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A NEW LIBERATION DOCTRINE FOR AFRICA

INTRODUCTION

Aside from the Middle East, Africa is the only region of the world not yet swept by democratic revolution. Deposited are autocratic leaders in Asia, Europe, and Latin America. In their place have emerged democratically elected governments.¹

But not in Africa. There, political and economic freedom remains virtually unknown. The vast majority of Sub-Saharan Africa's 400 million people cannot speak freely; they often are jailed and killed by African regimes for simply speaking out for democratic change or for questioning existing government policies. And their right to own private property, sell produce at market prices, and trade freely is prohibited throughout much of the continent. The result is that Africa has slipped further and further into poverty. Today, sixteen of the world's twenty poorest nations are in Africa, and some 100 million Africans — roughly one-quarter of the continent — are facing chronic food shortages.²

Hope Emerging. Yet, a glimmer of hope at last is emerging that the democratic revolution may yet reach Africa. Political liberty now is making marginal advances there. In the West African state of Benin, the Southern

1 These countries include Argentina, Armenia, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Czechoslovakia, formerly East Germany, El Salvador, Estonia, Georgia, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Hungary, Honduras, Jamaica, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldavia, Mongolia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Republic of China on Taiwan, Republic of Korea, Panama, Paraguay, the Philippines, Poland, Romania, and Uruguay.

2 For further information on the immense poverty of Africa, see Michael Johns, ed., *U.S. and Africa Statistical Handbook, 1991 Edition* (Washington, D.C.: The Heritage Foundation, 1991).

African nation of Namibia, and the Atlantic Ocean island of Cape Verde, governments have been elected in democratic multiparty elections over the past year, replacing unrepresentative, autocratic regimes.

More important than the few democratic gains so far is the possibility of more advances on the continent. In Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Nigeria, and Zaire, for example, one-party or military dictatorships are now either undergoing or being pressured to introduce democratic rule. And in Angola, Kenya, Mozambique, Zambia, and Zimbabwe strong political movements are challenging non-democratic governments and calling for democracy. Some of these movements are likely to prevail.³

The emergence of political freedom in Africa offers hope that free market reforms, too, will take root. If they do, the chronic poverty that plagues Africa could be greatly reduced. In other regions of the world, nations such as Chile and the Republic of China on Taiwan have found that free market reforms preceded the rise of political freedom. Leaders of these nations, while politically autocratic, saw the merits of free enterprise. This has not been, however, nor is it likely to be, the case in Africa. Most African autocrats have a deeply rooted economic and political stake in preserving their control over state-owned agriculture, banking, and manufacturing. Thus, in all but a very few cases, they are dragging their feet on privatizing state-owned enterprises and launching other free market reforms.

Reevaluating Policy. With the Cold War receding and the possibility that democracy and economic freedom can blossom in the world's last remaining predominantly undemocratic and economically statist continent, Washington needs to reevaluate its policy toward Africa. Washington was correctly concerned about Soviet advances in Africa during the Cold War, and consequently found it necessary to forge close political relations with dictators like Somalia's Mohammed Siad Barre and Zaire's Mobutu Sese Seko to offset Moscow's expansionism in East and Southern Africa. Washington also had to rationalize South Africa's repressive racism.

While Moscow continues to back pariah, Marxist regimes in Angola and Ethiopia, it is far less likely today than it was during the Cold War that this support will lead to further Soviet expansion on the African continent.⁴ This

3 In one such country, Mali, pro-democracy protests combined with military unrest led to the toppling on March 26 of Mali's military dictator, General Moussa Traore, who ruled Mali for 23 years. Coup leaders now are promising multiparty democracy for the country. For further information on the democratic rebellion in West Africa, see Michael Johns, "The Winds of Democracy," *The World and I*, August 1990, pp. 32-39.

