

## In Africa: A Pragmatic Assessment

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### Chapter I

The Soviet Union and the United States have been at verbal, even occasionally physical, loggerheads in Africa over their respective policies for just over a quarter century. The policy of the United States toward the USSR was designed following the extraordinary expansion of Russia's effective borders towards western Europe after the end of World War II. That policy, called *containment*, was intended to restrain any further extension of the Soviet military presence beyond Eastern Europe. Obviously, such a containment policy was also intended to keep the Soviet Union out of Africa and other areas of the Third World; and, it was successful during those years when the Soviets were digesting their gains of WW II and making their control of Eastern Europe effective, as well as when their attention was directed to Asia and Korea in the early 1950s.

However, with the beginning of the end of traditional imperialism in Africa in the mid 1950s — Ghana was first, becoming independent in 1957 — and with the successes of the US and its allies holding the line in western Europe, Russian leadership began to look to more distant horizons for expansion of their interests. It was an American policy misadventure in dealing with President Nasser of Egypt in 1955-56 and a mis-reading of the intentions of its allies — Britain, France, and Israel — that opened the door for the first important Soviet entry into African affairs. The Soviet Union replaced the United States as the primary economic sponsor of Egypt (UAR) and the Aswan Dam project; subsequently, Russia began a programme that was to lead them to become the military sponsor of much of Arab Africa and, eventually, in the 1970s, of Africa south of the Sahara.

It was a fundamental precept of US policy that the introduction of Soviet arms into a country would lead inevitably to Soviet advisors and technicians, and eventually to Soviet domination. In later years this policy thesis was to be expanded to include any intervention in Africa by the Soviet Union or any of its client states, like the German Democratic Republic or Cuba.

It is to this latter issue that this paper is directed; in Africa, is there evidence to support the US position about Soviet arms and eventual domination? Or, on the contrary, is there evidence that in the controlled circumstances of this 25 year period with a generally alert US, a newly independent and anti-colonial Africa, and repetitive Soviet behaviour patterns that are identifiable, that the Soviet assistance to Arab and Black Africa, while intended to be self-serving, has also been a major force for independence from colonial rule for a number of states without Soviet domination in the longer term?

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### Chapter II

Until the decade of the 1960s, Africa was not an independent area of concern in US foreign policy, though US contacts with Africa had been periodic from the years of the slave trade to the time of the Barbary pirates, from its formal relations with the returned slaves in Liberia to its belated lionizing of the Emperor of Ethiopia in the modern era. Most American interests in Africa, however, were managed as a function of its relationships with Africa's primary colonial powers, Great Britain, France, and Portugal, in southern Africa.<sup>2</sup>

In economic and political matters, however, this distance that the US kept itself from African affairs did not mean that the US was unprepared to take action in its own interest, including the use of military force, as in Jefferson's day with the pirates or a modern rescue mission to "Stanleyville" in 1964.<sup>3</sup> The US was always prepared, in fact, to be pragmatic, even though there were times when its cloudy idealism appeared, as reflected in President Franklin Roosevelt's half-formed ideas about the end of imperialism written in the latter years of WW II.<sup>4</sup>

The failure of the victorious Allied powers to maintain a sound working relationship after 1945 led to the emergence of political conflict in Europe — a cold war — that eventually spread to Africa. Because of its primary military, political and economic interests, Europe's recovery became the centre-piece of the American policy of containment. Thus, the US came naturally and logically to support its European allies in their subsequent struggles with their colonies in Africa. By the beginning of President Eisenhower's second term, however, profound changes had begun to take place in Soviet policy and revolutionary changes were taking place simultaneously in Africa.

An official of the US could say a decade later that "a strong, free and friendly Africa is extremely important to United States' security"<sup>5</sup>, but US policy decisions in that decade were not particularly consistent, nor were they in any way responsible for the outburst of independence that occurred in Africa. First, the failure of US policy in the Middle East had led to the beginning of a Soviet presence in African when they replaced the West as the economic and military sponsor for Egypt in its struggles. The containment policy had been breached by the successful Soviet leap across a line so carefully drawn across southern Europe. In West Africa, several states had become independent and the struggle against traditional imperialism was intensified. The Soviet Union, alert to the opportunities of the moment, was to orchestrate a careful campaign of support for the "liberation" movements, beginning in Egypt in 1956, for the next 25 years. That campaign reached across the length and breadth of Africa, from Egypt to South Africa, from Nigeria to Ethiopia. The threat of a direct US-Soviet confrontation in Angola in 1975 was quickly aborted only because the American Congress forbade further US participation there. That reaction was in part the result of the Indochina War and the domestic political scandals called "Watergate". The US thereby surrendered the field to the Soviet-Cuban adventures and the American Secretary of State warned of tragedy to come as Soviet influence spread to fifteen African states.

