshops, or games on environmental security in the Middle East, Europe, Asia, and Latin America. He has twice testified before Congress on the topic of Climate Change and Security. He is co-author of the book, *Geopolitics of Southern Africa: South Africa as Regional Superpower*, and co-editor of the books, *Economics and National Security: the Case of China* and *Sustainability and National Security*.

Ms. Caitriona Dowd is Senior Researcher for the Armed Conflict Location & Event Dataset (ACLED), and a PhD candidate in Geography in Trinity College Dublin, Ireland. Her PhD research centers on Islamist violence in Sub-Saharan Africa, with a particular focus on the East and West African case studies of Kenya, Nigeria, Somalia, and emerging dynamics in the Sahel. Caitriona holds an MSc in Development Studies from the London School of Economics, where her research focused on civilian vulnerability to violence in conflict-affected contexts, and has worked on humanitarian aid programming for Kenya, Uganda, and Somalia.

Ms. Deborah Espinosa is a senior lawyer and land tenure specialist with the international NGO, Landesa Rural Development Institute, which helps to secure land rights for the world's rural poor. She has expertise in land tenure policy, legal, and regulatory reform; land conflicts and conflict management in both formal and informal dispute resolution systems; and women's access and rights to land. Ms. Espinosa has performed rural fieldwork to understand customary laws and institutions governing land relations for purposes of designing new land policy, legislation, regulations, and interventions. She has assessed a variety of proposed and existing land laws, land and forest conflicts, dispute resolution mechanisms, and government-sponsored land programs. Ms. Espinosa has managed projects for USAID and other organizations related to land tenure and dispute resolution, access to customary justice, and legal aid in Tanzania, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, India, and Russia, among others.

Dr. Michael Findley is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Government at University of Texas at Austin. His research addresses civil wars, terrorism, international relations, and development. He has developed geomapping solutions that have been used by the World Bank, African Development Bank, Malawi Government, the International Aid Transparency Initiative, and AidData, among others. He has worked with UNICEF Uganda to evaluate crowdsourcing technologies and works with Ugandan NGO networks to evaluate NGO transparency and effectiveness. His scholarly research employs field experiments, statistical and computational models, and some interviews. He conducts ongoing fieldwork in Uganda, South Africa, and Malawi. Dr. Findley's publications appear in the *American Journal of Political Science*, *Journal of Politics*, *International Studies Quarterly*, *British Journal of Political Science*, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *Journal of Peace Research*, *Public Choice*, *Complexity*, *Minnesota Law Review*, and *World Development*, among others. He is a principal investigator for AidData and a core researcher on the Strauss Center's Climate Change and African Political Stability research team.

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This material is based upon work supported by, or in part by, the U.S. Army Research Office grant number W911NF-09-1-0077 under the Minerva Initiative of the U.S. Department of Defense.