

January Aff Case

We affirm.

Schwartz 21 Stephen M. Schwartz, (First US ambassador to Somaliland since 1991) Reports from October 8 2021, Foreign Policy Research Institute, The African Union Should Resolve Somaliland's Status, <https://www.fpri.org/article/2021/11/the-african-union-should-resolve-somalilands-status/> ARW:// 12/12/24

The African Union took up the issue in 2005 by sending a fact-finding mission to Somaliland. **The official summary of its findings is very favorable towards Somaliland's claims, asserting, "Somaliland's search for recognition [is] historically unique and self-justified in African political history," and it urges the AU to take up the issue** with the governments in Mogadishu and Hargeisa without delay. The African Union did not act on that report and has played little role since then. Now, 16 years later, it is the time for the African Union to act. The United Nations is the world's preeminent forum on the issue of national sovereignty, by its decision to accord or deny membership to a petitioning state. Applicants need a favorable vote from the Security Council and the support of two-thirds of the General Assembly. **Besides considering their own interests and the merits of the case presented, countries look to the position of the relevant regional body, in this case the African Union. If accepted into the African Union or even with a favorable recommendation, Somaliland would probably be allowed to join the United Nations; without the AU's endorsement, it is unlikely to gain membership.** China could be expected to thwart Somaliland's admission as long as it maintains close ties to Taiwan, but this is a matter for Somaliland to manage. To determine whether the United Nations should even consider Somaliland's case, the African Union should do four things to clarify the issue: 1. Organize a new fact-finding mission to familiarize African leaders and officials with the current situation in Somaliland. 2. Give the Federal Government of Somalia a deadline by which to begin AU-sponsored negotiations with the Republic of Somaliland over its status and the relationship between the two entities. 3. Lead the Somalia-Somaliland negotiations and require the parties to participate in good faith and agree on an outcome by a date certain. 4. Announce that if the parties fail to reach an agreement the African Union will make public its views on which party was more responsible for the breakdown and make a recommendation to the Assembly of the African Union on next steps.

Contention One is Economic Resilience

Unfortunately, Somaliland's lack of diplomatic recognition has hindered effective humanitarian responses in two ways:

First, by impeding aid efforts.

Aid can address a growing food crisis. Beaubien 17 of NPR finds

Baubien 17 [Jason Beaubien, NPR's Global Health and Development Correspondent on the Science Desk, 30 May 2017, "Somaliland Wants To Make One Thing Clear: It Is NOT Somalia", NPR,

<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2017/05/30/530703639/somaliland-wants-to-make-one-thing-clear-it-is-not-somalia>, DOA 12/2/2024] ESR // rct Bobby

Foreign Minister Shire says **lack of recognition is impeding what has already been a slow international response to the food crisis in Somaliland. Aid** from international agencies **is being coordinated and routed through war-ravaged Mogadishu — the Somali capital 900 miles to the south.** "It is affecting us in many ways," Shire says. "We **[officials say they] are not present in the forums in which these [aid efforts] are discussed.** We **[and] cannot access bilateral aid.** We cannot **get loans.** We cannot **attract international investors.**" Because it's not officially a country **Somaliland isn't eligible for loans** that the World Bank

makes to poor nations. **It can't get in on other assistance programs that are traditionally delivered to governments.** Somaliland broke away from Somalia to keep from getting sucked down as Somalia disintegrated in to a failed state in the 1990's. It lacked any central government from 1991 to 2006. Pirates took to terrorizing ships in its waterway. Islamist militants set up shop. Somalia is still one of the world's most dangerous countries for international aid groups to work in. And Somaliland continues to be tarnished by its former partner's woes. **When aid groups consider working in Somaliland, officials** at their head offices in Europe or the U.S. often **treat the project as if it's occurring in Mogadishu.** "For example a U.S. NGO will go to the State Department website," Shire says. "They look at the traveler advice [for Somalia] and they would be dissuaded by what they see on the screen. This really does not reflect what's on the ground in Somaliland." Africa specialist Bruton says Shire's frustration is justified. Somaliland, she says, has created a relatively stable enclave in a turbulent part of the Horn of Africa. "Somaliland gets a ton of good press for being stable and kind of a peaceful island in a sea of violence that is Somalia," Bruton says. "The reality is that unlike southern Somalia, where you have a lot of violence, Somaliland is essentially a single clan territory. And so what's happening is it's being run as a traditional clan democracy." This has its drawbacks if you aren't part of the dominant clan, she points out, but one of the upsides is stability. "Somalilanders have made an excellent case that because they were a British rather than an Italian colony, they were never really part of Somalia and so they have a right to be separate," Bruton says. The two colonies merged after they each won their independence from the Europeans in 1960. But she says African nations worry that Somaliland secession from the rest of Somalia sets a dangerous precedent on the continent. Foreign Minister Shire says **what's dangerous for Somalilanders right now is to stay in international limbo. The lack of recognition is impeding international relief, he emphasizes, and stymying development.** Bruton at the Atlantic Council says he definitely has a point: **"Somaliland is effectively being held hostage to the chaos in southern Somalia,"** Which is grossly unfair."

UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee, "A participation revolution: include people receiving aid in making the decisions which affect their lives", No Publication, <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/a-participation-revolution-include-people-receiving-aid-in-making-the-decisions-which-affect-their-lives>

It is necessary to include the people affected by humanitarian crises and their communities in our decisions to be certain that the humanitarian response is relevant, timely, effective and efficient. To do so, it is important to provide accessible information, ensure that an effective process for participation and feedback is in place and that design and management decisions are responsive to the views of affected communities and people. Donors and aid organisations should work to ensure that the voices of the most vulnerable groups considering gender, age, ethnicity, language and special needs are heard and acted upon. This will create an environment of greater trust, transparency and accountability. The following commitments will help promote the Core Humanitarian Standard and the IASC Commitments to Accountability to Affected Populations.

