

AFRICOM: United States Africa Command

A document compiled Brother Metusala Dikobe

Say No to Africom

by Danny Glover and Nicole C. Lee

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"Africom is a dangerous continuation of US military expansion around the globe."

With little scrutiny from Democrats in Congress and nary a whimper of protest from the liberal establishment, the United States will soon establish permanent military bases in sub-Saharan Africa. An alarming step forward in the militarization of the African continent, the US Africa Command (Africom) will oversee all US military and security interests throughout the region, excluding Egypt. Africom is set to launch by September 2008 and the Senate recently confirmed Gen. William "Kip" Ward as its first commander.

General Ward told the Senate Armed Services Committee that Africom would first seek "African solutions to African problems." His testimony made Africom sound like a magnanimous effort for the good of the African people. In truth Africom is a dangerous continuation of US military expansion around the globe. Such foreign-policy priorities, as well as the use of weapons of war to combat terrorist threats on the African continent, will not achieve national security. Africom will only inflame threats against the United States, make Africa even more dependent on external powers and delay responsible African solutions to continental security issues.

The US militarization of Africa is further rationalized by George W. Bush's claims that Africom "will enhance our efforts to bring peace and security to the people of Africa" and promote the "goals of development, health, education, democracy and economic growth." Yet the Bush Administration fails to mention that securing and controlling African wealth and natural resources is key to US trade interests, which face growing competition from China. Transnational corporations rely on Africa for petroleum, uranium and diamonds - to name some of the continent's bounty. West Africa currently provides 15 percent of crude oil imports to the United States, and that figure is expected to rise to 25 percent by 2015.

"Securing and controlling African wealth and natural resources is key to US trade interests."

Policy-makers seem to have forgotten the legacy of US intervention in Africa. During the cold war, African nations were used as pawns in postcolonial proxy wars, an experience that had a devastating impact on African democracy, peace and development. In the past Washington has aided reactionary African factions that have carried out atrocities against civilians. An increased US military presence in Africa will likely follow this pattern of extracting resources while aiding factions in some of their bloodiest conflicts, thus further destabilizing the region.

Misguided unilateral US military policy to "bring peace and security to the people of Africa" has, in fact, led to inflamed local conflicts, destabilization of entire regions, billions of wasted dollars and the unnecessary deaths of US soldiers. The US bombing of Somalia in January - an attempt to

eradicate alleged Islamic extremists in the Horn of Africa - resulted in the mass killing of civilians and the forced exodus of refugees into neighboring nations. What evidence suggests Africom will be an exception?

In contrast, Africa has demonstrated the capacity to stabilize volatile situations on its own. For example, in 1990 the Economic Community of West African States set up an armed Monitoring Group (Ecomog) in response to the civil war in Liberia. At their height, Ecomog forces in Liberia numbered 12,000, and it was these forces - not US or UN troops - that kept Liberia from disintegrating. In another mission, Ecomog forces were instrumental in repelling rebels from Sierra Leone's capital, Freetown.

"Policy toward Africa must be rooted in the principles of African self-determination and sovereignty."

There are a range of initiatives that can be taken by the US government and civil society to provide development and security assistance to Africa that do not include a US military presence. Foremost, policy toward Africa must be rooted in the principles of African self-determination and sovereignty. The legitimate and urgent development and security concerns of African countries cannot be fixed by dependence on the United States or any other foreign power. Instead of military strategies, African countries need immediate debt cancellation, fair trade policies and increased development assistance that respects indigenous approaches to building sustainable communities. Civil wars, genocide and terrorist threats can and must be confronted by a well-equipped African Union military command.

American policy-makers should be mindful that South Africa, whose citizens overthrew the US-supported apartheid regime, opposes Africom. In addition, Nigeria and the fourteen-nation Southern African Development Community resist Africom. These forces should be joined by other African governments and citizens around the world, to develop Africa's own strong, effective and timely security capacities. Progressive US-Africa policy organizations and related civil society groups have not been sufficiently organized to bring this critical issue before the people of the United States. It is urgent that we persuade progressive US legislators to stop the militarization of aid to Africa and to help ensure Africa's rise to responsible self-determination.

In the early 20th Century Philippines, U.S. troops called "enemy" fighters "niggers" and "injuns," as surrogates for the people they despised back home. In Vietnam, the "Cong" were "gooks" and "dinks" - never human. The "bad guys" in Iraq and Afghanistan are "hajjis" and "rag-heads" - similarly dehumanized and now openly described as "game," to be hunted as such by a new crop of Marine Bwanas on killing safaris. Marine kill-scientists have enlisted the help of inner city police officers and "big-game hunters" as troop trainers for the "urban jungles" of Iraq. Under the slogan, "Every Marine a Hunter," the U.S. military continues its proud perversion of civilized values: Every Target a Non-Human.

AFRICOM: America's Military Foot in Africa's Doorway



by **BAR Managing Editor Bruce Dixon**

On October 1 the US launched AFRICOM, the Pentagon's outpost in Africa. Commanded by a Black American general and incorporating State Department and other civilian personnel from top to bottom it is billed as a "new kind" of US military command.

Incorporating nearly all US civilian programs in Africa under its umbrella, from trade to aid to public information, AFRICOM marks the militarization of US policy toward what is already the most war-torn region in the world. AFRICOM's planners offer their twelve year intervention in Somalia, where a million out of ten million have died due to US intervention, as a "model" for the continent

Since the end of the second world war, the US has been the dominant foreign power in Africa. Between 1950 and 1989, Africa was the target of more than a [billion and a half dollars in US military aid](#). The Clinton administration ramped the militarization of Africa to unprecedented levels, funneling enormous quantities of arms, training and other military assistance to 50 out of the 53 nations in Africa. The Bush regime has further escalated the quantities of arms and aid and on October 3, 2008 inaugurated [Africom](#), the Pentagon's eyes, ears, mouth, wallet and foot on the African continent.

As Asad Ismi and Kristin Schwartz in the [Ravaging of Africa](#) told us last year:

"Africa is the most war-torn region in the world, with armed conflicts going on in nine countries; Ethiopia with Somalia, civil war in Ethiopia, Uganda, Chad, Nigeria, Morocco with Western Sahara, and Algeria. The US has provided arms and military training to participants in all of these nine wars. Washington has done the same in another five wars that ended during 2002-2006. These are the long civil wars in Angola, Sierra Leone, Burundi and Liberia, as well as that in Congo-Brazzaville.

Thanks to half a century of pouring US arms stockpiles into Africa, the price of an assault rifle in Africa has for some time been [cheaper than anywhere](#) else on the planet. US military assistance programs, American arms, American corporations and America's insistence upon privatization of military functions are everywhere to be found in Africa. At the end of August, Africom's commander, General William E. "Kip" Ward was keynote speaker of the graduation exercises of [Liberia's military training facility](#), which is jointly run by Lockheed-Martin subsidiary [Pacific Engineering & Architecture](#), and [DynCorp](#), which supplies mercenaries and torturers in Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Congo, Colombia, Darfur, and elsewhere. Africom then, seems to follow the traditional American practice of requiring that as much of America's military and non-military "aid" as possible is spent with politically influential US corporations.



Gen. William E. "Kip" Ward

Africom is unlike other US military commands around the world in that its command structure includes both civilian and military officials from the top to the bottom, and in that Africom will openly and directly administer all civilian programs funded through the US Dept. of State. Africom's deputy commander is Ambassador Mary C. Yates, and Africom will be in charge of all State Department, USAID and a number of other US government civilian programs in Africa, reflecting a militarization of US Africa policy from top to bottom.

In an essay titled "[What is Africom Really About?](#)" earlier this year, Daniel Volman reported attending a conference of US and African government officials at the [National Defense University](#) aimed at getting Africom up and running.