The brief interest of the Carter administration, during the tenure of UN Ambassador Andrew Young, was to quicken American interests in Africa once again. It was also to increase the hopes of many Africans that the US would make a positive contribution toward freedom for the remaining colonial territories, and for economic assistance for the stagnating development programmes in much of Africa. The economic importance of Africa, especially oil-rich countries like Nigeria, was evident

by this time to most American leaders.

The relations of the Soviet Union with newly independent Africa did not run smoothly either, though for different reasons; the extent of the influence of the USSR, and its indirect influence through Cuban and East European missions reached its greatest growth during the decade of the 1970s, during the Ford and Carter administrations. The lament of US policy leaders that the new African leaders would be unable to handle the awesome Soviet political, military and potential economic penetration fell on deaf ears in Africa. Some African leaders were insulted at the implicit condescension in such US remarks; one called it "an insult to the intelligence of African leaders".<sup>6</sup>

In 1977, President Carter declared that the United States would not become militarily involved in any conflict in Africa simply because the Russians were there. That policy was part of his attempt to pursue the policy of "detente", then so prominent; it was also designed to limit the level of arms shipments to Third World countries. It is apparent that such a policy which reduced the risk of any direct confrontation with the US, also presented opportunities to the Soviet Union if it chose to pursue them. That is exactly the choice they made and a review of their adventures is revealing.

### Chapter III

The Soviet Union has had, at one time or another, what has been described as considerable influence in Egypt, the Sudan, Somalia, Guinea, Ghana and Uganda, among other states in Africa. In each case the USSR lost the foothold. Further, events in Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea and the Central African Republic in recent years suggest a continuing deterioration of Soviet influence in Africa.

Certainly, the USSR has initiated a formal programme to gain greater military, economic or political influence in at least twenty-two states in Africa, including the two efforts in Nigeria and Mali, as shown in the Table below. The efforts began in Egypt in 1955 and continue today. Their goal in every case has been to secure greater influence, to promote the development of friendly and if possible "communist" governments, to develop a military client and, where appropriate, to build or make use of port facilities for the new Soviet "blue sea" navy.

In seven cases, the Soviet Union has been expelled for interfering in the domestic affairs of the host state or overstaying their welcome, beginning in Ghana in 1960 and most recently in 1977 in Somalia. The Soviet difficulty in Somalia came after Russia attempted to befriend both sides in the Somalia-Ethiopian war. In five additional states the Soviets departed when they failed to secure their policy goal, as in Nigeria in 1961, or when the Soviet connection was disrupted, as in Uganda in 1979 following the over-throw of the Amin government.

Thus, today the Soviet Union and its client states are directly involved in an effort to expand their influence in ten African states, as shown on the Table and map below.

Two countries in Africa today have the preponderance of Russian or Russian-sponsored military and civilian personnel, Angola and Ethiopia; and they are far from being viewed as Soviet puppets by African observers. The continuing refusal of the United States to recognise Angola only seems to serve to keep Angola close to the Soviets, a result contrary to US policy. Further, Soviet personnel are in Africa either

at the invitation of the legitimate governments or in support of a "liberation" movement formally recognised by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). Thus, it is difficult to logically criticise Soviet behaviour or to impress African or other Third World states with US policy in Africa when the actions they have taken *vis a vis* the Soviet Union were freely taken.

African leaders and writers are quite aware of Soviet aims and adventures in Africa; their motivations are a mixture of geo-political, strategic and ideological considerations. The USSR continues to seize opportunities when they arise in Zimbabwe, Namibia and elsewhere, and even to switch sides from Somalia to Ethiopia as they dispense their military aid in pursuit of policy objectives.<sup>7</sup> In one of David Albright's works in 1978, "The USSR And Africa: Soviet Policy", he pointed out that the Soviet Union does not have a grand design for Africa and the Soviets do not really anticipate any genuine "communist" breakthroughs in Africa, but however expect to continue their efforts to take advantage of whatever openings develop.<sup>8</sup> One might also conclude, as the evidence below suggests, that if the Soviets do indeed have a grand strategy, then the implementation of that strategy during the last 25 years has been one of their greatest failures, as shown in the Figure below.