AA 24, a global NGO, quantifies.

AA 24 [8/1/24, Action Aid, ActionAid is an international network building a just, equitable, and sustainable world in solidarity with communities on the frontlines of poverty and injustice, "Somalia/Somaliland: the differences and issues explained," Action Aid, <https://www.actionaid.org.uk/about-us/where-we-work/somaliland/somalia-somaliland-differences-explained>, 12/13/24:] – V.L.) // rct Bobby

There are fears, particularly among the African Union, that the formal recognition of **Somaliland** would encourage other secessionist movements on the African continent to also seek independence. And although it is a relatively stable region by world standards, it **is extremely poor - the World Bank estimated its GDP per capita at just \$348 (£267), which would make it the fourth-poorest country in the world were it independent. Today, Somaliland is suffering with its extreme vulnerability to issues caused by climate change. Years of severe drought, famine and other disasters have pushed people to the brink of a humanitarian crisis.** Communities struggling to recover from a two-year drought that ended in 2017 are now facing one of the driest rainy seasons in three decades, with **the UN claiming that 2.2 million people are at risk of starvation across the Somalia/Somaliland region.** And for women and girls living in Somaliland, life can be extremely difficult. It's estimated 98% of women have undergone female genital mutilation (FGM). For the tens of thousands of women and girls living in camps for internally displaced people, there is a constant risk of violence. That's why ActionAid is working

in displacement camps in Somaliland, to help women and girls to survive and to put a stop to gender-based violence. And across Somaliland we work with women's groups to end FGM, support girls' education and train women with the tools and skills they need to escape poverty and become resilient to climate change.

And it compounds the risk of war. Defeo 17: Michael Defeo, 2017, "Food Insecurity and the Threat to Global Stability and Security in the 21st Century", *Inquiries Journal*, <http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/articles/1712/food-insecurity-and-the-threat-to-global-stability-and-security-in-the-21st-century>

The conflict began as a civil war but has evolved to threaten the interests of major world powers. While limited access to food and water did not directly spark the violence in Syria, it was the underlying cause of the instability seen in that region today. Concerns about access to food can be applied to many of the world's developing countries. Developing countries generally have large agricultural sectors but may lack the infrastructure or government institutions to supply all of its citizens with adequate food. **When people are hungry, they often fight their government**, or they break into ethnic **or** religious factions and fight **each other. Such conflicts can destabilize countries and even**, as Syria has proven, **entire regions. Regional destabilization in the developing world, in turn, threatens the peace and security of the international community.** Rich countries such as the United States and Western Europe, must support developing countries through aid and trade policies so that food insecure countries do not become fragile or failed states.

Somaliland cannot provide for its people.

Ferragamo and Klobucista 24 [Mariel Ferragamo covers Africa and global health and holds a bachelor's degree in environmental policy from Colby College and a certification in journalism from New York University. 1-25-2024, "Somaliland: The Horn of Africa's Breakaway State", Council on Foreign Relations, <https://www.cfr.org/background/somaliland-horn-africas-breakaway-state>, DOA: 12/5/24] RWC // rct Bobby

The Somaliland government asserts that it meets most of the requirements of a sovereign democratic state: it holds free and fair elections, has its own currency and security forces, and issues its own passports. It also says that its independence claim is consistent with a longstanding norm of the African Union and its predecessor that colonial-era borders should be maintained. Some analysts also note that Somalilanders are predominantly from the Isaaq clan, and thus ethnically distinctive from other Somalis. The territory has widely been seen as an "oasis" for stability in a turbulent region. "From the Somalilanders' perspective, they have a completely reasonable argument," Bronwyn Bruton, democracy and governance expert, said in 2018. "Somaliland is trying to break off from Somalia, which hasn't been a functioning country in decades." Democracy and civil liberties watchdog Freedom House rates Somaliland's freedom index at "partly free," scoring a forty-four out of one hundred in 2023, while Somalia got only eight in the same year—an unequivocally "not free" status, and the fourteenth-lowest worldwide. However, Somaliland's score has declined in recent years following crackdowns on opposition protestors when its parliament postponed the 2022 presidential election. What is its financial situation? **A weak economy and limited opportunities for foreign trade and investment have [has] stifled the government's capacity to provide services to its approximately four million residents.** Somaliland has a gross domestic product (GDP) of about \$2 billion, most of which it receives in remittances from Somalilanders working abroad. The area's unemployment remains very high, particularly for youth, and officials worry about a potential "brain drain" phenomenon, with educated people migrating in search of opportunities elsewhere. Its main exports are livestock and animal products, which it ships to neighboring Djibouti and Ethiopia, as well as to Gulf states, such as Saudi Arabia and Oman. Its GDP per capita, in the hundreds of dollars, is one of the lowest in the world. If it were to gain independence, Somaliland would become the eighteenth-poorest country [PDF] today. Somalia, meanwhile, is the world's fifth-poorest. **Meanwhile, the government is ineligible for loans from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund as long as Somaliland is not an internationally recognized state or reconciled with Somalia. President Muse Bihi Abdi, in an op-ed after his 2017 election victory, said that Somaliland's [Its] exclusion from international markets "compounds the socioeconomic pressures that Somaliland [it] faces," and analysts say that an anemic economy puts decades of political progress at risk.**