"The conference was very much a nuts-and-bolts discussion of all the practical matters of making Africom work.

"The first interesting thing was the discussion of how they define Africom's mission. The presentation on this were based on internal DoD presentations, so they were much more honest and revealing than the kind of thing that comes from the public pronouncements. The presentation specifically cited the challenge of preventing disruptions in African oil production and exports as one of Africom's six chief missions, along with meeting the challenge of China, controlling ungoverned regions and transnational extremism, dealing with instability in the Horn of Africa, dealing with instability in the Great Lakes region, and dealing with the situation in Chad/Sudan.

"A couple of other interesting points they made was to say that they saw the Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (the people who are spearheading U.S. involvement in Somalia and Ethiopia) as a model for what Africom could do in the rest of the continent. They admitted that they had made no attempt to consult with anyone at the UN while they were developing Africom and hadn't really consulted with anyone in Africa either.

"It was clear from their statements that they were very surprised and unhappy about the public response from Africans to Africom and that this was the reason that they were going to have to keep the Africom HQ in Stuttgart for the time being, although they will continue to look for African hosts and will also work on ways to station Africom staff people in less obvious and provocative ways like sending small groups to liaison with selected African military forces. They want to believe that this is just a problem of public relations and that they just have to do a better job of explaining themselves. One of the new buzzwords in Africom is 'active listening,' i.e. pretending to care what other people think."

The fact that Africom's planners would cite Somalia as a model they'd like to extend to the rest of the continent is more than a little instructive. US involvement in that unhappy country since the 1991 overthrow of Siad Barre has resulted in constant civil war and man-made famines, topped off by a US funded invasion by Ethiopia that have killed a million people, about a tenth of Somalia's population, and driven another million from their homes. Coincidentally, Somalia is just across the Gulf of Aden from Arabia and the Gulf States, and sits atop a virtually untapped lake of oil.

Evidently, keeping Africa [barefoot, hungry, sick and at war with itself](#) is good for American business. During the bloody Congolese war, in which the US supported armies of nine nations invaded and pillaged the Congo killing at least five million of its inhabitants, US policy was focused on keeping the timber, gold, titanium, and other strategic minerals flowing to the US and its allies, regardless of the civilian death toll. At the same time, a conflict in Darfur, with somewhere between one twentieth and one fiftieth of the Congo's death toll has rallied the bipartisan US foreign policy establishment to call for open US military involvement in Darfur, perhaps because some of Sudan's oil is going to China.

Africans are not fools, and despite the clamor of a few of the continent's most discredited and craven regimes to locate Africom in their countries, probably as the ultimate insurance against coups and

revolutions, Africom has not yet found an African host country. Most African governments fear being labeled as abject stooges of Africom. They fear the wrath of their own people, which is as it should be.

The questions for Americans concerned about the nation's policies in Africa are stark. The militarization of Africa, and of US policy toward Africa is a matter of bipartisan consensus, no matter who will be president come next January. Africans can be expected to resist the extension of the Somalia "model" to the rest of the continent. By now, this is business as usual. The only question is whether activists on this side of the water are prepared to somehow raise the cost of "business as usual" beyond what America's otherwise unaccountable rulers are willing to pay.

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The controversy over Africom

By Daniel Gordon
BBC World Service's Analysis programme

US Africa Command - a unit designed to run all of America's military operations in Africa - opened for business this month.

Africom takes over the work currently done by three different command centres, all of them based outside Africa. While it is stationed in Germany for now, there has been a hostile reaction from many African countries to the idea of such a major US military installation moving onto African soil.

Many crucial details about how it is meant to work are still unclear. It has not yet been revealed, for example, where its headquarters will be.

And the fact that so much is still under wraps is fuelling the suspicion about what it is intended for.

Militarised society?

The Bush administration insists there's nothing sinister about the Africom initiative.

According to US Under-Secretary of Defence Ryan Henry, it amounts merely to the redeployment of a few hundred personnel.

"Today we have the European Command, the Central Command and the Pacific Command, that deal with Africa," he says.

"All we're doing is realigning that to put it under a single commander, so that we have somebody who is making an attempt to work with Africans on a day-in and day-out basis, rather than three different commanders who have their priorities in other places."

President Bush says Africom will not only improve security, but will also promote development, health, education, democracy and economic growth in Africa.

But not everyone is convinced.

Salim Lone, a columnist for a daily newspaper in Kenya, believes the creation of Africom is a milestone in US foreign policy - and that the fact Mr Bush is advertising it as a kind of panacea for Africa proves that the only future engagement the US plans for Africa is a military one.

"It will militarise society," he says.

"The military now is going to be working with civil society, to promote health and education.

"Africa is going to look at all its development efforts through the lens of the Pentagon. That's a truly dangerous dimension. We don't need militarisation of Africa, we don't need securitisation of aid and development in Africa."

Indian influence

He is convinced America's goal is not development, but resources such as oil, timber, cobalt and uranium.

And he is not the only one who views Africom unfavourably.

Morocco, Algeria and Libya are all reported to have refused US requests to base the command centre on their soil, while South Africa has been actively discouraging support for the idea amongst its neighbours.

We have somebody who is making an attempt to work with Africans on a day-in and day-out basis, rather than three different commanders who have their priorities in other places

Under-Secretary of Defence Ryan Henry

Helmut Heitman, the South Africa Correspondent of Jane's Defence Weekly, is less sceptical. He thinks the earnest claims made by the US about its intentions in Africa can be taken at face value - for now at least.

"What they're saying at the moment - that it's primarily a security, assistance and training focus, is probably true," he says.

"They're still building up their knowledge base. I don't see them rushing into Africa with large combat forces or anything. This is a contact building exercise that will be extended if necessary."

Mr Heitman adds, however, that he can see an emphasis on countering both the growing Chinese influence in Africa, and the potential Indian influence there too.

But he points out that the objections raised by African countries are about more than protecting their national sovereignty.

"There's a general negativity among African countries that don't function all that cleanly towards Europe and America - they much prefer the Chinese version of 'here's the money, do what you like'," he says.

"South Africa has reacted negatively, but not for that reason. South Africa has never liked Washington much, because it sees itself as a regional power, and doesn't want anyone else to tell it what to do."

Expanding interests

Not all of Africa is against Africom. Many states are waiting for more details to be made public before they declare where they stand.

And the project does have its backers. Liberia has offered to host the headquarters on its territory.

President Ellen Johnston Sirleaf calls it a model for the future: helping governments that are willing to help themselves.

Africa analyst Brett Schaeffer of the Heritage Foundation in Washington puts the objections down to a public relations failure on the part of the US.

"Because the US was so hesitant in announcing the details, it allowed people to fill the void with these conspiracy theories which don't have any basis on which to come to their conclusions," he says.

"All the US can do is explain clearly what role it sees for Africom - which I see as very positive."

Meanwhile, Helmut Heitman says the US is not the only foreign power trying to secure its grip on the region; the difference is others are more covert in the way they're going about it.

"I think China, India and to a lesser extent Brazil will try to expand their interests in Africa," he says.

"But they won't do things as obviously. I think they will only be indirectly involved militarily, by supporting their favoured government, opposition group or warlord."

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Kip's Folly: A Black Commander for U.S. Forces in Africa

by Mark P. Fancher

From Clarence Thomas to Colin Powell to Condoleezza Rice - and many more African American mercenaries in between - U.S. rulers have had little problem finding Black front men and women for their intrigues and adventures. And so it is with Africom, the U.S. military's newly debuted Africa Command, under Army General William E. "Kip" Ward. Designed to establish "an expanded western military presence in Africa for the purpose of securing domination of the continent's oil and other natural resources," Africom "possibly poses the most lethal threat to Africa and African people in the modern era." General "Kip" Ward's Black presence cannot change the nature of the beast.

