CHAPTER 13

The Sub-Saharan African Shatterbelt

Sub-Saharan Africa, the poorest region in the world, has been a shatterbelt since the outbreak of the Cold War—its internal fragmentation magnified by the ideological, military, and economic pressure and intervention of external powers. While outside powers had acquired colonial footholds as early as the fifteenth century, they did not subdivide the region into separate spheres of influence until the modern imperialist era of the late nineteenth century. Only Ethiopia and Liberia retained their independence during this period. However, the region did not become a shatterbelt because internal divisions were stifled by the outside rulers.

Following World War II, Sub-Saharan African states gained their independence only to be caught up in the Cold War as arenas of conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union. The two superpowers offered military and economic aid to ideologically minded groups within these states, opening up the fissures which had been dormant during the imperialist era. This was the process that created modern shatterbelts, and Sub-Saharan Africa has stood out as the most highly atomized of such fragmented regions. Today the main goals of external interveners are no longer ideological, they are economic, and it is China, not the Soviet Union, that vies with Europe and the United States for influence within the region. Not only is this economic competition over supplies of raw material, but it also reflects the quest for markets and investment.

So intense is Washington's concern over China's growing influence in Sub-Saharan Africa that the Pentagon decided to establish a new US Command (AFRICOM). The original intent was to locate it somewhere on the Gulf of Guinea coast, since the major objective of the command was to secure access to the oil riches of the Gulf of Guinea in the face of increasing Chinese competition, although humanitarian aid was, and remains part of, its mission. Because of logistical problems, AFRICOM was located instead in Stuttgart, Germany. For many Africans, the competition between the United States and China is welcome as a spur to economic development, although it also stirs memories of centuries of colonial exploitation as well as the resentment of being plundered for raw materials without being provided with commensurate job opportunities. Where military assistance is made available by the United States or European countries, it is not designed against China. Rather, it is offered as part of an antiterrorist campaign or as a means of securing a government against internal rebellion. The background to this colonial/imperial period follows.

Colonial/Imperial Background

The race for the anticipated riches of Sub-Saharan Africa resulted in the fierce European colonial struggles of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. After World War I, German *geopolitik* promoted the doctrine of a Pan-Eur-Africa as part of a north-south panregional theory.[1] This was rooted in the proposition that the southern continents were the "exploitable worlds" and vital to the progress of northern, industrialized societies.

European penetration of Africa dates back to the discovery period of the fifteenth century and to the era of the slave trade that flourished in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. However, it began in earnest with the explorations and footholds that were established in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This is conveyed in the names accorded to the West African coast—"Grain and Pepper Coast," "Slave Coast," "Gold Coast," "Ivory Coast." The "Copperbelt" of Northern Rhodesia/Zambia and southeastern Congo (Katanga) is another example.

A rationale offered for European intervention in Africa during the nineteenth century was assumption of the "white man's burden" as the duty of Christian powers to stop the slave trade and "civilize the natives." However, the main motive was economic exploitation. The rapid industrialization of Europe between 1870 and 1890 stimulated the search for new markets, not only within Europe and North America but also in Africa and Asia. In addition, it produced the capital surpluses that were required to exploit the mineral riches and agricultural potential of these tropical regions. Population growth in Europe resulted in massive overseas emigration after 1880, not just to the United States but also to the African colonies, where white immigrants could help their mother countries retain political control.[2]

Congo is a most egregious example of the ruthlessness with which native Africans were exploited in the search for riches. Britain's colonial interest was not sparked by Henry Stanley's three explorations of the great Congo river during 1871–84, following those of David Livingstone. However, these explorations did prod Belgian king Leopold to establish the Independent State of the Congo as his private preserve. His pursuit of the "wonderful natural wealth" that Stanley ascribed to the Congo led to the exploitation, first of rubber and ivory, and then of the copper resources of the river's upper basin. All of the concessions that were awarded by Leopold utilized forced labor, and the brutality of this system sparked widespread outrage. In response, the government of Belgium eventually annexed the territory from Leopold in 1908, establishing the Belgian Congo and ameliorating the conditions somewhat.