David Newson suggests that the west really has little to fear from directly competing with the Soviet Union on issues of importance to Africa.

The Soviets do not provide a market for most African goods; they are not part of the world economic system; not members of the IMF; they have no multilateral companies to spread technology; their rouble is not convertible. On balance, I believe that these policies have resulted in our being in a stronger position vis-a-vis the African continent than the Soviet and other communist states have achieved with their MIG and Kalashnikov-bearing troops.<sup>9</sup>

The Soviet inability to recognise the real meaning of the independence of the African states and the aspirations of their peoples and leaders have been the root cause of the continuing record of Soviet failure in Africa.

Nevertheless, some reflection on the map indicates the degree of Soviet persistence over the years in their effort to gain a significant foothold, if not control over the countries that have emerged on the west coast of Africa, excluding, only, most of the former French colonies which remained close to France.

The same pattern is apparent on the east coast of Africa as well, stretching from Egypt in the north to Mozambique in the south, excluding only Tanzania where the Chinese influence was very strong. The rate of failure is certainly over fifty percent, as evidenced in the Table below, and if one also excludes the very independent governments like Algeria from the client state list, the failure rate is even larger. Military or naval bases have been achieved in north, west and east Africa; however, short of a general war between the US and the USSR, it is difficult to see how these bases serve any co-ordinated programme to the serious disadvantage of the United States.

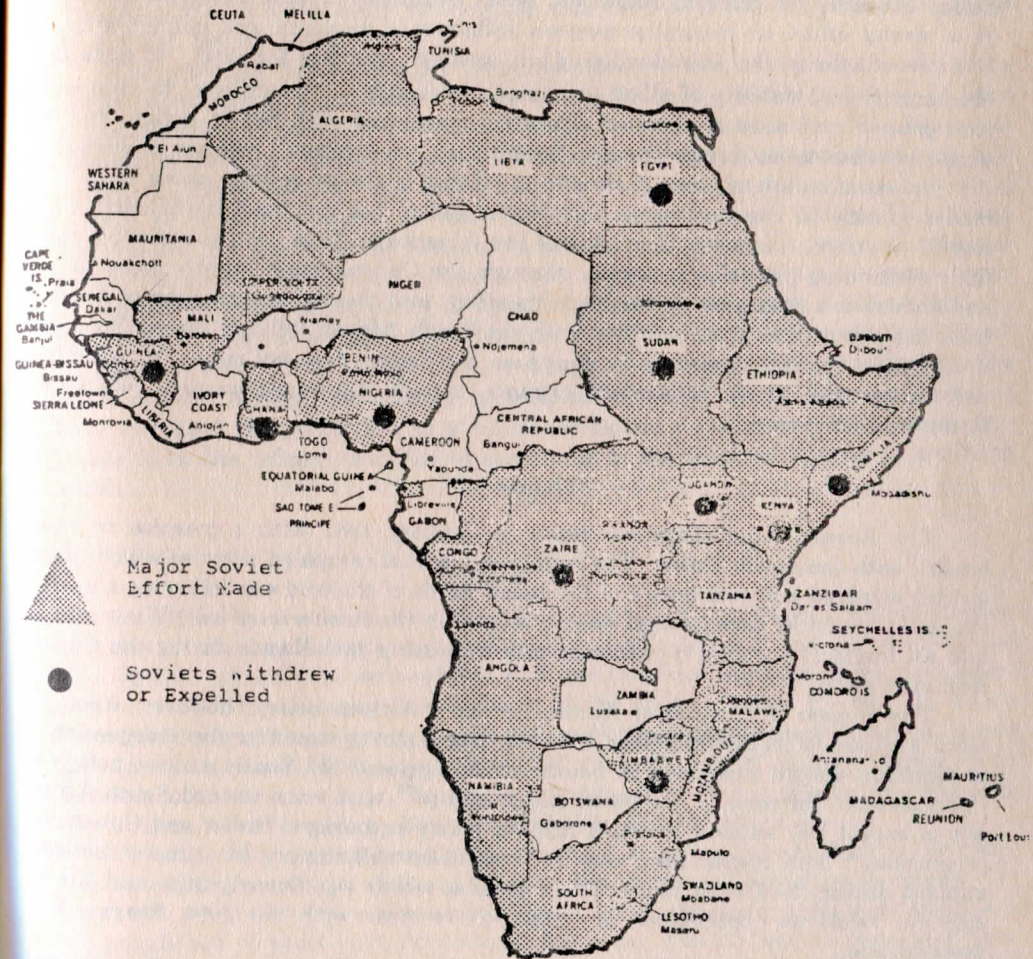
On the other hand, it can be argued that the Soviet Union's assistance to countries, including Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, have strengthened the nation-building process during their civil or external wars and, in the latter cases, directly contributed to the wars of liberation that led to independence. Further, the continuing military support of the Soviet Union for the rebels in South Africa through the frontline states can also be classified as promoting the independence of a people held in bondage contrary to the policy of the United States and the United Nations General Assembly.