"We can safely bet that the Pentagon will label African freedom fighters as terrorists and order good ole Kip to 'suppress the restless natives.'"



Army General William E. "Kip" Ward stands tall as imperialism's shining black prince. He has been anointed to head Africom, a rapidly unfolding plan to establish an expanded western military presence in Africa for the purpose of securing domination of the continent's oil and other natural resources. (Okay, okay - so they claim Africom is designed to quell internal strife and fight terrorism. But none of us believe that.)

Although Africom has triggered a wave of grumbling across the breadth of the African continent and into many corners of the African Diaspora, it's a pretty good bet that from the oil company executive suites, to the oval office, to the Pentagon, and on down to the fellas who hang out in the officer's club at the local Army base,

General Ward is the man of the hour. Even his nickname has been made to order. Can't you hear the comments? "That Kip is a credit to his country, the armed forces and his race." "Why can't they all be more like Kip?"

With degrees from Morgan State University and Pennsylvania State University followed by 36 years of military service in Korea, Egypt, Somalia, Bosnia, Israel, Germany, Alaska and Hawaii, how can you beat this guy? He certainly must have been the kind of person retired generals had in mind when, during the last big affirmative action case to come before the Supreme Court the generals said: "... the military cannot achieve an officer corps that is both highly qualified and racially diverse" without race-conscious remedies. And if the military can't do that, whose black faces can be used to give credibility to U.S. military operations in Africa?

"The General and so many Africans born in America drift into roles that require them to work against the interests of their people."

It is certainly possible that General Ward is a dedicated career military man who, with great sincerity, welcomes the opportunity to cap his long career with service to the continent of his ancestral origins. If so, that is precisely the problem. He and so many Africans born in America who have distinguished themselves professionally within corporate and government structures either naively miss, or deliberately ignore, their drift into roles that require them to work against the interests of their people.

In the case of Africom, this project is not divorced from a long history of efforts by Africa's people to wrest control of unquantifiable natural wealth, first from western governments that colonized the continent and more recently from multi-national corporations that exploit Africa with the assistance of black neo-colonial heads of African states. It has been necessary for many of these people's struggles to be carried out with arms in places like Angola, Guinea Bissau, Congo, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. Given the determination of exploiters to maintain their iron grip on valuable natural resources, even while Africa's people suffer and starve, it is certainly likely that armed struggle by genuine revolutionaries will occur again in other parts of the continent. When that happens, we can safely bet that the Pentagon will label the African freedom fighters as terrorists and order good ole Kip to "suppress the restless natives."

General Ward is not alone in his willingness to play the role of imperialist lackey. Barack Obama enthusiastically embraces the Africom concept. He uttered the following nonsense: "There will be situations that require the United States to work with its partners in Africa to fight terrorism with lethal force. Having a unified command operating in Africa will facilitate this action." If Ward and Obama were to rationalize their compromises with the tired excuse that Africom can't be stopped and "at least it will be under the control of a brother," we would be compelled to respond that our people's history shows that it doesn't have to be that way.

"Barack Obama enthusiastically embraces the Africom concept."

At the dawn of the 20th Century, when Buffalo Soldiers were directed by racist white commanders to suppress a rebellion by brown-skinned Filipinos, conscience prevented a number of these Africans from following those orders. During the Vietnam War, some of the brothers in the U.S. military did the same thing. In fact, Muhammad Ali, while at the peak of his career, was moved by conscience to bravely refuse to fight in Vietnam. He lost almost everything as a consequence. We must remember the 43 brothers stationed at Fort Hood, Texas who were prosecuted for refusing to attack anti-war protesters at the 1968 Democratic National Convention.

This tradition of refusing to participate in unconscionable U.S. military missions is alive even today. Consider that until the year 2000, U.S.-born Africans accounted for nearly 25 percent of Army personnel. By 2004, less than 16 percent of Army recruits were Africans. That percentage continues to decline. An Army study concluded that the attitudes of black youth were significantly shaped by their community, and the widespread opposition to the Iraq War in that community led

to a rejection of military service. According to a Gallup Poll, 78 percent of whites supported the Iraq war, and 72 percent of blacks opposed it in 2003.

"General Ward stands poised to preside over an operation that possibly poses the most lethal threat to Africa and African people in the modern era."

Is it fair to demand that Ward commit career suicide by opposing Africom, or at least refusing to lead it? The short answer is yes. Since our arrival on U.S. shores, Africans have never had the convenient option of declining heroism. Unlike the majority demographic in this country whose individual decisions often have implications only for the individuals who make them, whenever we Africans take the easy road paved by an oppressive system, large numbers of our people are injured or killed as a consequence. Contemplate for only a moment the incredible number of lives of oppressed people and people of color that have been ruined or lost because of the opportunistic, self-centered careers of Clarence Thomas, Condoleezza Rice, and other lesser-known individuals of that ilk. General Ward stands poised to preside over an operation that possibly poses the most lethal threat to Africa and African people in the modern era. If on the question of whether to go forward as Africom's commander, Ward is to be guided by morality and his people's history, he has but one clear choice.

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U.S. 'Bwana' Goes 'Big Game' Hunting for Iraqis

by Nick Turse

This article originally appeared in [TomDispatch](#).

"The Corps hopes to tap into skills certain Marines may already have learned growing up in rural hunting areas and in urban areas, such as inner cities."

Earlier this month, news of the military's use of Human Terrain Teams - U.S. combat units operating in Afghanistan and Iraq that contain anthropologists and other social scientists who have traded in their academic robes for body armor - hit the [front-page](#) of the *New York Times*. While the incorporation of [academic experts](#) into combat units has raised ire in some [scholarly circles](#), their use as "cultural advisers" to aid the war effort has been greeted by the military as "a crucial new weapon in counterinsurgency operations" and in the media as an example of increased cultural sensitivity as well as evidence of a new Pentagon willingness to think outside the box.

But the university is only one of a number of areas where an overstretched military, involved in two losing wars, is in a desperate search for new ideas. And humanizing allies and enemies alike has only been one part of the process. Dehumanizing them has been the other. At a recent [conference](#) on urban warfare in Washington, D.C., James Lasswell, a retired Marine Corps colonel who now heads the Office of Science and Technology at the Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory, opened an interesting window into this side of things. He noted that, as part of an instruction course named "Combat Hunter," the Marines have brought in "big-game hunters" to school their

snipers in the better use of "optics." According to a September 2007 article by Grace Jean in [National Defense Magazine](#), "[T]he lab conducted a war game with Marines, African game hunters and inner city police officers to search for ways to improve training." The program included a 15-minute CD titled "Every Marine a Hunter."

"The Warfighting Laboratory conducted a war game with Marines, African game hunters and inner city police officers to search for ways to improve training."

Earlier this year, according to an article by Kimberly Johnson of the *Marine Corps Times*, Col. Clarke Lethin, chief of staff of the I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) - a unit based in Camp Pendleton, California that took part in the 2003 invasion of Iraq and will be [returning there](#) soon - indicated that its commanders "believe that if we create a mentality in our Marines that they are hunters and they take on some of those skills, then we'll be able to increase our combat effectiveness." The article included this curious add-on: "The Corps hopes to tap into skills certain Marines may already have learned growing up in rural hunting areas and in urban areas, such as inner cities, said Col. Clarke Lethin, I MEF's chief of staff." Outraged by the statement, one Sgt. Ramsey K. Gregory wrote a [letter](#) to the publication asking, "Just what was meant by that comment about the inner city? I hope to God that he's not saying that people from the inner cities are experts in killing each other and that we all just walk around carrying guns."