Somaliland Chronicle 24

Somaliland Chronicle, 12-20-2024, "The Strategic Implications of Somaliland's Recognition: A Comprehensive Analysis", Somaliland Chronicle,
<https://somalilandchronicle.com/2024/12/20/the-strategic-implications-of-somalilands-recognition-a-comprehensive-analysis/>

Despite operating without formal recognition, Somaliland has demonstrated remarkable economic resilience. The strategic port of Berbera exemplifies this potential, attracting substantial international investment and serving as a crucial gateway for regional trade. **Recognition would unlock access to international financial institutions and development funding, enabling Somaliland to fully realize its economic potential. This would facilitate formal trade agreements and economic partnerships, attracting increased foreign direct investment while supporting broader regional economic integration initiatives. The economic benefits would extend throughout the region, creating new opportunities for trade and development that could help address the root causes of regional instability.**

World Bank, 2-12-23, "Trade has been a powerful driver of economic development and poverty reduction",
<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/trade/brief/trade-has-been-a-powerful-driver-of-economic-development-and-poverty-reduction>

From 1990 to 2017, developing countries increased their share of global exports from 16 percent to 30 percent; in the same period, the global poverty rate fell from 36 percent to 9 percent. Not all countries have benefited equally, but overall, **trade has generated unprecedented prosperity, helping to lift some 1 billion people out of poverty in recent decades.**

Poverty Global Practice, 2024,
<https://www.somalilandcsd.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Somaliland-Poverty-Profile..pdf>

More than 1 in 4 people in urban Somaliland and more than 1 in 3 people in rural Somaliland are living in poverty.

Contention Two is Democracy

China's rise in Africa decreasing democracy

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<https://tnsr.org/2024/05/rethinking-u-s-africa-policy-amid-changing-geopolitical-realities/> DOA: 12-18-2024 MRC)

Since 2020, Africa has seen more political unrest, violent extremism, and democratic reversals than any other region in the world. A wave of coups has washed across the Sahel and West Africa, leaving authoritarians in power in numerous countries. In addition, the continent has served as a stage for the escalating great-power competition between China, Russia, and the United States. U.S. engagement with Africa has long been deprioritized in Washington, with successive administrations devoting scant attention and resources to advancing

democracy and resolving conflicts. Thus far, the Biden administration has maintained this pattern, which reflects the persistent tension between an interests-based and values-based U.S. foreign policy. Nevertheless, **there are a few actions**

the United States can take to reinvigorate democracy and stabilize the region, such as emphasizing development and diplomacy over military responses and stepping up cooperation with allies and partners to reduce the influence of China and Russia.

Ongoing instability in the Sahel — involving worsening insurgent violence, deepening great-power competition, and frequent coups — is exposing weaknesses in U.S. Africa policy.¹ In fact, nearly four years into what U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres called an “epidemic” of coups,² the United States and its closest Western allies and regional partners still lack a coherent and coordinated strategy to defend

democracy in Africa without sacrificing security interests and geopolitical influence. Whether and how to engage with post-coup regimes in Africa exemplifies the enduring friction between a values-based and an interests-based U.S. foreign policy. Widespread democratic backsliding could have long-term and lasting geopolitical and security implications for the region and for the United States and its allies, who are quickly losing their influence on the continent.

Historically, strategic priorities elsewhere have drawn Washington’s attention away from Africa, resulting in minimal engagement with the region. As such, U.S. Africa strategy has not received the attention and resources needed to manage deteriorating political and security developments on the continent.

America’s current Africa policy is being overtaken by events and is ill suited to adequately address the coup pandemic. Years of counter-terrorism work on the continent are going by the wayside, along with strategic partnerships and relationships built over decades of evolving engagement, due to the coup pandemic and new state leaders being less willing to host Western counter-terrorism forces. In this article, we outline what we see as the main challenge for U.S. Africa policy today — which we call the Africa policy trilemma, or the difficulty of simultaneously promoting democracy, combatting violent extremism, and engaging in great-power competition. This trilemma echoes Cold War dilemmas, but with counter-terrorism supplanting combatting local communist forces. We argue that Washington must

learn from its mistakes during the Cold War, particularly the tendency to separate democracy promotion from security interests and sacrifice the former in the name of the latter. In an era of great-power competition with authoritarian rivals, the United States should bolster efforts to promote democracy and economic prosperity. Prioritizing more diplomacy and development could help to prevent the growing militarization of U.S. Africa policy seen in recent years.

This article proceeds in three sections. First, we review recent governance, security, and geopolitical developments across Africa. The second section examines the history of U.S. Africa policy and engagement related to democracy promotion, counter-terrorism, and great-power competition. We conclude with a number of policy recommendations the United States could adopt to reinvigorate Africa policy to

better enable democratization in the future. Africa has suffered more democratic decline than any other region of the world since

2020. For a time, Africa appeared poised to become a showpiece for freedom’s “inevitable” worldwide progression after the Cold War.³ In the first two decades after the Cold War, many African countries caught the third wave of democracy.⁴ From 1975 to 2014, the number of African countries democratizing exceeded those autocratizing, with the peak wave of democratization occurring in the early to mid-1990s.⁵ As a result, the share of African states that are “closed autocracies” (the least democratic regime type, according to the Regimes of

the World classification) fell from over 60 percent in 1988 to 11 percent by 2007. By contrast, whereas fewer than 4 percent of African countries could claim to be democracies in 1988, nearly 40 percent could by 2016.⁶ In recent years, however, an

autocratic counter-wave has washed over Africa. According to the Sweden-based V-Dem project, democracy has suffered more in Africa than any other world region since 2020. The share of autocratizing countries in Africa rose from less than 5 percent in 2008 to over 30 percent in 2020, while the share of democratizing countries fell from 20 percent in 2014 to only 7 percent by