4 For further information on Soviet policy in Africa, see Michael Johns, "Angola: Testing Gorbachev's New Thinking," Heritage Foundation *Executive Memorandum* No. 259, February 5, 1990; Michael Johns, "Soviet Policy Towards Southern Africa: The Gorbachev Factor," *Southern African Freedom Review*, Summer 1988, pp. 53-60; and Michael Johns, "Gorbachev's Holocaust: Soviet Complicity in Ethiopia's Famine," *Policy Review*, Summer 1988, pp. 74-75.

gives Washington the ability to switch its policy toward Africa from containing Moscow to assisting the emergence of political and economic liberties on the continent, which will be Africa's best hope to move beyond its current state of chaos, poverty, and misery.

This is in America's interests. To be sure, championing democracy across the globe is not the chief aim of U.S. foreign policy. Yet, in Africa, under the new geopolitical circumstances of the post-Cold War era, encouraging the growth of democracy and free markets when possible can serve U.S. interests by:

◆ ◆ **Expanding markets for American goods and products, as democratic African governments seeking more trade with the West remove barriers to trade.**

◆ ◆ **Establishing new African governments that share American ideals and values in the United Nations and other multinational agencies.** African governments occupy nearly one-third of the U.N.'s seats. The vast majority of African ambassadors to the U.N. and other multinational institutions now represent autocratic governments largely at odds with American geopolitical and economic policies. As with most newly democratic governments, as those in Nicaragua, Panama, and Eastern Europe, democracies are much more likely to support American interests than their autocratic predecessors.

◆ ◆ **Creating a more stable continent, less likely to threaten American or Western interests or to seek alliances with foreign pariah states.** Democratic African nations are less likely than autocratic ones to seek alliances with such anti-American regimes as Cuba or Libya. It also is less likely that democratic states will fall into civil war or attack their neighbors.⁵ Such aggression can potentially threaten American interests by denying U.S. access to strategic waterways, natural resources, and potentially valuable foreign markets.

◆ ◆ **Promoting greater financial accountability on the African continent, thus helping to ensure that Western aid to Africa is not misused and that corruption is ended.**

◆ ◆ **Reducing U.S. foreign aid to the continent. Democratization should spur economic growth in Africa.** This will help alleviate the grinding poverty that seems to justify the \$1.058 billion in economic aid that America gave Africa last year. U.S. aid to Africa could be halved if the downward economic slide of Africa is reversed.

⁵ Civil wars now exist in the African nations of Angola, Chad, Ethiopia, Liberia, Mozambique, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, and Western Sahara. Armed insurrections are underway against governments in Senegal and South Africa. Also, aggression between African states includes occasionally violent disputes between Mauritania and Senegal and between Rwanda and Uganda.

Noble Objectives. Washington's traditional objectives in Africa have been noble — to combat starvation, to alleviate poverty, and to expand human rights and liberties. Yet, this policy by and large has failed, except as a one-time Band-Aid to stanch a crisis. The problem has been that America's policy toward Africa generally has been reactive. As a result, Washington has missed opportunities to influence events in Africa, or when things go badly, as in Ethiopia, Liberia, and Sudan, to enter the game in time to have much of an impact.

Washington today has an opportunity to develop a new African policy, at a relatively low cost to American taxpayers, to foster political and economic liberty in Africa. Doing so would help bring lasting solutions to Africa's economic and political crises. While it is true that bitter ethnic divisions and other factors are often to blame for Africa's wars, poverty, and oppression, no factor has contributed to this crisis more than Africa's political authoritarianism. Denying their people political freedom, African regimes generally have faced few impediments in abusing their people.

Encouraging Liberty. Helping foster political liberty in Africa will require a fundamental reevaluation of American policy toward that continent. In place of the old African policy that focused so heavily on assisting dictatorships primarily because they were anti-Soviet, Washington should adopt a new Liberation Doctrine for Africa that will encourage the emergence of political and economic liberty on the continent.⁶ The Liberation Doctrine will be rooted in George Bush's declaration, which accompanied the December 20, 1989, American liberation of Panama, that "the day of the dictator is over," and it will seek to advance the emerging trend toward political democratization in Africa.