While the colonel's language - [defended](#) by some - did seem to suggest that inner-city dwellers lived in an urban jungle of gun-toting hunters of other humans, none of the letters, pro or con, considered quite a different part of the Colonel's equation: the implicit comparison of enemies in urban warfare, today largely Iraqis and Afghans, to animals that are hunted and killed as quarry. As Lethin had unabashedly noted, "We identified a need to ensure our Marines were being the hunters... Hunting is more than just the shooting. It's finding your game."

That military men might indulge in this sort of description was perhaps less than surprising, given the degree to which "hunting" the enemy has been on the lips of America's commander-in-chief. George W. Bush has, on many [occasions](#), invoked the image: "We're hunting them down, one at a time" he likes to say of, for instance, al-Qaeda terrorists, or "we're smoking them out," as he [said](#) in November 2001. In fact, the President needed no big-game hunters to coach him on his optics or anything else. He's talked incessantly of hunting humans - in [speeches](#) to American troops, at [photo ops](#) with foreign leaders, at [family fundraisers](#), even in the midst of [remarks](#) about homeownership.

"The President has talked incessantly of hunting humans, even in the midst of remarks about homeownership."

Nor is there anything new about Americans treating racial and ethnic enemies as the equivalent of animals to be abused or killed. In his memoir of the Vietnam War, *Dispatches*, acclaimed combat correspondent Michael Herr, for example, recalled a young soldier from the Army's 1st Infantry Division who admitted, "Well, you know what we do to animals.... kill 'em and hurt 'em and beat on 'em.... Shit, we don't treat the Dinks [Vietnamese] no different than that." Another veteran, quoted elsewhere remembered, "As soon as I hit boot camp.... they tried to change your total personality.... Right away they told us not to call them Vietnamese. Call them gooks, dinks.... They were like animals, or something other than human.... They told us they're not to be treated with any type of mercy..." Today, the slurs of the Vietnam era have been [replaced](#) by "haji" and "raghead," while the big-game hunters and the language that goes with killing animals have added to the atmosphere of dehumanization.

That program of instruction is, however, just one recent example of an undercurrent within the military's institutional culture that implicitly reduces people to animals. It's not just in the language

of everyday anger and dismissal by soldiers in a strange land where danger is everywhere and it's difficult to tell friend from foe. It's lodged right in the institutional language, if you care to notice. Last month, a piece in the [Washington Post](#), for example, drew much [media attention](#) when it came to light that U.S. Army snipers from the "painted demons" platoon of the 1st Battalion, 501st Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division allegedly took part in "a classified program of 'baiting' their targets" to lure insurgents within their sniper scopes.

"Basically, we would put an item [like a spool of wire or ammunition] out there and watch it," said Capt. Matthew P. Didier, the leader of the elite sniper platoon in a sworn statement. "If someone found the item, picked it up and attempted to leave with the item, we would engage the individual as I saw this as a sign they would use the item against U.S. Forces." While there has been much subsequent discussion about the ethics and legality of such a program, nobody seemed to take note of the hunting language involved. After all, when you "bait" a trap (or a hook), it's to lure an animal (or fish) in for the kill. But "bait" for a human?

"There is nothing new about Americans treating racial and ethnic enemies as the equivalent of animals to be abused or killed."

While the use of anthropologists and other social scientists has made headlines, the utilization of "big-game hunters" as troop trainers for the "urban jungles" of Iraq has been essentially ignored. Programs stressing cultural sensitivity may be covered, but treating Iraqis scavenging in a weapon-strewn war zone as the equivalent of elephants, water buffalo, or other prized trophies of *great white hunters* has gone largely unexamined in any meaningful way.

From the commander-in-chief to low-ranking snipers, a language of dehumanization that includes the idea of hunting humans as if they were animals has crept into our world - unnoticed and unnoted in the mainstream media. Perhaps a few linguistics professors or other social scientists might like to step into the breach and offer their views on the subject - unless, of course, they've already been mustered into those Human Terrain Teams.

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Americanistic Personality Disorder (type 1776.0)

by Jason Miller

"Believing in their inherent superiority, they eschew laws or rules except when they can utilize them for personal gain or when they fear punishment."

This article originally appeared in [Cyrano's Journal](#).

Mr. Miller has studied the American personality, and the prognosis does not look good. Miller identifies nine characteristics of what he calls Americanistic Personality Disorder (type 1776.0), "a dangerous perversion of character" that may become pathological. Practitioners of "deeply conservative Christianity" and residents of the South and certain other states are especially susceptible to the disorder, which presents itself in displays of racism, flag-waving, nationalistic, and militaristic fervor." There's no point in quarantining the afflicted since, according to the author, they make up about 35 percent of the U.S. population.

The essential features of Americanistic Personality Disorder include pervasive patterns of extreme self-absorption, profound and long-term lapses in empathy, a deep disregard for the well-being of others, a powerful aversion to intellectual honesty and reality, and a grossly exaggerated sense of the importance of one's self and one's nation. These patterns emerge in infancy, manifest themselves in nearly all contexts, and often become pathological.

These patterns have also been characterized as sociopathic, or colloquially as the "Ugly American Syndrome." Note that the latter terminology carries too benign a connotation to accurately describe an individual afflicted with such a dangerous perversion of character.

For this diagnosis to be given, the individual must be deeply immersed in the flag-waving, nationalistic, and militaristic fervor derived primarily from the nearly perpetual barrage of reality warping emanations of the "mainstream media," most commonly through the medium of television. Typically indoctrinated from birth to believe that they are morally superior, exceptional human beings, these individuals suffer from severe egocentrism, a condition further engendered by the prevalence of the acutely toxic dominant paradigm known as capitalism.

"The individual must be deeply immersed in the flag-waving, nationalistic, and militaristic fervor."

Individuals with Americanistic Personality Disorder are generally covertly racist, xenophobic, and openly species-istic. They readily participate in the execution of heinous crimes against human and non-human animals, even if their complicity is banal and limited. As long as they are comfortable, safe, and enjoying the relative affluence and convenience afforded by their nation's economic extortion, cultural genocide, rape of other species and the environment, and imperial conquests, such individuals display an apathetic disregard for the well-being of other human beings, sentient creatures, and the environment.

Individuals with Americanistic Personality Disorder tend to exhibit unabated greed and an insatiable desire for material goods. Fueled by a compulsion to shop and acquire excessive amounts of material goods, a condition sometimes referred to as consumerism, they have no regard for the misery and destruction caused by their pathological need for "more stuff." When confronted with the finitude and fragility of the Earth, they frequently react with level one ego defenses by denying that their behavior is a part of the problem or by distorting reality by asserting that concerns about Climate Change, resource depletion, and irreversible damage to the environment are over-blown. Their deeply entrenched sense of entitlement renders excessive consumption a nearly immutable aspect of their behavior.

Individuals with Americanistic Personality Disorder are virtually devoid of empathy or compassion. They view life as a game played by "law of the jungle" rules and co-exist with others in a chronic state of hyper-competitiveness, seeking only to advance their careers and "keep up with the Joneses." Their desire to win, get ahead and "protect what is theirs" has been so deeply etched into their psyches that their capacity to empathize and experience true concern for the well-

being of others is severely stunted or extinguished. The pursuit of property, profit, and power rules their malformed psyches, nearly eliminating their capacity for humane behavior.

"The pursuit of property, profit, and power rules their malformed psyches."