While the African rubber trade declined steeply with the shift of the industry to the plantations of Southeast Asia, copper remained a significant export, although today it is exceeded in importance by diamonds. Other minerals (such as cobalt, zinc, tin, and uranium), petroleum (from offshore deposits at the mouth of the Congo), tropical hardwoods, and plantation crops remain the backbone of the modern Congo (Zaire) economy. In addition, some of the substantial hydroelectric potential of the great river has been harnessed, although most of it remains untapped. However, the Congo basin never proved to be as rich as the early explorers and exploiters assumed. Poverty of soils, climatic rigor, disease, labor force instability, and competition from crops and minerals of other parts of the world prevented the region from attaining its perceived potential.

Since the collapse of the European colonial system, Sub-Saharan Africa has sunk into a state of de-development. The world's poorest region, it is geopolitically atomized, torn by recurrent conflicts among and within its fifty national states. These states essentially follow the territorial frameworks that were established during the colonial period. There is growing consensus that these national frameworks are flawed because they have failed to account for many of the drives for territorial sovereignty of ethnic, tribal, and religious groups that are subsumed within them.

One recipe for reducing conflict is a larger number of smaller, more homogeneous states. Another school of thought takes the opposite view, holding that substantially larger states are the answer to the African crisis. For example, A. S. Gakwandi proposed a new political map of Africa with only seven states as a way to resolve the current problems of border disputes, refugees who have been separated from their homelands, and the liabilities of landlocked states. The rationale is that a balance among a handful of states that are ethnically and religiously diverse but economically viable would promote political stability.[3]

The position of the Organization of African Unity (now the African Union—AU), however, is that all member states should respect the borders existing at the time of their independence and that to attempt to redraw them would be an invitation to the spread of conflict in a region already torn by widespread violence.

Postcolonial Political Frameworks

Postcolonial Africa has experienced many efforts to break up existing states or to forge unions among them. Separation has often led to bitter warfare, heavy loss of life, devastation of the countryside and cities, and massive flows of refugees. The most prominent have been secession attempts in Nigeria and the recurrent attempts in Congo/Zaire. The Ibo of oil-rich southeast Nigeria established the independent state of Biafra in 1967, seven years after the country gained its freedom from Great Britain. In a war that lasted three years before the defeat of Biafra, more than one million Biafrans are said to have died of starvation.

Shortly after Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo, DRC) became independent in 1960, Katanga (Shaba), the mineral-rich province in the southeastern plateau portion of the country, seceded. The Katangese waged a civil war for three years before the rebellion was put down by UN and Belgian troops, whose aim was to save Zaire from anarchy and maintain the stability of the copper industry. Patrice Lumumba, the leftist prime minister, failed to secure UN intervention when the rebellion broke out and turned for help to the Soviet Union. He was dismissed by President Joseph Kasa-Vubu and was subsequently murdered by the troops of Colonel Joseph Mobutu Sese Seko, head of the army. Mobutu eventually succeeded in crushing the rebellion and seized power in 1966 with the help of Belgian troops and the US Central Intelligence Agency, initiating a dictatorial and exploitative regime that lasted until 1997, when it was overthrown by General Laurent Kabila. Since then, however, Congo has known little peace.

Five years after Uganda was established as an independent republic in 1962, its southern province of Buganda sought to secede. Buganda had a long history as an independent kingdom before becoming a British protectorate. It rebelled against the abolition by the central government of the high degree of autonomy that had been guaranteed to it when Uganda became independent. The rebellion was quashed, although in 1993 Uganda and other traditional monarchies were restored for ceremonial purposes only. Over the years the country has suffered from intermittent civil wars, coups, and dictatorships.

Shortly after Angola won its independence from Portugal in 1975, the Kongo people in the oil-rich Cabinda exclave, the main source of the country's petroleum, were unsuccessful in their struggle to establish a separate state. However, a major rebellion broke out in Angola that year between the Marxist MPLA government, headed by José Eduardo dos Santos, and the UNITA rebels. The conflict raged continuously until Jonas Savimbi, UNITA's founder and leader, died in battle in 2002, resulting in peace. The rebels' diamond-rich highland base, plus US and South African military support, had enabled them to maintain a "state within a state" throughout the fight that displaced one-quarter of the country's inhabitants. Since then, the country has changed from a one-party, Marxist-Leninist system to a multiparty democracy. Dos Santos was reelected president in 2008 and again in 2012. Angola is now Sub-Saharan Africa's second-largest oil producer, challenging Nigeria for the lead.

Thanks to its oil reserves, Angola's population of eighteen million has a per capita income of nearly $6,500, with oil accounting for 45 percent of its GDP and 90 percent of exports. China is the main market for these exports, followed by the United States and Europe, although the American share is rapidly declining thanks to US production increases.