This doctrine of supporting African liberty will be executed mainly with U.S. diplomatic measures, technical assistance, and public diplomacy. It should be applied across the continent. The possible exceptions are: 1) when there is no indigenous democratic movement, as there now are not in Libya and to a lesser extent Somalia; and 2) when American relations with a non-democratic nation are needed to ensure use of strategic facilities, such as U.S. access to Kenya's ports. But even in these cases, Washington should use diplomatic leverage to convince the non-democratic but friendly governments of the merits of economic and political liberty.

6 This new Liberation Doctrine for Africa differs from the Reagan Doctrine, through which Washington supported freedom fighters combatting Soviet-backed tyrannies. Still, in those areas where the Soviet Union continues to provide military support to pariah regimes, such as in Afghanistan and Angola, Washington should continue to pursue the Reagan Doctrine until these regimes hold free and fair multiparty elections.

A Liberation Doctrine for Africa should include:

1) Rechannelling at least 15 percent (some \$159 million) of America's \$1.058 billion in annual foreign economic aid to Africa into democracy-building programs. This can help build such democratic institutions as an independent press, radio, and television; human rights monitoring groups; and election monitoring.

2) Creating a Radio Free Africa. As with Radio Free Europe and Radio Marti, Radio Free Africa would broadcast independent news and analysis and democratically-oriented educational shows to African countries in their own languages. This would give the radio's audience a source of independent news and analysis that could help lay the groundwork for genuinely free societies.

3) Putting African governments on notice that unless U.S. security interests are jeopardized, the continued denial of fundamental economic and political liberties in African countries will result in a reduction or termination of U.S. aid to that country. The primary purpose of American foreign aid to Africa ostensibly has been to spark economic development and alleviate poverty. Because the vast majority of autocratic African leaders deny their people such economic liberties as the rights to own private property, to sell produce at market prices, and to private banking, American foreign aid has failed to achieve its objectives. African governments that deny their people these rights are almost always unable to use foreign aid properly to improve the lot of their people. Washington thus wastes the money of American taxpayers by continuing to send such aid indefinitely.

4) Doubling the \$750,000 that the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) now spends on democracy-building programs in Africa. This new money should be transferred from existing foreign aid programs to Africa. NED operates in only ten African countries; yet the 45 countries in Africa that are one-party or military dictatorships are potential targets for NED activities.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE IN AFRICA

It is unlikely that the collapse of Africa's authoritarian, one-party and military dictatorships will occur as quickly as it has in Eastern Europe. Yet pressure is building on the African continent for quick political change. From the "frontline states" of Southern Africa to the Francophone nations of West Africa, and even in some of the most despotic regions of East Africa, Africans are calling for an end to one-party and military rule.

Following independence from European colonial rule in the 1960s, one-party and military dictatorships emerged throughout Africa. Such governments were led mostly by charismatic leaders whose political support was based primarily on their pledge to wipe out the vestiges of colonialism. This was the case with Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah, Kenya's Jomo Kenyatta,

Tanzania's Julius Nyerere, Zambia's Kenneth Kaunda, Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe, and many others.

Africans quickly learned, however, that these new regimes were equally, and sometimes more, brutal than their colonial predecessors. This clearly was the case with the governments of Macias Nguema in Equatorial Guinea (a former Spanish colony), Idi Amin in Uganda (a former British colony), and many others. Still, because these new governments spoke assertively against colonialism, championed nationalism, and often enjoyed a tribal base of support, they have survived politically.

Africans Losing Patience. Now, however, Africans seem to be losing their patience with their elderly "statesmen" – many of whom have ruled repressively for two and three decades. In Angola, Ghana, Togo, Zaire, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and many other African nations, democratic opponents have emerged to threaten the rule of authoritarian regimes.