Individuals with Americanistic Personality Disorder almost always rely on extortion or violence to get their needs met and to resolve conflict. Believing in their inherent superiority, they eschew laws or rules except when they can utilize them for personal gain or when they fear punishment. Given a choice between a just resolution to a situation and the opportunity to humiliate, subdue, or subjugate the other party, they will choose the latter with a high degree of frequency. They have an amazing capacity to justify their unethical or criminal behavior using false pretexts such as self defense, good intentions, ignorance of the consequences of their actions, or asserting that they were merely carrying out orders.

Individuals with Americanistic Personality Disorder tend to manifest traits indicative of two of Erich Fromm's personality orientations. They thrive on adding to their possessions, and appreciate their acquisitions more when they attain them through coercion, theft, or manipulation, thus showing strains of Fromm's exploitative type. They also exist at a very superficial level, offering the world the "friendly face" of the marketing personality that Bernays and Madison Avenue have taught them is the most effective way of advancing their selfish agenda. Opportunism, careerism, and narcissism poison nearly all of their interactions and relationships.

Specific Culture Features

Americanistic Personality Disorder appears to prevail in a very high percentage of those in the upper strata of the socioeconomic order in the United States (and to persist tenaciously because these individuals have little motivation to alter their pathological behavior as they are largely immune from the consequences of their actions). While it is epidemic amongst the opulent, this characterological deficiency does not recognize socioeconomic boundaries. Various segments of the middle, working and impoverished classes comprise a notable percentage of those exhibiting this condition, including those practicing deeply conservative Christianity, many residents of reactionary states such as those in the south, Kansas, Idaho, Utah, and Wyoming, and many members of the Republican Party.

Prevalence

The overall prevalence of Americanistic Personality Disorder was recently measured at approximately 35% of the overall population in the United States.

Diagnostic Criteria for 1776.0 Americanistic Personality Disorder:

A pervasive pattern of greed, selfishness, and lack of empathy, beginning the moment he or she begins to intellectualize and presented in nearly all contexts, as indicated by five (or more) of the following:

1. lacks empathy due to an excessive degree of self-absorption
2. believes that he or she is exceptional and morally superior
3. frequently engages in exploitative behaviors
4. requires frequent acquisition of goods he or she doesn't need
5. usually resorts to some form of overt or covert violence, coercion, or extortion to resolve conflicts
6. perceives others as obstacles to his or her "success"
7. disregards laws and rules except as a means to achieve his or her agenda

8. demonstrates deep hypocrisy by projecting a righteous, benevolent image while committing reprehensible acts
9. refuses to accept the consequences of his or her actions

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Pentagon Plans 100-Year Global War in the Cities

by Nick Turse

Weapons that take out one floor of a city building, but leave the structure standing. Robot spies that look like dragonflies that can fly into your apartment to scope its contents. Intensity sound transmitters - already tentatively deployed in the United States - to cause excruciating pain to crowds of thousands. Sensors that can "see" every person in an apartment building, and take out those targeted. The global spread of mega-cities, largely shanty towns of the dispossessed in poorer nations, and the ruler's unease at growing public discontent even in the developed world, have caused Pentagon planners and their hip-joined private contractors to conclude that urban warfare is the future.

"There were few imaginable technologies that weren't being considered for the 100-year battle these men are convinced is ahead of us in the planet's city streets."

This article previously appeared in TomDispatch.com.

Duane Schattle doesn't mince words. "The cities are the problem," he says. A retired Marine infantry lieutenant colonel who worked on urban warfare issues at the Pentagon in the late 1990s, he now serves as director of the Joint Urban Operations Office at U.S. Joint Forces Command. He sees the war in the streets of Iraq's cities as the prototype for tomorrow's battlespace. "This is the next fight," he warns. "The future of warfare is what we see now."

He isn't alone. "We think urban is the future," says James Lasswell, a retired colonel who now heads the Office of Science and Technology at the Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory. "Everything worth fighting for is in the urban environment." And Wayne Michael Hall, a retired Army brigadier general and the senior intelligence advisor in Schattle's operation, has a similar assessment, "We will be fighting in urban terrain for the next hundred years."

Last month, in a hotel nestled behind a medical complex in Washington, D.C., Schattle, Lasswell, and Hall, along with Pentagon power-brokers, active duty and retired U.S. military personnel, foreign coalition partners, representatives of big and small defense contractors, and academics who support their work gathered for a "Joint Urban Operations, 2007" conference. Some had served in Iraq or Afghanistan; others were involved in designing strategy, tactics, and concepts, or in creating new weaponry and equipment, for the urban wars in those countries. And here, in this

hotel conference center, they're talking about military technologies of a sort you've only seen in James Cameron's 2000-2002 television series *Dark Angel*.

"We will be fighting in urban terrain for the next hundred years."

I'm the oddity in this room of largely besuited defense contractors, military retirees, and camouflage-fatigue-clad military men at a conference focused on strategies for battling it out in the labyrinthine warrens of what urbanologist [Mike Davis](#) calls "the planet of slums." The hulking guy who plops down next to me as the meeting begins is a caricature of just the attendee you might imagine would be at such a meeting. "I sell guns," he says right off. Over the course of the conference, this representative of one of the world's best known weapons manufacturers will suggest that members of the media be shot to avoid bad press and he'll call a local tour guide he met in Vietnam a "bastard" for explaining just how his people thwarted U.S. efforts to kill them. But he's an exception. Almost everyone else seems to be a master of serene anodyne-speak. Even the camo-clad guys seem somehow more academic than warlike.

In his *tour de force* book [Planet of Slums](#), Davis observes, "The Pentagon's best minds have dared to venture where most United Nations, World Bank or Department of State types fear to go... [T]hey now assert that the 'feral, failed cities' of the Third World - especially their slum outskirts - will be the distinctive battlespace of the twenty-first century." Pentagon war-fighting doctrine, he notes, "is being reshaped accordingly to support a low-intensity world war of unlimited duration against criminalized segments of the urban poor."

But the mostly male conference-goers planning for a multi-generational struggle against the global South's slums aren't a gang of urban warfare cowboys talking non-stop death and destruction; and they don't look particularly bellicose either, as they munch on chocolate-chip cookies during our afternoon snack breaks in a room where cold cuts and brochures for the [Rapid Wall Breaching Kit](#) - which allows users to blast a man-sized hole in the side of any building - are carefully laid out on the tables. Instead, these mild-mannered men speak about combat restraint, "less than lethal weaponry," precision targeting, and (harking back to the Vietnam War) "winning hearts and minds."

The Men of Urban Warfare

Take Dr. Russell W. Glenn, a thin, bespectacled RAND Senior Policy Researcher who looks for all the world like some bookish college professor Hollywood dreamed up. You'd never guess he went to the Army's airborne, ranger, and pathfinder schools and is a veteran of Operation Desert Storm. You'd also never suspect that he might be the most prolific planner for the Pentagon's century-long slum fight of tomorrow.

In *Planet of Slums*, Davis notes that the RAND Corporation, a non-profit think-tank established by the Air Force in 1948, has been a key player in pioneering the conceptual framework that has led to the current generation of what's called, in the jargon of this meeting, "urban operations" or, more familiarly, UO. Glenn, it so happens, is their main man in the field. He travels the planet studying counterinsurgency warfare. Of late, he's been to the Solomon Islands, where an island rebellion occurred in the late 1990s, the Philippines, where an insurgency has been raging for decades (if not since the U.S. occupation at the dawn of the twentieth century), and, of course, Iraq. He's co-authored well over 20 UO studies for RAND including, most recently, "*People Make the City*": *Joint Urban Operations Observations and Insights from Afghanistan and Iraq* (publicly available in 86-page [executive summary form](#)) and the still-classified *A Tale of Three Cities: Analyzing Joint Urban Operations with a Focus on Fallujah, Al Amara, and Mosul*.

"DARPA is only a part of the story when it comes to promoting corporate assistance in this 100-year-war growth area."