2020. Since 2020, there has been a marked decline of electoral democracies and a re-emergence of “closed autocracies,” with the latter now ruling one-fifth of African states.⁷ By 2023, half of the continent’s

population lived under autocratic rule according to Freedom House, while only 7

percent lived in “free” countries.⁸ Democracy faces challenges across the continent, but the areas that have slid the most toward autocracy in recent years are northern Africa, the Sahel, and, to a lesser extent, western Africa. In

2023, the west and the south were the most democratic regions in Africa, with average electoral democracy scores around 0.5 on a scale of 0 to 1 (with 1 being the most democratic). By contrast, average electoral democracy scores were only 0.34 in central-east Africa, 0.29 in the Sahel, and 0.28 in northern Africa.⁹ Between 2013 and 2023, electoral democracy scores increased in 17 of Africa’s 54 countries but declined in 37 countries. The biggest democratic declines over this decade were in Burkina Faso, which saw its electoral democracy score fall by 0.4, followed by Libya (–0.35), Tunisia (–0.29), Mauritius (–0.27), Niger (–0.24), and Comoros (–0.23). Coups in 2022 caused the declines in Burkina Faso, as did a July 2023 coup for Niger. Libya has been mired in civil war since the Arab Spring. Tunisia, the only democratic success story to emerge from the Arab Spring, saw those gains reversed since President Kais Saïed’s takeover in 2021.¹⁰ Flawed elections and corruption have characterized the more gradual democratic backsliding in Mauritius and Comoros.¹¹ The triggers for what Nigerian President Bola Tinubu called “autocratic contagion” in the Sahel and west Africa have been coups, which have made a comeback in Africa since 2020 after years of decline.¹² According to the Colpus dataset, nine successful military coups have struck Africa since 2020.¹³ Of these, three toppled democratic governments — in Mali (2020), Burkina Faso (2022), and Niger (2023). Two coups were designed to ensure the survival of autocratic rule and block democratization — in Chad (2021) and Sudan (2021). Another two coups ousted autocrats — an aspiring autocrat in Guinea (2021) and an established one in Gabon (2023) — only to install new authoritarian regimes. Two more reflected splits among coup factions — in Mali (2021) and Burkina Faso (2022). There have been an additional five coup attempts in the region since 2020, including one in April 2023 that brought Sudan’s rival coup factions to civil war.¹⁴ Since 2020, virtually all coups have taken place within a so-called coup belt across the Sahel and west Africa. The August 2023 coup in Gabon was the lone exception (see figure 1). As The Economist recently noted, “You can now walk

across nearly the widest part of Africa, from the Atlantic to the Red Sea, passing only through countries that have suffered coups in the past three years. But it would be unwise — you might well be kidnapped.”¹⁵ Despite the rash of coups, support for

democracy among the public remains high but has weakened. According to Afrobarometer, an independent research network based in Ghana, nearly 70 percent of survey respondents across 34 African countries preferred democracy to any other system of government.

Large majorities in most countries also still reject military and one-party rule across the continent — only in Burkina Faso do most respondents favor military rule.¹⁷ Yet support for democracy has dropped in some countries. For example, between 2014–15 and 2021–22, support for democracy fell by 36 percent in Mali, 26 percent in Burkina Faso, 21 percent in South Africa, and 15 percent in Guinea.¹⁸ Meanwhile, perceptions of corruption by elected officials and rising armed conflict have led opposition to military rule to

soften in the region, especially among youth. In 2021–22, only 38 percent of Africans said they were satisfied with the way democracy works in their country, down from 46 percent in 2014–15.20 Popular support for

transparent elections remains strong across Africa

Three-quarters of respondents to Afrobarometer’s 2021–23 survey believed elections were the best method for choosing state leaders. However, support for elections has fallen in some places over the past decade such as Tunisia and Burkina Faso. At present, only Lesotho lacks a solid majority that supports elections.²¹ National elections occurred in three African countries in the first four months of 2024 and are scheduled to occur in 11 more African countries over the rest of the year.²² Meanwhile, none of Africa’s new military juntas appear willing to relinquish power any time soon. In September 2023, for example, Mali’s junta postponed the transitional presidential election scheduled for February 2024 due to unexplained “technical reasons” and also refused to hold legislative elections.²³ Soon after, Ibrahim Traoré, the junta leader in Burkina Faso, said that holding elections in 2024 was “not a priority” and that they would not be held until the security situation in the country had improved.²⁴ As of May 2024, neither junta has committed to a timeframe for new presidential elections.²⁵ Only in Chad did the authorities promise elections for 2024, but only after shepherding a new constitution allowing de facto President Mahamat Idriss Déby,

who came to power through a military junta, to stand in those elections.²⁶ The 2020s have also witnessed rising violent extremism and Islamist

terrorism in Africa. Political instability in the region is contributing to an already poor security situation.