One example of a successful separatist struggle has been the experience of Southwest Africa (Namibia), which rebelled against South African rule and gained its independence in 1989. The territory had had a history separate from that of South Africa. A German protectorate in the late nineteenth century, it was occupied in World War I by South Africa, which administered it under a League of Nations mandate. The South Africans refused to surrender this mandate to the UN trusteeship system in 1945. In the 1970s a nationalist guerrilla movement, the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), based largely in Angola, organized a guerrilla war against Pretoria's rule that culminated eventually in the establishment of the separate state of Namibia.

Secessions have also occurred in the Horn of Africa. The Arabic-speaking, Muslim Eritreans are oriented toward trade and fishing, unlike the highland Christian Ethiopian farmers. The coastal territory, which had first been occupied by Italy in the 1880s, was administered as a separate colony until merged with Ethiopia when the Italians conquered that country in 1935–36. From the 1960s onward, the Eritreans fought for their freedom. In the late 1970s they forged an alliance with the Tigrinya-speaking Ethiopian rebels in a struggle to overthrow Ethiopia's Amharic-controlled Marxist regime. After three decades, and at the cost of 100,000 to 150,000 fatalities, the regime was overthrown, and shortly thereafter Eritrea was able to become an independent, secular republic. While Eritrea separated from Ethiopia peacefully in 1993, the two countries waged war from 1998 to 2000 over a border dispute that was ultimately resolved through UN intervention. Nevertheless, tensions over that border have remained because Ethiopia refused to accept an adjusted line that included Badma in Eritrea. Eritrea opposed Ethiopia’s 2006 intervention in Somalia, but the two parties came to a final agreement in 2009. Both Ethiopia and Eritrea are internally divided along religious lines, but the Amharic Ethiopian Orthodox Christians generally dominate Ethiopian politics, while Eritrea is Muslim led.

On the Somali coast, Britain, France, and Italy had all established colonies during the previous century, each centering on a strategic port. Britain created a protectorate around the port of Berbera on the Gulf of Aden. London’s objective was to have a presence on the Somali coast to counter French-controlled Djibouti, which had been developed in 1862 as a commercial and strategic rival to Aden. In addition, Britain was interested in securing a food supply for Aden, especially mutton, from the Somali herdsmen. Italy followed suit in 1889 by establishing a protectorate along the central coast, focusing on the port of Mogadishu, which overlooked both the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean. Italy expanded the territory southward in the years that followed.

The British and Italian colonies merged to become the independent Republic of Somalia in 1960. (French Somaliland did not join and gained its own independence, as did Djibouti, in 1977.) Torn by clan fighting, Somalia splintered into a number of unstable parts in the civil war of 1991. The conflict that broke out after the separation of Eritrea from Ethiopia and the dismemberment of Somalia will be discussed in the section on compression zones.

Attempts to create larger African states through federations or mergers have, for the most part, been unsuccessful. In 1959, Mali and Senegal formed the Mali federation only to have it dissolved the next year. Guinea and Ghana, which had joined in a symbolic union in 1958, expanded that union to include Mali in 1961. This merger had no practical effect and ended in 1966, when Ghana’s Kwame Nkrumah was deposed.

The East African experience with regional unions was similarly disappointing. While Uganda, Kenya, and Tanganyika were still under British rule, the idea of an East African federation was promoted. A royal commission (1953–55) proposed that the three territories establish a federated framework with functions that would include transportation, communications, and taxation. The proposal was not implemented at that time because it called for eventual control by native Africans, and it was therefore strongly opposed by the white settlers. An East African Community (EAC) was formed by the three countries after independence (1967), but it made little headway because of conflict between Uganda and Tanzania over Tanzanian control of the Kagera Region in northwest Tanzania, on the southwestern shore of Lake Victoria. The EAC was formally dissolved in 1977, but it was revived in February 2001 as an economic bloc.

In Southern Africa, Southern Rhodesia became a member of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. The federation was broken up in 1963. A year later, Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) and Nyasaland (Malawi) became independent. In 1965 the white minority government of Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) declared itself independent of Britain—it later renamed itself the Republic of Rhodesia—and instituted complete separation of the voting franchise along racial lines. UN economic sanctions and African nationalist guerrilla warfare ultimately led, in 1980, to the independence of Zimbabwe under black majority rule. An attempt to unite the Portuguese colonies of Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau failed in 1980, and a confederal arrangement between Senegal and the Gambia (called “Senegambia”) was dismantled the following year.