On the technological front, the Pentagon's blue-skies research outfit, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency ([DARPA](#)) sent its grandfatherly-looking deputy director, Robert F. Leheny, to talk about such [UO-oriented technology](#) as the latest in unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and sense-through-walls technologies that allow troops to *see* people and objects inside buildings. While Leheny noted that 63% of DARPA's \$3 billion yearly budget (\$600 million of it dedicated to UO technologies in the coming years) is funneled to industry partners, DARPA is only a part of the story when it comes to promoting corporate assistance in this 100-year-war growth area.

The largest contractors in the military-corporate complex are already hard at work helping the Pentagon prepare for future urban occupations. Raytheon, L-3 Communications, and Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC) - the 5th, 7th, and 10th largest Pentagon contractors last year, taking in a combined \$18.4-plus billion from the Department of Defense - have all signed Cooperative Research and Development Agreements with the U.S. Joint Forces Command, according to Berry "Dan" Fox, the Deputy Director of Science and Technology at its Joint Urban Operations Office.

As you might imagine, smaller contractors are eager to climb aboard the urban warfare gravy train. At the conference, Lite Machines Corporation was a good example of this. It was vigorously marketing a hand-launched, low-flying UAV so light that it resembled nothing more than a large, plastic [toy water rocket](#) with miniature helicopter rotors. The company envisions a profitably privacy-free future in which urban zones are besieged by "swarms" of such small UAVs that not only peek into city windows, but even invade homes. According to a company spokesman, "You could really blanket a ground area with as many UAVs as you want.... penetrate structures, see through a window or even break a window," in order to fly inside a house or apartment and troll around.

"The company envisions a profitably privacy-free future in which urban zones are besieged by "swarms" of such small UAVs that not only peek into city windows, but even invade homes."

DARPA'S Leheny also extolled hovering UAVs, specifically the positively *green*-sounding [Organic Micro Air Vehicle](#) which brings to mind the "spinners" in *Blade Runner* or, even earlier in blow-your-mind futuristic movie history, [V.I.N.CENT](#) from Disney's *The Black Hole*. This drone, Leheny noted, has "perch and stare" capabilities that allow it to lie in wait for hours before fixing on a target and guiding in extended-line-of-sight or beyond-line-of-sight weapons. He also described in detail another DARPA-pioneered unmanned aerial vehicle, the WASP - a tiny, silent drone that spies on the sly and can be carried in a soldier's pack. Leheny noted that there are now "a couple hundred of these flying in Iraq."

In addition to endless chatter about the devastated "urban canyons" of Iraq and Afghanistan, the specters of past battleground cities - some of them, anyway - were clearly on many minds. There were constant references to urban battle zones of history like Stalingrad and Grozny or such American examples as Manila in 1945 and Panama City in 1989. Curiously neglected, however, were the flattened cities of Germany and Japan in World War II, not to speak of the bombed-out cities of Korea and Vietnam. Perhaps the Korean and Vietnam Wars weren't on the agenda because "restraint" and "precision" were such watchwords of the meeting. No one seemed particularly eager to discuss the destruction visited on the Iraqi city of Fallujah either -- three-quarters of its buildings and mosques were [damaged](#) in an American assault in November 2004.

During James Lasswell's presentation, he was quite specific about the non-Fallujah-like need to be "very discriminate" in applying firepower in an urban environment. As an example of the ability of technology to aid in such efforts, he displayed a photo of the aftermath of an Israeli strike on a three-story Lebanese building. The third floor of the structure had been obliterated, while the roof above and the floors below appeared relatively unscathed. In an aside, Lasswell mentioned that, while the effort had been a discriminating one, the floor taken out "turned out to be the wrong floor." A rumble of knowing chuckles swept the room.

Fighting in the City of Your Choice, 2045

Discrimination, it turned out, didn't mean legal constraint. Speakers and conference-goers alike repeatedly lamented the way international law and similar hindrances stood in the way of unleashing chemical agents and emerging technologies. Microwave-like pain rays and other directed energy weapons - such as the [Active Denial System](#) which inflicts an intense burning sensation on victims - were reoccurring favorites of the gathering. During their PowerPoint presentation, the men from Lite Machines, for instance, showed a computer rendering of their micro-UAVs attacking an unarmed crowd gathered in a town square with a variety of less-than-lethal weapons like disorienting laser [dazzlers](#) and chemical gases (vomiting and tear-gas agents), while a company spokesman regretfully mentioned that international regulations have made it impossible to employ such gases on the battlefield. Undoubtedly, this was a reference to the scorned [Chemical Weapons Convention](#), which has been binding for the last decade.

"The men from Lite Machines showed a computer rendering of their micro-UAVs attacking an unarmed crowd gathered in a town square with a variety of less-than-lethal weapons like disorienting laser [dazzler](#) and chemical gases"

RAND's Glenn similarly brought up the possibility of reassessing such international conventions and overcoming fears that chemical weapons might fall into the "wrong hands." Saddam Hussein was his example of such "wrong hands," but the hands responsible for Abu Ghraib, Mahmudiyah, Hamdania, Haditha, or the invasion of Iraq itself - to find non-existent banned weapons - seemed to give him no pause.

While the various speakers at the conference focused on the burgeoning inhabitants of the developing world's slum cities as targets of the Pentagon's 100-year war, it was clear that those in the "homeland" weren't about to escape some of its effects either. For example, back in 2004, Marines deploying to Iraq brought the Long Range Acoustic Device (LRAD) with them. A futuristic non-lethal weapon alluded to multiple times at the conference, it emits a powerful tone which can bring agonizing pain to those within earshot. Says Woody Norris, chairman of the American Technology Corporation, which manufactures the device: "It will knock [some people] on their knees." That very same year, the LRAD was [deployed](#) to the streets of the Big Apple (but apparently not used) by the New York Police Department as a backup for protests against the Republican National Convention. In 2005, it was [shipped](#) to "areas hit by Hurricane Katrina" for possible "crowd control" purposes and, by 2006, was in the hands of U.S. Border Patrol agents. In that same year, it was also revealed that the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department had begun testing the use of remote-controlled surveillance UAVs - not unlike those now operating above Iraqi cities - over their own megalopolis.

When it came to the "homeland," conference participants were particularly focused on moving beyond weaponry aimed at individuals, like rubber bullets. Needed in the future, they generally agreed, were technologies that could target whole crowds at once - not just rioters but even those simply attending "demonstrations that *could* go violent."

"In 2005, Long Range Acoustic Devices were shipped to 'areas hit by Hurricane Katrina' for possible 'crowd control' purposes."

Other futuristic UO concepts are also coming home. According to Dan Fox of the Joint Urban Operations Office, the Department of Justice, like the military, is currently working on sense-through-wall technologies. His associate Duane Schattle is collaborating with the U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) - set up by the Bush administration in 2002 and whose area of operations is "America's homefront" - on such [subjects](#) as "sharing intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, command and control capabilities." He also spoke at the conference about developing synergy between the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security in regard to urban-operations technologies. He, too, expressed his hope that microwave weapon technology would be made available for police use in this country.

A specific goal of DARPA, as a slide in deputy chief Leheny's presentation made clear, is to "make a foreign city as familiar as the soldier's backyard." This would be done through the deployment of intrusive sensor, UAV, and mapping technologies. In fact, there were few imaginable technologies, even ones that not so long ago inhabited the wildest frontiers of science fiction, that weren't being considered for the 100-year battle these men are convinced is ahead of us in the planet's city streets. The only thing not evidently open to discussion was the basic wisdom of planning to occupy foreign cities for a century to come. Even among the most thoughtful of these often brainy participants, there wasn't a nod toward, or a question asked of, the essential guiding principle of the conference itself.