Half of all intra-state armed conflicts worldwide took place in Africa

(26 of 52) in 2022.²⁷ Two-fifths of the top 50 countries ranked in the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data 2024 Conflict Severity Index are in Africa,²⁸ with the Sahel, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo among the top ten conflicts appearing on the associated 2024 “conflict watchlist.”²⁹ Overall, armed conflict violence has greatly increased in Africa since

2020, with fatalities more than quadrupling, from fewer than 25,000 to well over 100,000 across the continent in 2022. Armed conflict deaths in Africa now exceed levels last seen

in the late 1990s and early 2000s during the height of the Second Congo War, which was the deadliest

civil war since 1945.³⁰ Four of Africa’s five deadliest ongoing armed conflicts — those with over 1,000 fatalities in 2022 — involved insurgencies by Islamist violent extremist organizations, namely the al-Qaeda-aligned Jamaat Nusrat al-Islam

wal-Muslimin in Mali and Burkina Faso, the Islamic State in Nigeria, and al-Shabaab in Somalia.³¹ While most civil wars in Africa in the 1990s involved ethno-linguistic cleavages, the last two decades have seen a rise of religiously framed civil war.³² The rising

African death toll from 2020 to 2022 was due mainly to the outbreak of civil war in Ethiopia in 2020

and, since 2022, to insurgencies in Burkina Faso, Mali, and elsewhere.³³ Armed conflicts involving groups associated with the Islamic State have spread across the region, emerging in Niger (2015), Nigeria (2015), Chad (2017), Burkina Faso (2019), the

Democratic Republic of the Congo (2019), Mozambique (2019), Mali (2022), and Uganda (2022).34 Instances of organized political violence in Africa have increased

the most in recent years in Africa’s post-2020 “coup belt”: the Sahel

The number of political violence events in this region has risen from only a few hundred a year prior to 2012 to around 2,000 per year from 2013 to 2018, then increased steeply since 2019 to nearly 12,000 in the most recent 12 months to March 2024. Though central/eastern Africa also has seen major increases in political violence since 2012, only the Sahel has continued to see rising violence into 2024, according to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data conflict index.³⁵ As a result, the epicenter of global terrorism “has now conclusively shifted out of the Middle East and into the Central Sahel region,” according to the Global Terrorism Index. Sub-Saharan Africa accounted for 47 percent of global terrorism deaths in 2023; more than South Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa combined. Five of the 10 countries most affected by terrorism in 2023 are in Africa: Burkina Faso (first place), Mali (third), Somalia (seventh), Nigeria (eighth), and Niger (tenth).³⁶ The three most terrorism-afflicted countries in the Sahel — Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger — have also suffered coups since 2020. In each case, observers have argued that the incumbent government’s inability to successfully tame their terrorism problem and safeguard national security was at least a contributing if not a driving factor in each coup.³⁷ In all three countries, the newly installed juntas promised to prioritize restoring domestic security and order. Despite these promises, insurgencies in the Sahel have worsened following coups. Across the central Sahel, conflict fatalities from political violence increased 38 percent in 2023, and civilian fatalities grew 18 percent in 2022. More than 8,000 people were killed in Burkina Faso last year. In Niger, Islamic State Sahel Province forces have stepped up

attacks since the coup in July 2023.³⁸ In January 2024, Mali's junta withdrew from a peace agreement with separatists, which has spurred widespread violent attacks on civilians by government forces and Russia's Wagner group.³⁹ The case of Sudan is even more instructive of the vicious cycle of coups, autocratization, and civil war. In 2019, a mass uprising by pro-democracy forces managed to trigger a military coup ousting Sudan's long-time dictator Omar Bashir. Hopes ran high for a democratic transition after continuing protests led the coupmakers to agree to a new constitution and transition timetable.⁴⁰ A military coup in October 2021 blocked the promised transition to a civilian-led government. Subsequent infighting among security force elites for power within the military junta led to a failed coup attempt by the paramilitary Rapid

Support Forces against the Sudanese Armed Forces last April, which sparked a devastating civil war leading to at least 13,000 fatalities.⁴¹ **As Africa has become a more important front in America's so-called global war on terror, governments in the region have sought greater security assistance from external powers.** Initially, many turned to the United Nations, France, and the United States. **The United States expanded its military presence and sought cooperative security partnerships in Africa.** For example, in 2019, U.S. Air Base 201 in Niger, the drone base in Agadez that the United States built to the tune of \$110 million, and Camp Baledogle, a Soviet-era air base the United States refurbished to support operations against al-Shabaab, both became operational to support regional counter-terrorism operations.⁴² Recent political developments in the Sahel, enabled by coups

and great-power competition, threaten U.S. counter-terrorism interests. **Africa's new military juntas have sought to reduce their dependence on Western democracies and have sought counter-insurgency assistance and patronage from non-democratic actors like Russia's Wagner Group, recently rebranded as the Africa Corps, which is now directed by a Russian military intelligence unit.**⁴³ The latter has increasingly been relied upon to counter insurgency in Mali as French and U.N. peacekeeping forces have been forced to withdraw from the region.⁴⁴ Although American policymakers had hoped to avoid the same fate as France, in part by "playing nice" and cooperating with the juntas, this strategy appears to have largely failed by this spring. In March 2024, the junta in Niamey publicly revoked the military cooperation agreement with the United States and ordered U.S. troops to leave. After negotiations to stay failed, the Biden administration agreed to the request.⁴⁵ By May 2024, even before U.S. troops had pulled out, Russian troops moved into U.S. Air Base 101 in Niamey.⁴⁶ In April, the United States was also forced to withdraw dozens of troops based in N'Djamena, which had deployed to Chad since 2021 as part of a U.S. special operations task force.⁴⁷ U.S. Africa Command head Gen. Michael Langley warned that the loss of U.S. bases in the

region will "degrade our ability to do active watching and warning, including for homeland defense."⁴⁸ **Africa has become a major site of great-power competition. U.S. efforts to promote democracy and enhance security in Africa are complicated by rising regional great-power competition with China and Russia.**⁴⁹ This global competition pits liberal against authoritarian states with differing visions of international order.⁵⁰ After the Cold War, linkage to and leverage of the democratic West were associated with greater advances for democracy, whereas weak Western leverage opened the door to "competitive authoritarianism" and democratic backsliding across the developing world.⁵¹ Now Africa's new juntas and would-be strongmen are seeking to rely on autocratic major power patrons for regime security. Russia and China, in turn, have an interest in making the world and region