The coming end of apartheid in South Africa, too, has intensified Africans' demands for political change. For many years, such autocrats as Angola's Jose Eduardo dos Santos, Tanzania's Ali Hassan Mwinyi, Zambia's Kenneth Kaunda, and Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe were able to deflect attention from their own oppressive policies by pointing their finger at the evils of the South African white regime's apartheid system. But now, with South African President F.W. De Klerk's commitment to ending this system, the authoritarian African leaders are finding it more difficult to defend their own oppressive political practices.⁷

The prospects for political change in Africa are encouraging.

Example: The once Marxist regime of Mathieu Kerekou in Benin has been defeated in an open, democratic election. Kerekou on February 19, 1990, fired his cabinet, announced the formation of a transitional government, and scheduled legislative and presidential elections for this spring. In the presidential elections held on March 25, Kerekou was defeated by a reform-minded opponent, Nicephore Soglo, who obtained 64 percent of the vote.

Example: In the West African nation of Burkina Faso, military leader Blaise Compaore, also under domestic pressure, is laying the groundwork for democratic change; legislative and presidential elections are scheduled for late this year.

⁷ For further information on the political reform program in South Africa, see Michael Johns, "Preparing for a Post-Apartheid South Africa," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounders* No. 802, December 31, 1990.

Example: Mozambique's Marxist regime of Joaquim Chissano last November 3 reversed laws prohibiting the formation of new political parties and is pledging to hold multiparty elections.⁸

Example: In Cote d' Ivoire, Felix Houphouet-Boigny, president since 1960, held two sets of multiparty elections this year.

Example: Mobutu Sese Seko, Zaire's absolute ruler since 1965, agreed last April to move his nation toward multiparty democracy.

Example: In Zambia, the democratic opposition Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) is providing a strong challenge to Zambian strongman Kenneth Kaunda and urging an opening of the country's political system.

In Nigeria, Tunisia, and other nations also, autocratic regimes are laying the groundwork for democratic political change.

Despite the promise of reform, formidable obstacles remain to the spread of democracy in Africa. For one thing, in many countries, the drive for democracy lacks much backing from the rural population. It is from urban students and intellectuals that most demands for democratic political change are coming; the rural folk are far more preoccupied with daily struggles for survival than with championing democracy. For another, most African governments' acceptance of the need for more democracy has not yet been accompanied by an equal commitment to permit the freedoms upon which democracy rests — freedoms of speech, assembly, and communication. And then, many African governments maintain strong militaries, whose loyalty lies primarily with the ruling political elite, and who often resist democratic change.

Notwithstanding these obstacles, the demands for reform are likely to mean that African governments will be pressed to accept legalizing opposition political parties and permitting freedom of communication and assembly. If African dictators do not yield to the demands of democratic reformers, they will be forced to use military force to stop them. And in sharp contrast to the past, such repression now may fail. Increasingly, African militaries are losing the loyalty that once led them to protect African autocrats. And with human rights organizations paying increasing attention to Africa, there exists less possibility that African autocrats can crush opposition without facing Western criticism.

8 Unlike other democratic reforms in Africa, however, the political reform in Mozambique is being strongly controlled by the ruling party. The government reserves the right not to allow certain political parties to compete in the election, and it has granted itself the right to decide what campaign activities these opposition parties can engage in. Furthermore, the president and the one-party legislature have been given the authority to appoint the electoral commission (including themselves) that will oversee the elections.

PROGRESS ON DEMOCRATIZATION IN AFRICA

Governments attempting to reform their political systems fall into five types:

1) Functioning Democracies.

These are the rarest nations on the African continent. They include Botswana, Cape Verde, Egypt, Gambia, Mauritius, Namibia, and Senegal. They have multiparty systems, independent legislatures, independent judiciaries, and respect freedom of speech, press, assembly, and other liberties. Yet even here there is room for improvement. In Namibia, for instance, there are indications that the ruling South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) is using the power which it obtained through democratic means to erode Namibia's democratic political system. SWAPO Party leader Moses Garoeb, potentially building momentum for a bid to scrap Namibia's democratic political system, on January 30 stated that the multiparty democracy now in place in Namibia "is not necessarily the actual and the true choice of the Namibian people."⁹ The government also is forcing many government employees to join SWAPO as a prerequisite to obtaining a government job, and it has signed a secret defense pact with Angola, without legislative approval, despite provisions by the U.S. Congress that SWAPO's involvement in the Angolan civil war would jeopardize America's \$10 million foreign aid package to Namibia.¹⁰

2) Countries Showing Strong Commitment to Democracy.