"The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department had begun testing the use of remote-controlled surveillance Unarmed Aerial Vehicles - not unlike those now operating above Iraqi cities - over their own megalopolis."

With their surprisingly bloodless language, antiseptic PowerPoint presentations, and calm tones, these men - only one woman spoke - are still planning Iraq-style wars of tomorrow. What makes this chilling is not only that they envision a future of endless urban warfare, but that they have the power to drive such a war-fighting doctrine into that future; that they have the power to mold strategy and advance weaponry that can, in the end, lock Americans into policies that are unlikely to make it beyond these conference-room doors, no less into public debate, before they are unleashed.

These men may be mapping out the next hundred years for urban populations in cities across the planet. At the conference, at least, which ones exactly seemed beside the point. Who could know, after all, whether in, say, 2045, the target would be Mumbai, Lagos, or Karachi - though one speaker did offhandedly mention Jakarta, Indonesia, a city of nine million today, as a future possibility.

Along with the lack of even a hint of skepticism about the basic premise of the conference went a fundamental belief that being fought to a standstill by a ragtag insurgency in Iraq was an issue to be addressed by merely rewriting familiar tactics, strategy, and doctrine and throwing multi-billions more in taxpayer dollars - in the form of endless new technologies - at the problem. In fact, listening to the presentations in that conference room, with its rows of white-shrouded tables in front of a small stage, it would not have been hard to believe that the U.S. had defeated North Korea, had won in Vietnam, had never rushed out of Beirut or fled Mogadishu, or hadn't spent markedly more time failing to achieve victory in Afghanistan than it did fighting the First and Second World Wars combined.

"The Pentagon has evidently decided to prepare for 100 years of war against various outposts of a restless, oppressed population of slum-dwellers one billion strong and growing at an estimated rate of 25 million a year."

To the rest of the world, at least, it's clear enough that the Pentagon knows how to redden city streets in the developing world, just not win wars there; but in Washington - by the evidence of this "Joint Urban Operations, 2007" conference - it matters little. Advised, outfitted, and educated by these mild-mannered men who sipped sodas and noshed on burnt egg rolls between presentations, the Pentagon has evidently decided to prepare for 100 years more of the same: war against various outposts of a restless, oppressed population of slum-dwellers [one billion strong](#) and growing at an estimated rate of 25 million a year. All of these UO experts are preparing for an endless struggle that history suggests they can't win, but that is guaranteed to lead to large-scale destruction, destabilization, and death. Unsurprisingly, the civilians of the cities that they plan to occupy, whether living in Karachi, Jakarta, or Baghdad, have no say in the matter. No one thought to invite any of them to the conference.

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Is Africa the Next Cold War Theater?

by Nii OkaiJah

Africa's failure to move towards creation of a "United States of Africa" - Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's vision when he assumed the presidency of newly independent Ghana, 50 years ago - has exposed the continent to "a new form of colonialism." The two main pincers threatening African independence are the Chinese economic drive, and recent creation of the U.S. Africa Command - a military presence that should not be allowed to establish itself on African soil. Economic and military dependence run directly counter to Nkrumah's dream of a continent-wide association of nations that is "able to mobilize and coordinate their immense resources for the well being of their people" and "will also have their own strong military to defend and protect themselves"

This article previously appeared in [Africa News](#).

"From the outset, African countries were not adequately consulted on a U.S. military program on the continent."

China's massive economic drive into Africa and the recent creation of the African military command by the United States may trigger a



cold war on the continent. In such an event, Africa may pay a price for its independence because of its leaders' failure to establish a United States of Africa equipped with a strong military, economic, political and diplomatic apparatus. It is imperative that Africa heed its own prophet.

When Ghana became the first Black country south of the Sahara to gain freedom from colonial rule on March 6, 1957, its founder, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, set Africa on a course toward continental liberation and unification. Assisted later by the defunct Organization of African Unity, all African countries attained political independence, but they were not completely united. Although the later formation of the [African Union](#) (AU) was seen as a step in that direction, the AU soon lost steam because of the failure of African leaders to come out courageously in establishing the [United States of Africa](#) at its summit in Accra, Ghana this year. This is perpetuating the weak political and economic conditions of more than 50 countries on the continent. Consequently, Africa continues to be placed in a weak position, at the mercy of foreign countries with economic and military strength. Such is the impact of the Chinese economic drive, and most recently the U.S. creation of the [Africa Command](#) (Africom).

"Africa continues to be placed in a weak position, at the mercy of foreign countries with economic and military strength."

According to U.S. officials, Africom is aimed at better coordinating and cohesive handling of the work of three different command centers, all of them based outside Africa. The new force, with an initial 300 employees, is temporarily based in Germany while the debate is waged whether it should be sited on the continent or not. So far, strife-torn Liberia is the only African country to have agreed to have the headquarters in that country.

Opposition is strong in Africa because much as Africans are economically poor, they cherish their political independence, and see any military program without their approval in the way of planning a conquest. A grim reminder of this was echoed in a recent article in the *Chicago Defender*, a leading African American newspaper. Writing under the headline, "Conquest and greed: That's what made America great," Harry Alford, president of the National Black Chamber of Commerce, stated, "The slavery, genocide and empire building got America off to a good start - free land and free labor. You can't lose with that... Free land and massive infusion of cheap labor later made it easy for the United States to be ready and take advantage of the Industrial Revolution." He continued, "We [Americans] were well prepared from it. It made us a military and industrial might during the 20th century," [and beyond].

Today, Americans' greatest need is energy to maintain their power and high lifestyles. With consumption of energy so high, dependence is on foreign sources. Until recently, the Middle East led the world in meeting this need by providing 20 percent of U.S. oil imports. However, according to recent reports from the U.S. Energy Administration, African countries now provide the U.S. with 24 percent of its oil needs. In addition, Africa provides the U.S. with substantial amounts of strategic minerals and raw materials for American industries.

"African countries now provide the U.S. with 24 percent of its oil needs."

Obviously, the U.S. wants Africa safe for its oil, free of threat of terrorism and Chinese competition. At a recent meeting with African Union leaders in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, General William Ward, the black soldier heading the US African Force stated, "Africom will assist our African partners in increasing their capacity to provide a stable environment here in Africa." Ward, who many see as an Uncle Tom or a

black front to appease Africans, denied that the new force will militarize Africa by establishing military bases or stationing troops on the continent. The question is whether this black soldier is just taking orders or initiating policy. It is important to note that from the outset, African countries were not adequately consulted on a military program on the continent for obvious reasons. Consequently, African leaders should not entertain the idea of having the headquarters of the Africom, now based in Germany, on African soil. It will be a clear violation of the territorial sovereignty of Africa, if the U.S. imposes its will in doing so.

Amid the increasing Chinese economic drive into Africa, there is also concern about China arming the government in Sudan for that country's oil while thousands of people have died and millions displaced by the war in the Darfur region. U.S. concern should be channeled through the United Nations by providing adequate funds and equipment for African Union troops to deal with the situation. Or does America have its eyes on the oil in the Sudan?

The U.S. can better help Africa maintain a stable environment by focusing on providing more liberal economic deals to Africa. Instead of the U.S. and other European countries matching China's soft economic terms for African countries to boost their standard of living, America is resorting to a possible display of military power. Another factor to consider in the African context is that her population is split between Christians and Muslims. Do we need to inflame the situation? Clearly, the dire problem in Africa is economic. Even the German President acknowledged this recently while visiting Algeria. In an address to the African Partnership Forum in Algiers, he lamented the poor trading terms given to African countries and called for better terms. Western countries have not adequately opened their markets for African products, and where they have done so, African countries are always faced with the problem of price fluctuations.