"safe for autocracy."⁵² **Russia and China have cultivated friends and influence on the continent as part of a broader geopolitical struggle with the United States over power and influence in the developing world.**⁵³ Indeed, **Africa may be a testing ground for the resilience of the liberal international order.** For example, Gen. Laura Richardson, the commander of U.S. Southern Command, believes that rising competition with Russia and China in Africa may be a harbinger of things to come in the Western Hemisphere in the next five to seven years.⁵⁴ The influence of powerful Western states is now contested or in decline across much of Africa. During the Cold War, France and the United Kingdom had predominant economic and military influence in their former colonies on the continent. However, China's exploding economic and diplomatic engagement in Africa in recent decades has enabled its influence on the continent

to grow rapidly, in many cases now exceeding that of the former European colonial powers or the United States.⁵⁵ For example, **China surpassed the United States as Africa's largest trade partner in 2008. China's \$300 billion in trade with Africa in 2023 was four times the U.S.-Africa trade.** Similarly, French and U.S. outward investment in Africa dwarfed China's until 2017, but since then **China has become the largest source of investment on the African continent.**⁵⁶ As a result, China has more leverage to potentially subvert democracy or prop up autocrats in Africa.⁵⁷ The influence of France — America's closest external partner on the continent in recent decades — in Francophone Africa is now in freefall. France's condemnation of coups led to diplomatic fallout with the new juntas in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger. These three countries created the Alliance of Sahel States, a mutual defense pact, in September 2023.⁵⁸ In August 2022, the last of several thousand French troops withdrew from Mali, marking the end of Operation Barkhane, a decade-long counter-insurgency campaign.⁵⁹ In February 2023, France withdrew its troops from Burkina Faso.⁶⁰ On Sept. 27, 2023, two months after Niger's coup, France agreed to withdraw its ambassador and

1,500 troops.⁶¹ France has been forced to shift the base of its counter-insurgency operations in Africa to Chad.⁶² In December 2023, Mali and Niger revoked tax cooperation treaties with France.⁶³ In April, Burkina Faso expelled French diplomats.⁶⁴ **Russia has capitalized on anti-French sentiment and French withdrawals in the Sahel.**⁶⁵ The new Sahel alliance — Africa's new "holy alliance" — is poised to

become "a vehicle for Russian influence in the heart of Africa."⁶⁶ **Russia's Africa policy has emphasized military engagement, drawing from its historical role as one of the largest arms suppliers to Africa.** Since 2018, Russia has also deployed private military contractors to 31 African countries.⁶⁷ The most prominent of these is the Wagner Group, which moved into the Central African Republic in 2018 and expanded its presence across Africa in subsequent years.⁶⁸ In return for a "regime survival package," the Wagner Group — recently rebranded the Africa Corps or Expeditionary Corps — is seeking access to strategically important natural resources such as timber, gold, uranium, and lithium.⁶⁹ In May 2023, only months after expelling French troops, Burkina Faso's military leaders hailed Russia as a strategic ally.⁷⁰ Last December, Russia re-opened its embassy in Burkina Faso, which was shuttered in 1992.⁷¹ Moscow also struck a new military cooperation deal with Niger. In April 2024, 100 instructors from the Africa Corps arrived in Niger.⁷² Africa Corps personnel reportedly hope to take over the U.S. base in Agadez, which U.S. troops must now vacate.⁷³

Unlike Russia, **China has focused on economic engagement in Africa** — like it has elsewhere — **and funding infrastructure development through its Belt and Road Initiative. China's investment and aid without attaching conditions such as political and economic reforms — unlike some powerful Western countries — have attracted many African leaders who have come to resent what is perceived as Western meddling in internal affairs.**⁷⁴ Beijing may also have greater ambitions for military engagement and security cooperation on the continent.⁷⁵ **China opened its first overseas military base in Djibouti in 2017 and seeks another base in west Africa on the Atlantic coast.**⁷⁶ China has deployed private security contractors in 15 African states since 2018.⁷⁷ China has been ambivalent toward the coup trend in Africa and has sought to reinforce its existing influence.⁷⁸ In response to the 2017 coup that ousted Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, for example, Chinese President Xi Jinping backed Emmerson