TABLE 1

SOVIET ADVENTURES IN AFRICA

Arrival-Departure	Country	Soviet Goal*	Results
1955-72	Egypt	Outflank Baghdad Pact Naval facilities	Expelled for limiting support
1956-	Mozambique**	Weaken Chinese influence; naval bases	Base request refused
1957-61	Nigeria	Sought political and military influence	Soviets denounced by government
1958-60	Ghana	Naval base facilities	Socialism experiment collapsed
1958-68	Mali	Soviet influence	Military coup
1959-67	Guinea	Naval bases	Military aid halted; port request rejected
1960-	Algeria	Counter western influence; ports	Close relationship, Algeria very independent
1960-62	Congo-Zaire	Support anti-west Lumumba government	Western faction victorious; Lumumba killed
1961-	Congo-Braz.	Central African influence	Close political and military relationship
1963-77	Somalia	Ports, military client	Expelled over Russian contact with Ethiopia
1964-	Angola***	Military base, client	Limited to refueling
1965-77	Sudan	Military bases	Expelled for interfering
1965-80	Zimbabwe	Support liberation; Southern African client	Military support ended; failed to gain client
1965-66	Kenya	Naval base	Facilities refused
1967-77	Nigeria	Arms during Civil War	Expelled for interfering
1968-	Equat. Guinea***	Port facilities, client	Naval port developed
1970-	Mali	Military client	Limited relationship
1971-79	Uganda	Military client	Amin ousted in civil war
1973-	Libya**	Military & Naval base	Very independent
1976-	Benin	Port facilities	Naval station support
1976-	Ethiopia***	Military client; OAU	Extensive Cuban influence
1976-	Namibia-South Africa	Revolutionary change	Ongoing support for frontline forces

\* Common goal to seek Soviet political influence, encourage Marxist regimes  
 \*\* East Germany  
 \*\*\* Cuba



To most enlightened African leaders, it is quite clear that the Soviet Union too has moved from being a revolutionary state to being an imperialist one with imperialist ambitions. When Soviet interests are at risk, principle never seems to stand in the way of negotiations; as a result Soviet policy towards Africa becomes more and more pragmatic.

Their longer term objectives include 1) the obvious desire of Russia to maintain a presence in Africa consonant with their newfound global role: such a presence includes concerns for mineral resources, naval facilities and communication facilities; 2) a strong effort to neutralise western influence in economic and military affairs; 3) to prevent the further introduction of any western military forces; 4) to enhance the security and stability of allied or client states; 5) to continue to support insurgencies and wars of national liberation consistent with Soviet policy; and 6) where possible to encourage the development of "communist" regimes in Africa.

Any examination of these goals and the Table of Soviet activity above leads the reader quickly to the conclusion that Soviet policy has not been particularly successful in Africa, anymore than that of the Americans. It is even conceivable that their continuing presence in Angola through the Cubans could rapidly come to an end if there is a resolution of the Namibia affair, and thereby a separation of Angola from the potential of direct conflict with the South African military forces. Further, in any case, the rate of success as shown on the Figure does not seem to warrant any exaggerated alarm in western capitals, though continued western vigilance is certainly necessary.