"Africans must be warned about the new threats from the West and East."

Under these circumstances, Africans must be warned about the new threats from the West and East just after emerging from gruesome civil wars following the age of colonialism. They must know that their salvation is within Africa. Indeed, the ultimate answer to the problems of the struggling African people lies in their oneness. If African countries are effectively united, they would be able to mobilize and coordinate their immense resources for the well being of their people; they will also have their own strong military to defend and protect themselves and not rely on a force imposed on the continent. It is not too late for courageous African leaders or grassroots movements to push for the United States of Africa. The alternative will be a new form of colonialism to the detriment of the African people.

Nii OkaiJah is a Ghanaian freelance writer.

U.S-Instigated War Brings Mass Death to Somalia

A Black Agenda Radio commentary by Glen Ford

The United States remains, as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "the greatest purveyor of violence in the world," through its own wars of aggression and by fomenting and manipulating conflicts that

kill millions. It is also the most cynical power on the planet, crying crocodile tears over the carnage in Darfur (in which the U.S. is complicit) while simultaneously unleashing wholesale death in Somalia. Half a million Africans face starvation and disease as a direct result of U.S. instigation of the Ethiopian invasion of Somalia - an extension of Bush's "war on terror" and the underlying quest for Africa's wealth. United Nations officials now describe Somalia as the worst humanitarian crisis on the continent - more dire than Darfur.

To listen to this Black Agenda Radio commentary, click the Flash Player above. To download a copy for personal use or rebroadcast, visit the Black Agenda Radio archive page [here](#).

"If the rulers of the United States were searching for a plan that would kill hundreds of thousands of Africans, they have found it."

American foreign policy is the direct cause of the humanitarian crisis in Somalia - the worst in all of Africa, according to United Nations officials. That's why, until recent days, U.S. corporate media said little or nothing about the hundreds of thousands of Somalis - now numbering at least [half a million](#) - who face death by starvation and disease because of a war instigated and facilitated by Washington. The corporate press methodically avoid - and thereby, cover up - stories that contradict the mythical American narrative: that the U.S. means to do good in the world, and only does wrong by mistake.

The horrific wrong inflicted on Somalia was absolutely premeditated, an integral aspect of American [plans](#) to bring the bogus "war on terror" to Africa, as a cover to dominate the continent and its wealth. Ever since the end of formal European colonialism in Africa, [U.S. policy](#) has been to spread chaos wherever Washington failed to impose rule by its own favored strongmen. When Muslim groups early last year subdued the warlords of Somalia - a nation that is 99 percent Muslim - a semblance of peace and at least some hope for the future took root. By all accounts, life was getting back to something like "normal" for a people that had known only brutal warfare since 1991. Such a peace was unacceptable to George Bush's crew, who whipped up an hysteria in the United States, claiming Al Qaida was establishing a base in Somalia, and urged the regime in neighboring Ethiopia, Somalia's historical rival, to attack last December.

"U.S. policy has been to spread chaos wherever Washington failed to impose rule by its own favored strongmen."

The U.S. worked hand in hand with the Ethiopian invaders at every level of the Ethiopian military, while U.S. jets relentlessly wreaked terror from the air. Once the Ethiopians had planted themselves and their puppet Somali "government" in the capital, Mogadishu, the Americans sent their other African proxies, the Ugandan military, to make up most of the puny African "peacekeeping" force in Somalia. The Somali resistance to the Ethiopian invasion consider the African peacekeepers in Mogadishu to be agents of the U.S. - and, regarding the Ugandans, they are right.

If there were ever a formula for bloody and protracted war in Somalia, it is Ethiopian occupation, which is already unifying diverse elements of the Somali population in resistance. The war will also destabilize Ethiopia, which is more than a third Muslim and home to many peoples that oppose the dictatorial regime in Addis Ababa. If the rulers of the United States were searching for a plan that would kill hundreds of thousands of Africans, they have found it. This time, however, as in Iraq, Washington has created more chaos than it can handle.

The United Nations found it necessary to arrange trips for American journalists to witness the carnage that the Americans have wrought in Somalia - the same Americans that claim to care so much for the people of Darfur, and who promise that the new U.S. Africa Command will bring peace to the continent.

The Americans, like the Europeans before them, bring only the peace of the dead.

For Black Agenda Radio, I'm Glen Ford.

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The U.S. Push to Seize Control of Africa's Gulf of Guinea Oil

A Black Agenda Radio commentary by Glen Ford

The U.S. has developed a formula for divesting countries of their national wealth and territorial integrity: declare them incompetent to "protect" vital resources - "failed states" - and then use this pretext to seize control of those resources. This transparent pattern of aggression is well underway in West Africa's oil-rich Gulf of Guinea, whose waters are the property of several nations, including Nigeria. The Americans demand onshore basing rights for a naval presence that would "protect" the Gulf against - whom? Nigeria, in its tentative effort to organize African resistance to the U.S. intrusion, risks having itself declared a "failed state" by the encroachers.

"The United States is telegraphing its own invasion plans for the region."

According to recent reports, Nigeria's government is organizing other African states to block the U.S. from establishing a military base in the oil-rich Gulf of Guinea. The nations of the region have every reason to be alarmed. U.S. "strategic planners" - which is another way of saying "imperialists" - have marked the Gulf for deep penetration and eventual subjugation, as Washington's plans for global resource domination continue, unabated. Already, the Sahel region in the north of Africa is saturated with American military forces. Looking south, the Americans claim there is not a large enough military presence to "secure" the huge, largely untapped oil and gas reserves of the Gulf of Guinea, bordered by Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and Sao Tome and Principe. In reality, the Gulf needs protection from no one - except the rapacious United States.

The U.S. insists it needs to place submarines and warships in the Gulf, and to secure basing rights onshore to service its naval presence there. Of course, there is no enemy on the horizon to defend against - no Al Qaida fleet with Osama bin Laden at the helm - that would necessitate such a militarization of the Gulf of Guinea. What the United States is really doing, is telegraphing its own invasion plans for the region, to grab the oil.

Nigeria is not the ideal focus of resistance to U.S. encroachment on African resources, despite its large military and the biggest population in Black Africa. Nigeria is perhaps the most kleptocratic state on the

planet, a government and ruling class dominated by thieves. But now, the Nigerian gangster classes, in and out of uniform, face a threat from an even bigger thief: the U.S., a rogue superpower that steals whole nations. Compared to the Americans, the Nigerian godfathers are small-time, corner criminals. And they are scared.

"The American game plan throughout the developing world is to claim that Washington must come to the rescue when 'failed states' are incapable of providing security for precious resources."

After the African Internet news service [ThisDay](#) reported Nigeria's efforts to resist the U.S. onslaught, in mid-September, officials in the capital city of Abuja began to "soft-peddle" the threat posed by Uncle Sam, and to put out assurances that Nigeria and other African states would provide all the "security" that is necessary to guard the Gulf. That's understandable. The American game plan throughout the developing world is to claim that Washington must come to the rescue when "failed states" are incapable of providing security for precious resources. If you are not already a failed state, the U.S. will make you one.

The Iraqi model is the most recent. Having destroyed the Iraqi regime, and then declared its successor a "failed state," growing sectors of the American ruling class advocate the dismemberment of Iraq into three, easily manageable parts, none of which would be capable of defending the national oil patrimony. Nigeria, should it try to frustrate American greed for energy, could be deemed an "artificial" nation, a "failed state" made up of four or five distinct countries, whose peoples must be "liberated" from each other. The same could be said of almost every nation in Africa, where colonialists drew the lines of borders. Africans must now draw their own lines, in the Gulf of Guinea, to keep the United States from "protecting" them into oblivion.