There were a few limited successes in merging former colonies. The Gold Coast and British Togoland were united in 1957, when the two colonies gained their independence, to form Ghana. In 1961 the southern part of the British Cameroons joined the French Cameroons to form Cameroon, while the northern British Cameroons passed to Nigeria. Three years later the island of Zanzibar, a sultanate that had gained independence only to be overthrown in a bloody revolution, merged with Tanganyika to form Tanzania—a poor country of forty-six million people with a GDP of $75 billion and per capita income of only about $1,500.

Julius Nyerere, Tanzania’s first president, created TANU, a heavy-handed socialist party which collectivized the land and nationalized most of its economic institutions. Nyerere, strongly influenced by Maoism, aligned the country with China, which built the Tazara Railway, linking Tanzania’s port of Dar es Salaam with Zambia. While a multiparty system has developed over the years to replace the oppressive single-party regime, the country’s economy continues to languish. Agriculture, its mainstay, accounts for 85 percent of its exports, 80 percent of its work force, and 25 percent of its GDP. The main crops are maize, casaba, millet, rice, sorghum, and coffee. Gold, diamonds, and natural gas make a modest contribution.

Religious and economic differences between the two territories introduced friction early on. Zanzibar, for centuries the center for Arab slave traders, is almost completely Muslim, and the large majority of Tanganyikans are Christian or of traditional faiths. In addition, the impoverishment of the island of Zanzibar as a result of the collapse of the world clove market and the erosion of its autonomy in recent decades has given rise to a modest Zanzibari secessionist movement. Cloves had been the mainstay of Zanzibar and the nearby island of Pemba. With the steep drop in prices and demand, these offshore islands have sought to shift to a tourist economy, but this industry’s development has not yet had the desired impact.

Continental and regional African economic frameworks have also had limited impacts.[4] In its 1980 Lagos Plan of Action, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which had been established in 1963, set forth the goal of creating a single Pan-African Common Market by the year 2000. The African Union (AU) now includes not only the fifty Sub-Saharan African states but also four of the five North African countries. Also in 1963, at the Yaounde Convention, eighteen French-speaking African states and Madagascar formed the Economic Community of West and Central Africa, to whose exports the Common Market accorded tariff-free access. The organization made little coordinated progress, save sharing a common currency tied to the French franc. A European development fund was also established in connection with the agreement, which did prove a valuable source of aid.

The successor to the Yaounde Convention was the Lomé Agreement of 1975, which called for free movement of goods and people among and between the African signatories and the European Community (EC).[5] The African members at Lomé also formed a new geographical regional community—the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which now includes sixteen states, both French-speaking nations and Nigeria and other former British colonies.

The Lomé Agreement was initially sponsored by both France and Britain, reflecting a European decision not to disengage from Africa despite widespread tensions over decolonization. By 1999 the Lomé Agreement had been expanded to include a total of seventy-one states, including fifteen from the Caribbean, eight from the Pacific, and forty-eight from Africa. The EU members now provide the African Union with nearly half of the region's development aid and facilitate the access of African products to European markets.

Headquartered in Addis Ababa, the AU member countries total over one billion people. Agricultural development and food security continue to be the focus of AU-EU negotiations, as Europe's Common Agricultural Policy protects European farming, limiting the export of African agricultural commodities. Thus the goal of a free-trade area between the two regions remains unrealized, although there has been an agreement to establish a customs union by 2014.

Expanding its function, ECOWAS has become a political cover for the troops of Nigeria and other West African states to send peacekeeping forces to Liberia and Sierra Leone. The EU has sent peacekeepers to Burundi, Somalia, and Darfur, and France has independently dispatched peacekeeping troops to Mauritania, Togo, Mali, and Chad.

Another regional economic grouping, the fourteen-member Southern African Development Community (SADC), which intervened in the Democratic Republic of Congo, has also sought to turn itself into a regional security force. In effect, the civil war there was expanded into a regional conflict. Angola, Zimbabwe, and Namibia, acting on behalf of SADC, sent peacekeeping troops into Congo to save the Laurent Kabila regime from being toppled by rebels. The rebels were supported by forces from Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi. Thus, three Southern African states became arrayed against three East African Nilotic countries.

South Africa, by far the largest and most economically powerful of the SADC members, has opposed this intervention. Without South African support, SADC has little political or economic power.