#### Chapter IV

The Reagan Administration began in January 1981 with a promise to "get tough" with the Soviet Union. The fulfillment of that campaign promise which came quickly signaled a formal return to the harsh words of the cold war following a nearly successful policy of detente that was consumed in the firestorm called "Watergate", and an ineffective policy of openness and friendship with Russia during the Carter Administration.

The success of the Carter Administration's African policy, however, stood in stark contrast to its Soviet policy. The US took a strong stand for the independence of Namibia against apartheid in South Africa, opposed the South African policy of "bantustans" for each of the black ethnic groups<sup>13</sup>, and even warned South Africa not to expect US support if South African policy encouraged Soviet and Cuban intervention.<sup>14</sup> Anti-communism was an insufficient rallying cry to attract American support during the Carter years. These policies which significantly improved US - African relations experienced an apparent reversal with the new Reagan Administration.

A change in style, to make it clear to the Soviet Union that the US would not tolerate any continued use of force by the Soviet Union where American interests were concerned in the Third World, was probably desirable; a policy designed to return both countries to the negotiating table where they had been when the self-destruction of the Nixon Administration began in the summer 1973. President Reagan and his close supporters, however, had been critical of that policy of detente and negotiations and were personally disposed to see the Soviet Union as the basis of much of the evil in the world. As a result, they carried a logical policy of attempting to curtail Soviet adventurism in the Third World to the illogical extreme of describing all Soviet behaviour and attempts to gain influence there as dangerous to the security of the world.

In Africa, the gains of the Carter years in both goodwill and progress were diminished as the new US leaders moved closer to the South African government again in a new policy called "constructive engagement". Arguments about South Africa's contributions to the Allied cause during WW II were heard again in the US, but they were rejected in the Third World; in fact, such arguments clearly ignored the contributions of other Africans who also fought against the Germans. Further, the arguments about the US dependence on South African mineral resources was revived by the Reagan Administration ignoring the profound and fundamental changes in the US dependency relationship with the rest of Africa that has developed in the last twenty years.

The attempts by the Reagan Administration to link the presence of Cuban troops in Angola to a settlement of the Namibian independence question<sup>15</sup> have caused friends and foe alike in Africa to begin to doubt America's commitment to freedom in southern Africa. Nigerian leaders, among the most important and outspoken in Africa, consider any support for South Africa, even over the question of Angola, to be tantamount to an American alliance with South Africa. Thus many Africans see the results of the Reagan Administration policy of a return to cold war rhetoric as an anti-African policy insofar as it enhances a South African government committed to a continuing policy of apartheid; further, that such a policy seems to have delayed independence for Namibia and made freedom for the majority of South Africans an even more distant hope. Perhaps, most importantly, contrary to the policy of most African nations and contrary to US policy, that policy also seems to have increased the probability of a continued Soviet presence in Africa, as it continues to be the primary supplier of assistance to the freedom fighters in southern Africa.

#### Chapter V

It seems apparent then that the preoccupation of the Reagan Administration with the US-Russian struggle and its attempts to exclude the Soviet Union and Cuba from African affairs is at serious odds with the priorities established by the leadership of most African states, those friendly to the west included. Current US policy toward Africa is not sensitive to the dynamics of change taking place in Africa, nor to the almost universal African concern to end minority rule in southern Africa — in Namibia and in South Africa. To ignore this dynamic, since it affects the behaviour of all Africa's leaders, is to have no workable African policy.

Although Moscow has become the principal arms supplier to Africa, the complexities of African politics continue to shape the contours of Soviet involvement. According to Alvin Rubinstein, the only "prizes" of super-power rivalry in Africa are the acquisition of short-term advantages. Likewise, Robert Legvold concluded that the unpredictable African political environment has afforded the Russians only occasional transitory successes. Despite advances and limited success by Moscow, Africa remains largely under residual, if not active, western influence.<sup>17</sup> Moscow on several occasions has abandoned its earlier goals of rolling back the west in Africa, in favour of a more conservative strategy of seizing upon targets of opportunity. Even Moscow's access to strategic facilities can be considered more an outgrowth of broader and closer Soviet-African ties, a reflection of individual African leaders' predispositions, rather than a mark of Soviet influence.

Further, the revived US policy concerning access to vital, scarce mineral resources which has led the US to establish closer relations with the South African govern-

ment and more distant relations with the independent states of black Africa is at odds with the facts about the location of resources in Africa and is a continuing contradiction in America's professed concern about freedom in general. The US has a far greater long term dependence on mineral resources from African countries other than South Africa; hence, a policy that links the US to South Africa in any meaningful or longer term way is likely to be counter-productive to the interests of the United States in Africa.