These are authoritarian governments that have made a strong commitment to democratization. They include Benin, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, and Tunisia. They are firmly pledged to democratic change and are helping to build the democratic institutions necessary to sustain this change.

3) Countries Showing Moderate Commitment to Democracy.

These governments have made formal commitments to democratic change, but have taken only preliminary steps such as holding elections for a legislature but not for the presidency, or allowing only very limited freedom of assembly, press, and speech. Pledges to democratization exceed the country's actual deeds to date. These nations include Algeria, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Mozambique, Zambia, and others.

9 "SWAPO's Garoeb on Multiparty Democracy," Windhoek Domestic Service, January 30, 1991 (Foreign Broadcast Information Service: Southern Africa, January 31, 1991), p. 31.

10 For further information on Namibia, see Margaret Calhoun, "Namibia's First Democratic Government May Be Its Last," *The Wall Street Journal*, March 21, 1991, p. A-18; Michael Johns, "Namibian Voters Deny Total Power to SWAPO," *The Wall Street Journal*, November 15, 1989, p. A-27; and Michael Johns, "Namibia and the Global Democratic Revolution," Heritage Foundation *Lecture* No. 224, November 1, 1989.

4) Countries Showing Ambiguous Commitment to Democracy.

These governments reluctantly acknowledge demands for democracy, and then react to them ambiguously. They mouth some democratic rhetoric, but do little to make democratization a reality. They do not abandon the ruling party's monopoly of power, or set dates for elections, or permit freedom of speech, assembly, and communication. These nations include Angola, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, and others. Many of them try to use stated commitments to democratization for political gain without actually abandoning authoritarian power.

5) Authoritarian Countries.

These governments show no intention of moving toward democracy, and consistently deny their people fundamental economic, human, and political rights. These countries have no political freedom and no guarantees to fundamental human rights and liberties. These countries include Ethiopia, Libya, Sudan, and others.

POLITICAL FREEDOM IN AFRICA

Democratic Nations

Botswana
Cape Verde
Egypt
Gambia
Mauritius
Namibia
Senegal

Strong Commitment To Democracy

Benin
Nigeria
Sao Tome and Principe
Tunisia

Moderate Commitment To Democracy

Algeria	Burkina Faso
Cameroon	Congo
Cote d'Ivoire	Gabon
Guinea	Guinea-Bissau
Mozambique	Niger
Sierra Leone	Uganda

Ambiguous Commitment To Democracy

Angola	Central African Republic
Ghana	Kenya
Lesotho	Madagascar
Mali	Morocco
Rwanda	South Africa
Swaziland	Tanzania
Togo	Zaire
Zambia	Zimbabwe

Authoritarian

Burundi	Comoros
Djibouti	Equatorial Guinea
Ethiopia	Lesotho
Libya	Malawi
Mauritania	Seychelles
Sudan	

Note: the governments of Chad, Liberia, Mali, and Somalia are currently in transition, and it is too early to classify their commitment to democracy.

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A LIBERATION DOCTRINE FOR AFRICA

An opportunity now exists for Washington to help Africans in their bid for political freedom. From Zambia to Ethiopia, Africans are calling on Washington to decide whether it supports the authoritarian rulers or those emerging movements and institutions calling for democratic change. Although Washington has no inherent obligation to expend American resources to promote democracy in Africa, it can now do so with little expense to American taxpayers and little risk that doing so could benefit the Soviet Union.