ECOWAS and SADC are the most important of the present regional groups. There are others, such as the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Economic Community of Central African States. All of these organizations, however, have made little progress in furthering regional economic integration, in part because of the protectionist policies of the various states.

Geographical Background

Sub-Saharan Africa has a population of over 900 million that is widely scattered for several reasons. One is the broad spread of arable lands throughout the higher areas of the tropical and subtropical parts of the continent. Another is the limited extent of the various coastlines. A third is the multiplicity of widely separated river systems, each of which tends to attract denser settlements to the lower and middle courses.

No single coastal area in Sub-Saharan Africa possesses the population and economic concentrations that are necessary for a dominant regional power to arise. The region's largest country, Nigeria, has 175 million people, or nearly 18 percent of the population of the African subcontinent. However, Nigeria is torn by regional and religious factionalism.

The region is predominantly black racially, with Europeans, Indians, and Arabs combined representing under 5 percent of the total. However, Africa is subdivided into over one thousand ethnolinguistic groups, contributing to its atomization. Much of Sub-Saharan Africa's 7,800,000 square miles is unsuited to absorbing the rapidly increasing population. Tropical rain forests, poor and dry savanna soils, and deserts are all impediments to agriculture and settlement. Most of the subcontinent consists of high plateau that has experienced successive geologic uplifts, and much of it is inaccessible to the coast. The smooth, emerged coastal plains are narrow, covering a much smaller proportion of the land area than do coastal plains in other continents, and they afford few good, natural harbors. Where these plains do occur, they frequently are too dry and therefore are lightly populated or quite narrow and blocked off from the interior by highlands. Some coastal areas were also depopulated by slaving activities.

Development of modern urban economies has been inhibited by lack of such large, coastal populations in much of the region. There are important exceptions, however. These include the mouths of the Niger and the coastal lands along the Gulf of Guinea to the west and east, the lower Congo, the southwestern and eastern coasts of South Africa, coastal Tanzania, and eastern Madagascar. The rich oil and gas reserves of the Niger delta and the Gulf of Guinea waters, as well as Angola's offshore deposits, have played the key role in the developments of their coastal lands. Much of the revenues that have been generated by the energy resources have been squandered by corrupt regimes rather than applied to basic development purposes.

TRANSPORTATION

The railroad has not played the pioneering nation-building and economic development role in Sub-Saharan Africa that it has played elsewhere in the world, especially in the United States, Western Europe, the Eurasian heartland, southern Brazil, and the Pampas of Argentina. In those cases, railways served to attract large-scale settlement, first agricultural and then urban, and became the backbones of national ecumenes. On the African subcontinent, the role of railroads has been limited to transporting minerals and commercial crops to the sea for export rather than serving as frameworks for dense population and economic activities. Not only are fifteen of the Sub-Saharan states landlocked, but also in many other of the region's countries, mineral and timber resources are located in remote regions with sparse populations.

Indeed, instead of becoming nation-building agents, most of the railroads have been centrifugal forces. The Katanga (Shaba) railway in southeastern Congo runs to Benguela on the Atlantic coast of Angola rather than to the political capital of the DRC in Kinshasa, which is located on the lower course of the River Congo. Another rail line from Shaba connects with the Zambian and Zimbabwean systems to the port of Maputo on Mozambique's Indian Ocean coast. While the Katanga secession movement of the early 1960s was ultimately quashed, the separatist tendencies of the Katangese have been reinforced by geographical isolation and continue to simmer. This is despite the fact that Shaba's land connections to the rest of Congo have been improved in recent years.

Another important railway that has failed to attract broad economic development is the Tazara (Tan-Zam) Railway. It was built in the 1970s by China (fifteen thousand Chinese workers were involved in the construction) in its efforts to gain influence in East Africa. The line extends for eleven hundred miles and connects landlocked Zambia to the sea via Tanzania's port of Dar es Salaam. The railway's geopolitical significance is that it has freed Zambia from having to export its major copper resources through the Zimbabwean rail system to either the Mozambique ports of Beira and Maputo or the ports of South Africa. In recent years the railroad has been paralleled by a highway and an oil pipeline. While the Tazara line has been economically important to Zambia, it has not appreciably helped to broaden the country's economy, nor has it served as the spine of a corridor of major settlement and economic activity for either Zambia or Tanzania.