Finally, majority rule in South Africa could very well limit any further penetration of Africa by the Soviet Union, or its proxies Cuba and the German Democratic Republic, and reduce the power of the radical movements in Africa. Most of the African countries have long term needs that cannot or have not been met by the Soviet Union; in fact, most African leaders recognise that their development is inextricably linked to the west, and in particular to the technology available from the United States. The west alone is able to help the African states to develop their economies, they alone have the technology and capital; thus the United States has a fundamental advantage over the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, the African countries cannot, in most cases, link their country to the US or to the west when the west remains close to an unacceptable minority-ruled government in South Africa.

Unfortunately, at least through the mid-1980s, it appears likely that the US, under President Reagan's leadership, is more likely to see the US-African relationship in terms of US-Soviet relations, or cold war terms. Africa can only lose with the continuation of such a policy relationship. Perhaps, in time, American policy will be determined more by its fundamental and historical concern for freedom and human rights, and not based so completely on questionable and transient issues of mineral resources or Cuban troops in Angola or Ethiopia.

Until that day arrives, Africans who are immediately concerned about freedom in southern Africa may find it necessary to continue to depend on Soviet and Cuban military support in their struggle for independence. They recognise that a Soviet presence in Africa in the longer term is not desirable, and, in fact, not likely to continue once independence is finally achieved. They note as evidence the patterns shown on the map of Soviet interventionary efforts in Africa since 1955. In an objective discussion, many African leaders might concede that a vigilant, free and strong United States closely watching Soviet activity in Africa makes it possible for a single country like Egypt or Ghana to expel the Russian or Cuban forces and to have them leave voluntarily when the invitation is withdrawn. They know from experience that the Russians will try again somewhere else to gain bases for their blue sea navy, resources and influence; the Africans do not delude themselves about the rapacious potential of any of the great powers, including the Soviet Union. Certainly, they have a history of experience from which they should have learned about great power behaviour. In the quest for freedom, however, they, like Churchill, may well make a pact with the 'devil' in the interests of freedom.

<sup>1</sup> The premise for this article was drawn from a conclusion of Ekido Macaulay in his dissertation, "United States Foreign Policy Towards Nigeria and the Ivory Coast 1975-1981: A Comparative Case Study of Power and Diplomacy."

<sup>2</sup> A. Nielsen, *The Great Powers and Africa*. New York; Praeger, 1969: 245.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Hotstadter, *The American Tradition*. New York; Knopf, 1962: 348-9.

<sup>4</sup> George Kennan, "The Sources of Soviet Conduct." *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 25, ¶4 (July, 1947): 566-582.

<sup>5</sup> Nielsen, p. 263.

<sup>6</sup> George Kennan, *The Cloud of Danger*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1977: 205.

<sup>7</sup> Cyrus Vance, hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Africa, 95th Congress, CIS, May 12, 1978; 2-35.

<sup>8</sup> David Albright, "The USSR and Africa." *Problems of Communism*, Vol. 27 (Jan, 1978): 31.

<sup>9</sup> David Newsom, "America Engulfed." *Foreign Policy*, Summer, 1981.

<sup>10</sup> For detailed exposition see the following: Robert Price, *US Foreign Policy in Sub-Saharan Africa: National Interest and Global Strategy*. Berkley: Institute of International Studies, 1978:129; Weinstein and Henrisken, *Soviet and Chinese Aid to African Nations*. New York: Praeger, 1980:49; Heldman, *The USSR and Africa; Foreign Policy Under Khrushchev*. New York: Praeger, 1981:77; Central Intelligence Agency, *Communist Aid to the less Developed countries of the Free world*. 1976, ER77-10296 (Washington, D.C. August, 1977): 9; Crocker, "The African Setting" In *The Horn of Africa* (Washington, D.C.: The Washington Review of Strategic and International Studies, Special Supplement, May, 1978):19; Milene, *The Soviet Union and Africa: The History of the Soviet Involvement*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1980:72; Peleg, "Arms Supply to the Third-World: Models and Explanations." *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 15 ¶1 1977: 98-103; Legum, "The African Environment." *Problems of Communism*, Vol. 27 (Jan-Feb, 1978): 19; Legvold, "The Super Rivals: Conflict in the Third World." *Foreign Affairs* 57, ¶4 (Spring, 1979):755-78 and "Moscow's Changing View of Africa's Revolutionary Regimes." *Africa Report*, Vol. 14, Nos. 3-4 (March-April, 1969): 12; Rubenstein, "The Soviet Union's Imperial Game in Africa". *Optima*, 26, ¶3 (1977): 117; "Somalia expels the Soviets." *Washington Post*, Feb. 12, 1978: 1-2; "Soviets Held Losing Guinea Base Access." *Los Angeles Times*, May 31, 1978: 12.