The spread of political liberty in Africa will make it easier for governments there to correct the many problems created by decades of authoritarianism, like corruption, human rights abuses, famine, and the denial of fundamental economic rights. Without greater political liberty in Africa, Washington will be wasting American money in efforts to help the African economy, expand markets for America goods, and to cooperate more with African governments at the U.N. and other multinational agencies.

Strengthening Democratic Institutions. It is time, therefore, for Washington to overhaul its policy toward Africa and craft a Liberation Doctrine designed to strengthen African democratic movements and institutions. Washington should be careful not to choose sides between competing political parties in Africa. Rather it should contribute to the strengthening of democratic institutions on the continent, such as free press, human rights monitoring groups, and democratic-minded educational organizations.

A Liberation Doctrine for Africa is inspired by the success of the Reagan Doctrine, which led America to support freedom fighters combatting Soviet-backed dictatorships in Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, and Nicaragua. Because of Reagan Administration support, democracy emerged in Nicaragua with the February 1990 election of Violeta Chamorro as president. And prospects appear good that because of American support for Angola's democratic resistance, the Marxist government there may soon permit multi-party elections in which Jonas Savimbi's National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) will be permitted to participate.¹¹

Non-Military Tools. With the exception of Angola — where Soviet military aid for the Marxist regime continues to warrant American military assistance for UNITA — a Liberation Doctrine toward Africa would involve primarily the non-military tools of technical, educational, and economic assistance. Above all, America needs to change fundamentally its attitude toward aid to Africa. While the \$1.058 billion spent annually on foreign aid to Africa went

¹¹ See Michael Johns, "With Freedom Near in Angola, This Is No Time to Curtail UNITA Assistance," Heritage Foundation *Executive Memorandum* No. 276, July 31, 1990.

**AFRICAN RECIPIENTS OF U.S. AID,
FISCAL YEAR 1990**

	<u>\$ Economic Aid</u>	<u>\$ Military Aid</u>
Algeria	None	100,000
Angola	3,300,000	None
Benin	3,500,000	75,000
Botswana	9,100,000	1,354,000
Burkina Faso	13,600,000	100,000
Burundi	19,800,000	139,000
Cameroon	20,600,000	274,000
Cape Verde	8,800,000	70,000
Central African Republic	1,200,000	179,000
Chad	12,300,000	3,236,000
Comoros	700,000	40,000
Congo	2,700,000	50,000
Cote d'Ivoire	25,700,000	149,000
Djibouti	3,200,000	2,140,000
Egypt	1,101,389,000	2,437,410,000
Equatorial Guinea	800,000	100,000
Ethiopia	172,900,000	None
Gabon	None	100,000
Gambia	6,300,000	70,000
Ghana	31,800,000	174,000
Guinea	13,600,000	149,000
Guinea-Bissau	4,200,000	70,000
Kenya	46,500,000	10,962,000
Lesotho	9,100,000	70,000
Liberia	28,600,000	1,394,000
Libya	None	None
Madagascar	21,300,000	374,000
Malawi	41,100,000	2,240,000
Mali	20,600,000	149,000
Mauritania	6,300,000	124,000
Mauritius	None	20,000
Morocco	79,153,000	43,811,000
Mozambique	71,800,000	None

	\$ Economic Aid	\$ Military Aid
Namibia	30,000	None
Niger	24,500,000	1,967,000
Nigeria	8,000,000	100,000
Rwanda	11,700,000	100,000
Sao Tome and Principe	900,000	60,000
Senegal	44,000,000	1,469,000
Seychelles	3,000,000	100,000
Sierra Leone	6,000,000	None
Somalia	9,900,000	796,000
South Africa	32,100,000	None
Sudan	25,100,000	676,000
Swaziland	7,900,000	50,000
Tanzania	5,900,000	50,000
Togo	6,600,000	100,000
Tunisia	27,786,000	31,265,000
Uganda	55,300,000	149,000
Zaire	34,400,000	3,942,000
Zambia	11,900,000	None
Zimbabwe	5,000,000	239,000

Source: U.S. Agency for International Development, U.S. Department of State; and Michael Johns, ed., *U.S. and Africa Statistical Handbook, 1991 Edition* (Washington, D.C.: The Heritage Foundation, 1991).