In general, transportation remains the Achilles heel of Africa's economic development efforts. Rail freight rates are much higher than in other parts of the developing world—50 percent higher than in Latin America and twice as high as in Asia. Road systems are even more problematic, as they suffer from continuing deterioration due to inadequate maintenance that is exacerbated by unfavorable conditions relating to climate, vegetation, and terrain.

ECONOMY

Sub-Saharan Africa is the poorest region in the world, with an average per capita income of slightly over $2,300. Even more alarming, 70 percent of the region's working poor earn less than two dollars per day. The pervasive poverty is aggravated by an international debt to foreign governments and international lenders. While at the end of the year 2000, the industrial nations of the world agreed to provide debt relief to the twenty-two poorest countries—eighteen of which were located within Sub-Saharan Africa (the other four were in Latin America), this has done little to ameliorate the region's poverty. Today nineteen of the twenty poorest countries in the world are located within Sub-Saharan Africa. While direct foreign investments have tripled since 2000, they still represent only 7 percent of total world investment in developing countries. In addition, much of this investment is in oil development that does not benefit most of the poor.[6] Over the past few years, the GDPs of Sub-Saharan Africa's countries have increased at an annual rate of 5 to 6 percent. While this offers a ray of hope for lifting the region out of poverty, this growth has only brought the regional economy back to where it was more than a decade ago. Sub-Saharan Africa continues to remain in a condition of economic and therefore geopolitical dependence upon the outside world—a reality underscored by the acrimony that was evinced in the rejection by most African nations of the EU's proposal for a Euro-African Free Trade Agreement at the December 2007 Lisbon Conference. In addition to inadequate capital investment, the region is plagued by HIV-AIDS and other diseases, such as Ebola, civil strife, and war.

While minerals, including petroleum, and commercial crops and fibers are important generators of export currency and have expanded the region's GDP by over 5 percent per annum in recent years, they cannot support the continent's vast subsistence agricultural and urban population. Swings in international mineral prices and high foreign tariffs on agricultural products contribute to economic instability. In addition, corruption siphons off much of the export income into the pockets of the political and economic elite. Periodic crop failures brought on by drought and plant disease devastate the rural countryside, forcing waves of hunger-stricken subsistence farmers to abandon their homes for crime-ridden urban slums in the major cities that cannot support existing populations, let alone absorb these newcomers. The refugees from famine, as well as those fleeing war-torn areas, gain some measure of security and access to food from international relief agencies but remain rootless in their cities of refuge. The flight from countryside to city is also accelerated by the land consolidation that goes hand in hand with agricultural development efforts to increase farm productivity.

The tragic consequences of this massive flight are reflected painfully in the urban anarchy that prevails in Lagos. This Nigerian megacity has grown from a peaceful center of two hundred thousand half a century ago to a metropolis of over twenty-one million, the largest in all of Africa. It lacks any semblance of an urban infrastructure, as the continuing streams of newcomers take shelter in shantytowns and in the devastated areas, amid open sewers and with limited access to potable water. Disease is rife, children are unschooled, and crime is endemic. Yet Nigerian migrants keep fleeing the drought-stricken Sahel to the cities. Unless a major international effort is made to stabilize Lagos and the other megacities of the Third World, there is little prospect that the urban tragedy can be ameliorated.

A major challenge for Sub-Saharan Africa, as in so many parts of the developing world, is to find ways of increasing farm output and incomes of small farmers. In the region as a whole, less than 40 percent of the population is urban. In many African countries, 60 to 80 percent of the population consists of an impoverished rural peasantry. Estimates for oil-rich Nigeria and Angola, for example, are over 50 and over 60 percent, respectively. Even in South Africa, which has the most advanced economy of the region, the rural populace is 40 percent.

The role of manufacturing in the region's economy remains very limited except in South Africa. An indicator of Africa's lag in this sector is its minimal participation in world merchandise trade. While developing nations as a whole now account for more than one-third of the world's total merchandise exports, Sub-Saharan Africa's share of world trade is minuscule, and less than 10 percent of its trade is intraregional. While the EU is the region's largest trade partner, China is by far the leading single trading source for imports and exports. This lack of exchange contributes to the atmosphere of isolation and atomization and feeds long-held antagonisms and hostilities among the member states of the region.

Under these woeful human and economic conditions, it is clear that Sub-Saharan Africa lacks the capacity to advance without massive economic and technical aid and capital investment from the developed world. Ameliorating the plight of the rural and urban poor by improving health, fighting disease, providing safe water and sanitation, and reducing illiteracy will require far greater investment than has heretofore been provided. The aid that the region has been receiving in the form of grants and loans has amounted to billions of dollars over the decades, and it annually accounts for 10 percent of the economic activity of the subcontinent.