<sup>11</sup> Alvin Rubenstein, "The Soviet Union's Imperial Game in Africa." *Optima* 26, ¶3 1977:117.

<sup>12</sup> Eric Weise, "Mr. 'X', Russia, and Vietnam." *Modern Age*, Vol. 19, ¶4 Fall, 1975:397-409.

<sup>13</sup> Walter Mondale, "Africa and US Shared Value." Department of State Current Policy, 203 (July 22, 1980) 1-5.

<sup>14</sup> William Schaufele, "US Relations with Southern Africa." *Department of State Bulletin*, Vol. XXVI, ¶1976 (May 9, 1977): 467.

<sup>15</sup> Richard Deutsch, "Reagan's African Policy." *Africa Report*, (March, 1981); 4-6.

<sup>16</sup> Alvin Rubenstein, "The Soviet Union's Imperial Game in Africa." *Optima* 26, ¶3 (1977) p; 117.

<sup>17</sup> Robert Legvold, "The Super Rivals: Conflict in the Third World." *Foreign Affairs*, 57, ¶4 (Spring, 1979): 755-78.

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## ECONOMY AND GOVERNMENTAL DISORDER IN GHANA

K. Osei-Hwedie

### INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on the background to the political instability<sup>1</sup> in Ghana which has led to the fall of three civilian governments and several coup attempts. The main objective is to demonstrate that the economy and its effects on major sections of the population are the primary factors in political instability. In this respect, problems such as concentration of administration, duplication of efforts, corruption of government officials, bribery, nepotism, incompetency and selfishness, which are often given as the causes of political instability, are secondary, and manifest through the poor performance of the Ghanaian economy.

The paper argues that the linkage between economics and politics has much to do with the re-occurrence of coups in Ghana. It is the ability of those in power to minimise socio-economic hardships which sets the pace and determines the life-span of governments.

Finally, the paper also deals with the linkage between the economy and its legacy of inequality that helps to translate political conflicts into class struggles and the realignment of socio-economic groupings which eventually bring about coups.

Ghana is a particularly good case to examine when trying to answer questions about political instability in Africa and the developing world generally. On March 6, 1957, Ghana became the first independent black African country after 113 years of colonial rule. Indications were that Ghana had a great promise for rapid development. Economically, the country was in good standing; the sale of cocoa had generated large reserves of foreign exchange; it had a large literate population and a good infrastructure. Politically, the country adopted a parliamentary form of government with the party in power having seemingly widespread support and consensus. In addition, there was a relatively low level of regional or ethnic conflict. From the conventional standpoint, Ghana had all the characteristics or ingredients for modernising successfully. From another standpoint, Ghana held great promises; it was the champion of anti-colonial and anti-imperial struggle; its leaders had a broad pan-African outlook; and it embarked upon a socialist experiment, after 1961, which the international left watched with hopeful eyes. But the warning signs of economic, political and social troubles were there and had been there for a long time for anyone who wanted to recognise and heed them:<sup>2</sup>

In any case, Ghana's vision as black Africa's "shining star" was shattered in 1966 when the ruling government of Nkrumah was overthrown in a military coup. The National Liberation Council (NLC), the new military government, ruled until 1969 and handed over power to a civilian government with Dr. K.A. Busia as the Prime Minister. In January 1972, Busia's government was overthrown and the National Redemption Council (NRC), formed by the armed forces, became the new government. Its name was later changed to the Supreme Military Council (SMC). The head of this council was overthrown in September 1978 and replaced by another coup which established the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) led by Flight Lieutenant Rawlings. On September 24, 1979, power was passed from the military to the civilian government of Dr. Hilla Limann and the

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