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to direct economic assistance, economic support funds, and food aid, a Liberation Doctrine would shift resources to help build and institutionalize democratic and free market change in Africa.

Helping to build democratic and economic freedoms in Africa will be far more lengthy and complicated than building them elsewhere. For instance, while ethnic rivalry is a prominent political factor in most places, no region of the world has the deeply-rooted ethnic hatreds of Africa. Some African experts contend that these rivalries are so intense that multiparty democracy only will intensify them, potentially pushing Africa into still further chaos.

Yet, one-party and military dictatorships in Africa often have exacerbated ethnic divisions by denying rival ethnic groups access to the political system, and by discriminating against them in economic development decisions. This often has led rival ethnic groups to take up arms against the government, as is

now happening in Ethiopia, Liberia, Somalia, and Sudan. Under a democratic political system, these groups would be able to challenge the existing government politically, to speak openly about their grievances, or to participate in the existing political structure. As such, it is more likely that ethnic divisions in Africa would be settled at the ballot box, and not on the battlefield.

Whether or not political liberty eventually roots itself in Africa could depend on whether Washington looks anew at Africa, and begins to assist in the emergence of political freedom. This new Liberation Doctrine for Africa should include:

◆ ◆ **Rechanneling at least 15 percent of America's \$1.058 billion in annual economic aid to Africa into democracy-building programs.**

American economic aid to Africa has failed to combat African poverty in large part because Africa lacks the democratic political structure that would enable free market economic reforms to take root. Because of this, Washington should restructure its aid programs to Africa, and commit greater resources to democracy-building programs, such as expanded support for National Endowment for Democracy (NED) programs on the continent, and for the creation of a Radio Free Africa. Rechanneling 15 percent of the current \$1.058 billion in foreign economic aid to Africa — \$159 million — would go far toward funding these Liberation Doctrine projects. (The U.S. also sent \$38.73 million in military aid to Africa last year.)

NED's budget for African programs last year was around \$750,000, spent on democracy-building initiatives in ten African countries — Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, and Uganda. In addition, NED funded regional labor groups which, in turn, assisted indigenous labor groups in Guinea, Cote d' Ivoire, Mali, Niger, and Zaire. NED-affiliated groups such as the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the National Republican Institute (NRI), and the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) provided grants to various democracy-building groups and projects in Kenya, Liberia, Namibia, Tunisia, and Uganda. In all, there are 45 non-democratic nations in Africa that potentially could benefit from NED grants.¹²

◆ ◆ **Creating a Radio Free Africa.**

No aspect of a Liberation Doctrine for Africa is likely to be more important than exposing Africans to democratic ideas and values. This approach

¹² Author's conversation with Dave Peterson, Africa Program Officer, National Endowment for Democracy, March 27, 1991.

worked in Eastern Europe, where Radio Free Europe has presented independent news and analysis, and helped build momentum for democratic change.¹³ In Cuba, too, Radio Marti, inaugurated in May 1985, is exposing Cubans to alternative news and opinion, which, in turn, is resulting in increased calls for democratic change.

Africa will be no different. An American-sponsored Radio Free Africa would broadcast news and democratically-oriented programs, such as those on the mechanics of democracy and the merits of free enterprise. It is estimated by David Sanders, a former staff member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and an advocate of Radio Free Africa, that by using existing transmitters, Radio Free Africa could be broadcast in five languages for as little as \$20 million. Representative Dan Burton, the Indiana Republican, is the leading congressional advocate for Radio Free Africa, though his effort so far has been ignored by the Bush Administration.

◆ ◆ Putting autocratic African governments on notice that unless American security interests are jeopardized, the continued denial by an African country of fundamental economic and political liberties will result in a reduction or termination of U.S. aid to that country.