Mnangagwa, invited him to Beijing for a state visit in April 2018, and increased investment in Zimbabwe.⁷⁹ **China also seeks to promote its norms and values through professional military education in Africa.**⁸⁰ **The rise of Russian and Chinese influence and decline of democracy in the region over the last decade are mutually reinforcing.**⁸¹ **The number of disinformation campaigns in the region quadrupled from 2022 to 2023, with foreign state sponsors led by Russia and China responsible for most. Russia alone has sponsored disinformation to undermine democracy in 19 African states,** more often than not with the Wagner Group directly involved. For example, Russian networks "helped prime and promote" the coups in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger, whose new military juntas have in turn also become major sponsors of

disinformation in west Africa.⁸² **China's propaganda in Africa likewise perpetuates anti-U.S. and anti-democratic narratives.**⁸³ because Africa has never been seen as strategically important.⁸⁴ The U.S. State Department only established a separate regional bureau for Africa in 1958.⁸⁵ During the first half of the Cold War, U.S. Africa policy was one of minimal economic and military engagement aimed at avoiding major commitments in the region.⁸⁶ In the latter Cold War from the mid-1970s, Africa received relatively more attention from U.S. policymakers (but not necessarily more resources) as U.S.-Soviet struggles for political influence intensified across the Global South. North Africa, and Egypt in particular, garnered the highest priority as they were seen as more relevant to the more strategically important Middle East.⁸⁷ For example, after the Camp David Accords in 1979, Egypt became a top recipient of U.S. foreign aid. Egypt's special status is also reflected in the fact that it is the only African state included under the U.S. Central Command theater covering the greater Middle East since the 1980s. By contrast, U.S. attention and commitments in sub-Saharan Africa have always lagged behind. Only six U.S. presidents since World War II have ever made official state visits to sub-Saharan Africa, the first being Jimmy Carter in 1978 and the last being Barack Obama in 2015.⁸⁸ Throughout the Cold War, as in other regions, U.S. Africa policy focused on great-power competition — namely, containing Soviet and communist influence. Fear of Soviet encroachment animated American interventions in Africa.⁸⁹ For example, after the Soviets and Cubans backed left-wing forces in the Angolan civil war, Washington backed right-wing National Union for the Total Independence of Angola rebels.⁹⁰ Likewise, after the Soviet Union backed Ethiopia in the Ogaden War in 1977–78, the United States seized the opportunity to gain Somalia as an ally. In exchange for access to military bases, the United States gave aid to President Siad Barre and turned a blind eye to the dictator's human rights abuses.⁹¹ America's security interests in Africa were limited, with Libya's state sponsorship of terrorism a nuisance. Democracy promotion was never a central U.S. objective in Africa during the Cold War.⁹²

recognition k2 counter China's rise

Aidi 22 (Hisham Aidi focuses on cultural globalization and the political economy of race and social movements. He received his Ph.D. in political science from Columbia University and has taught at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA), and at the Driskell Center for the Study of the African Diaspora at the University of Maryland, College Park. He is the author of *Redeploying the State* (Palgrave, 2008) a comparative study of neo-liberalism and labor movements in Latin America; and co-editor, with Manning Marable, of *Black Routes to Islam* (Palgrave, 2009). In 2002–2003, Aidi was a consultant for UNDP's Human Development Report. From 2000 to 2003, he was part of Harvard University's Encarta Africana project, and worked as a cultural reporter, covering youth culture and immigration in Harlem and the Bronx, for *Africana*, *The New African* and *ColorLines*. More recently, his work has appeared in *The Atlantic*, *Foreign Affairs*, *The New Yorker* and *Salon*. Since 2007, he has been a contributing editor of *Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Culture, Politics and Society*. Aidi is the author most recently of *Rebel Music: Race, Empire and the New Muslim Youth Culture* (Pantheon, 2014), a study of American cultural diplomacy. Aidi teaches the SIPA MIA survey course *Conceptual Foundations of International Politics* and seminars in SIPA's summer program, Policy Center for the New South, April 2022, ["Somaliland and the Great Powers" https://www.policycenter.ma/sites/default/files/2022-04/PB_31-22_Aidi.pdf] DOA: 12-18-2024 MRC)

The rise of China the COVID pandemic and the consolidation of Somaliland democracy seem to **have accelerated Hargeisa's push for international recognition**. Sympathizers in Congress are seeing **Somaliland** not simply as a democratic oasis in a region dominated by authoritarian regimes,¹⁴ but also **as a bulwark against Chinese influence in East Africa**.¹⁵ "Somaliland has stayed faithful to democracy when hardly anyone noticed," said Kevin Roberts, president of the Heritage Foundation. "We need to be clear eyed about the competition we're in with the Chinese Communist Party... **Almost alone in Africa [Somaliland] has been immune to Beijing's overtures and threats.**"¹⁵ Another think tank specialist wrote, **Recognizing Somaliland's independence would enable the U.S. to hedge against further deterioration of its position in Djibouti, which is under Chinese sway.**¹⁶ Djibouti, since 2002, has hosted the American military base of Camp Lemonnier; in 2016, China built a base in this East African nation. In 2020, **Somaliland and Taiwan set up representative offices in each other's capital cities, irking the governments in Beijing and Mogadishu.** China would go on to accuse Taiwan of "fanning the flames" and "harming others." Kayd would retort that Beijing could not dictate his country's political alliances: "We were born free and we will stay free. We will run our business the way we want. China cannot dictate, no other country can dictate."¹⁷ (As China has expanded to Africa, Taiwan has lost support on the continent, with only Eswatini (Swaziland) having full relations with the island.) **As Mogadishu has signed bilateral agreements with Beijing, Somaliland has distanced itself from China**.¹⁸ **and, stressing its democratic credentials, sought to cultivate support in conservative political quarters in the U.S. and Britain.** Meanwhile, Western organizations that monitor and democracies have observed that Somaliland's electoral system needs to be more inclusive. **A recent report by the International Crisis Group hailed Somaliland's parliamentary and local elections held in May 2021 as a "milestone," showing "the strength of Somaliland democratic culture,"** but underlined the complete absence of woman from parliament, and called for greater efforts to include women, under-represented communities, and to open dialogue with the restive eastern regions. Somaliland's recent diplomatic charm offensive seems to be paying off. In England, the Conservative MP Gavin Williams has called for Somaliland's independence, stressing Britain's ties to the territory, saying, "Our nations have long historic ties, and now it is time to make history together." Republican and thinktank support notwithstanding, the Biden administration has made clear it has no plans to recognize Somaliland. American officials worry that recognizing Somaliland would jeopardize Washington's relations with Mogadishu, undermining efforts to contain al-Shabaab. Recognizing Somaliland would also violate the African Union's 1964 resolution (that called on African states to respect their inherited borders)¹⁹ and set a dangerous precedent, inspiring other regions to break away. As former diplomat Cameron Hudson explained, "They're doing an end run around the African Union and around their own home region trying to get Washington to give them what they can't get locally," adding That would be sort of like the African Union recognizing Puerto Rico as the 51st U.S. state before the U.S. does."²⁰ **As the war in Tigray, Ethiopia drags on, and Somalia struggles to assert control over its territory, and China continues to expand into Africa, Washington and London's calculus could change, and Somaliland's independence could come to be seen as a strategic asset**.²¹ In such a scenario, the African Union's norms and resolutions would not figure prominently in the Great Powers' calculations.