American foreign aid has three purposes – to charitably assist those in need, to protect or advance American security interests, and to promote economic development. The lion's share of American foreign aid to Africa has aimed at the last purpose – to promote economic development. This has failed. In part this is because political and economic freedom is almost always required for economic growth. Without economic and political liberty, most African nations thus have wasted American taxpayers' money. Washington no longer should send foreign aid to African nations with the intention of promoting economic development unless these countries move toward the political and economic liberty necessary for such development.

◆ ◆ Doubling assistance to the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) for democracy-building programs in Africa.

NED, though small, helps spur democratic change in Africa. Its programs have achieved modest success on the continent so far – particularly in Benin, Botswana, and Nigeria. With further resources it is likely that they can do more. This year NED is spending \$750,000 on Africa.¹⁴ A Liberation Doctrine should double this amount by taking an additional \$750,000 from the existing \$1.058 billion annual Africa foreign aid budget. Although the

13 When asked in November 1989 how instrumental Radio Free Europe (RFE) and Radio Liberty had been in liberating Eastern Europe from totalitarianism, Polish resistance leader Lech Walesa said: "Would there be land and earth without a sun?"

14 In addition to this, Congress appropriated some \$635,000 to NED last year for programs in South Africa.

spread of democracy in Africa is important for U.S. interests, there is no need to expand U.S. foreign aid expenditures to do it.

Yet, there are problems with NED programs in Africa. One is that often money goes to countries needing it least. Some \$715,000 of NED grants, for example, last year were made to Nigeria and South Africa, even though these countries are among those making the greatest progress toward democratic reform.¹⁵ In very oppressive societies, like Angola and Ethiopia, NED offers no assistance. The reason for this apparently is that few if any eligible democratic organizations exist inside these countries. The authoritarian regimes have jailed, killed, or exiled most leaders of democratic movements; those democratic-minded Angolans and Ethiopians who remain in their country either have joined armed resistance movements or disengaged from politics.

One way to assist the building of democracy in highly oppressive African nations is for NED to assist democratic-oriented exile groups engaged in advancing democracy in their homeland through independent publishing, the hosting of forums, and other such activities. A second way, of course, is by ensuring that Radio Free Africa reaches the people of these repressive nations. As was the case in Eastern Europe, independent communications can play an important role in building momentum for democratic change, even in the most oppressed societies.

CONCLUSION

At no time since the end of European colonialism a quarter-century ago has the prospect for a fundamental political transition in Africa been so great. Some seventeen of Africa's 45 non-democratic governments are now making moves toward multiparty democracy, and another fourteen may be doing so shortly. Others surely will follow. Africans are making this change because they correctly have come to equate political authoritarianism with economic malaise and human rights abuses. The rise of democracy and free market reforms in Eastern Europe, and Latin America, too, have prompted African leaders and people to look anew at their autocratic political systems.

Washington will not be able, nor should it attempt, to force democracy on Africa. Yet with the Cold War receding and prospects for democratic political change in Africa increasing, America has the flexibility to pursue a nuanced policy towards Africa.

¹⁵ This NED assistance excludes NED-sponsored programs by the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) in South Africa and by the African-American Labor Center in Nigeria.

Advancing American Interests. This policy, above all, should serve American interests. It would do so, in part, by encouraging democratic change on the continent by the Bush Administration adopting a Liberation Doctrine toward Africa. This policy should be designed to advance the democratic trend in Africa by increasing Africans' exposure to independent news and democratic ideas through Radio Free Africa, by increasing National Endowment for Democracy programs in support of emerging democratic institutions in Africa, and by restructuring American foreign aid programs so that they advance — rather than hinder — the development of democratic political reforms.

Through this doctrine, Washington can help tip the political balance in Africa toward political freedom. This, in turn, will advance Washington's interests of bringing Africa — one of the world's last remaining bastions of authoritarianism and economic statism — into the growing community of democratic, free market nations.

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CONCLUSION

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