Otherwise, Absence of democracy is an impact filter

Diamond 19 [Larry Diamond, American political sociologist and leading contemporary scholar in the field of democracy studies. Diamond is a senior fellow at the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, which is Stanford University's main center for research on international issues], 2019, "Ill Winds: Saving Democracy from Russian Rage, Chinese Ambition, and American Complacency", ISBN 9780525560647, PDF, Penguin Books, [DOA 1/2/24 YRM]

In our networked age, both idealism and the harder imperatives of global power and security argue for more democracy, not less. For one thing, if we do not worry about the quality of governance in lower-income countries, we will face more and more troubled and failing states. **Famine and genocide are the curse of authoritarian states, not democratic ones. Outright state collapse is the ultimate, bitter fruit of tyranny. When countries like Syria, Libya, and Afghanistan descend into civil war; when poor states in Africa cannot generate jobs and improve their citizens' lives due to rule by corrupt and callous strongmen; when Central American societies are held hostage by brutal gangs and kleptocratic rulers, people flee—and wash up on the shores of the democracies.** Europe and the United States cannot withstand the rising pressures of immigration unless they work to support better, more stable and accountable government in troubled countries. The world has simply grown too small, too flat, and too fast to wall off rotten states and pretend they are on some other planet. Hard security interests are at stake. **As even the Trump administration's 2017 National Security Strategy makes clear, the main threats to U.S. national security all stem from authoritarianism, whether in the form of tyrannies from Russia and China to Iran and North Korea or in the guise of antidemocratic terrorist movements such as ISIS.**¹ By supporting the development of democracy around the world, we can deny these authoritarian adversaries the geopolitical running room they seek. Just as Russia, China, and Iran are trying to undermine democracies to bend other countries to their will, so too can we contain these autocrats' ambitions by helping other countries build effective, resilient democracies that can withstand the dictators' malevolence. Of course, democratically elected governments with open

societies will not support the American line on every issue. But no free society wants to mortgage its future to another country. The American national interest would best be secured by a pluralistic world of free countries—one in which autocrats can no longer use corruption and coercion to gobble up resources, alliances, and territory. If you look back over our history to see who has posed a threat to the United States and our allies, it has always been authoritarian regimes and empires. As political scientists have long noted, no two democracies have ever gone to war with each other—ever. It is not the democracies of the world that are supporting international terrorism, proliferating weapons of mass destruction, or threatening the territory of their neighbors.

Jing Xuan Teng, 10-17-2023, “Key Issues Surrounding China's Belt And Road Project,” AFP News, <https://www.barrons.com/news/key-issues-surrounding-china-s-belt-and-road-project-64f3dd62>

Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative has been criticised for saddling poor countries with enormous debt and causing environmental harm,

while proponents hail it for bringing resources and economic growth to the Global South. As representatives of 130 countries gather for a summit in Beijing to mark a decade of the project, AFP looks at some of the key issues surrounding the massive infrastructure project: The Belt and Road is a landmark project in President Xi Jinping's bid to expand China's clout overseas, with Beijing saying it has now inked over two trillion dollars in contracts around the world. Its most high-profile projects have laid down high-speed rail tracks crisscrossing South East Asia and massive transport, energy and infrastructure works through Central Asia. But the flip side of the massive infrastructure spending is the huge debts incurred by participating countries. China said this month that **BRI participants owe more than \$300 billion to the Export-Import Bank of China.** And BRI nations

were hit especially hard during the Covid-19 pandemic as soaring inflation and interest rates hurt their ability to repay debts. Critics have also pointed to opaque pricing for the projects built by Chinese companies, with countries including Malaysia and Myanmar renegotiating BRI deals to bring down costs. **Residents of BRI nations have also complained that the majority of jobs at**

infrastructure projects are being done by Chinese workers who send their wages home rather than spend them in local businesses. China has been forced to hand out billions of dollars in bailout loans to BRI countries in

recent years to allow the countries to extend their loans and remain solvent, according to a joint report this year by the World Bank and other institutions. The BRI has functioned as a diplomatic vehicle burnishing China's image as leader of the global South, while giving Chinese infrastructure firms a foothold in many emerging economies. **The development of megaports, pipelines, railways**

and highways could render the Paris climate goals unreachable, researchers from China, the United States and the United Kingdom warned in 2019.