However, it has proven to be insufficient and has not been used effectively. Since the region has the world's most rapid population growth, with a median age of fifteen in ten of its countries, birth control measures are necessary to balance the population growth that would accompany improvements in health and other living conditions.[7]

Even with increased aid and additional loan forgiveness packages, there will not be significant economic progress for the region without elimination of corruption and the encouragement of interstate cooperative projects. However, such steps will have limited impact unless the conflicts that sap the human and economic development capacities of Sub-Saharan Africa can be radically reduced. Regrettably, regional geopolitical structural trends provide little evidence that the atomization that is both cause and effect of Africa's current economic and political plight will soon run its course.

Geopolitical Features

In its geopolitical features and patterns, Sub-Saharan Africa is the least mature region of the world's geopolitical system, and there is little likelihood that it will soon evolve coherent geopolitical structures that could overcome the current regional atomization.

HISTORIC REGIONAL CORE

No single place can lay claim to have planted the seed of Sub-Saharan African unity and thus fulfill the role of historic political core. The leading early proponent of Pan-Africanism, Kwame Nkrumah, led Ghana to independence from his base in Accra. Although Ghana received considerable economic and technical aid from both the United States and the Soviet Union, falling world cocoa prices and ill-conceived large-scale development projects led to economic chaos and the overthrow of Nkrumah in 1966. Ghana then lost its role as a Third World ideological leader, the country being plagued with political instability and military rule that depressed it for more than three decades. Since then, it has recovered from its impoverishment of that period. Democracy has been restored through a multiparty system, and Ghana is on the verge of becoming middle income, adding the manufacturing of clothing and the expansion of service industries to its traditional economic base of cocoa and timber exports. This is supplemented by exports of such minerals such as gold, bauxite, diamonds, and manganese.

Lomé, the capital of Togo and the founding site for ECOWAS, has also failed to become a rallying point for regional unity. The same applies to Arusha in Tanzania, which was the site for President Julius Nyerere's 1967 Arusha Declaration, in which he called for African socialism, egalitarianism, hard work, and self-reliance. The declaration had a powerful influence within Africa during this period, and the city became the headquarters of the East African Community. However, the EAC was later disbanded because of intraregional conflict. Thus, Arusha did not sustain the spirit of Pan-Africanism in changing political and economic times, and it became merely an interesting historical footnote.

The African Union (AU) is modeled after the European Union. The AU has a much broader mandate than its predecessor, the OAU. Its lofty goals include achieving political and economic integration among its members, promotion of democratic institutions, and good governance. A common parliament, central bank, court of justice, and a single currency are also envisaged.[8] The organization is also authorized to intervene in stopping genocide, war crimes, and human rights abuses. Under this mandate, it has been enlisted in attempts to halt the bloodletting in Darfur, but with little success. For the most part, peacekeeping within Sub-Saharan Africa continues to depend on UN-organized troops or those of individual states, especially France.

POLITICAL CAPITALS

Similarly, no current political center holds the potential for becoming a contemporary regional political core. Nigeria's federal capital, the planned city of Abuja, which replaced Lagos as the seat of government in 1991, is the center of government for West Africa's largest and most powerful country. Its location in the middle of the country was selected for its salubrious climate, limited surrounding population, and "neutral" ground between North and South. However, Nigeria's cohesiveness is undermined by political strife and violence. Lagos, the largest urban center, has been the scene of unrestrained ethnic strife between the Yoruba and Hausa and has become a geographical symbol of national disunity.

South Africa's Pretoria might have been a candidate to become Southern Africa's political capital, but it is more representative of the colonial past than it is of future African unity. Built by the white colonizers, the city has little in the way of a symbolic built landscape that can evoke black African political aspirations. Moreover, the leaders of South Africa have only recently evinced interest in seeking regional influence. For most of the period following Nelson Mandela's ascension to the presidency in 1994, the new black regime has been absorbed in national, not regional, affairs.

Nairobi, Kenya, is headquarters for several international organizations, including the UN's environmental programs. It was the historical capital of the British East Africa Protectorate but remains essentially a regional center.

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the headquarters of the AU, is located in the Horn of Africa on the margins of the region and does not serve as an ideological rallying point for the Sub-Saharan continent.

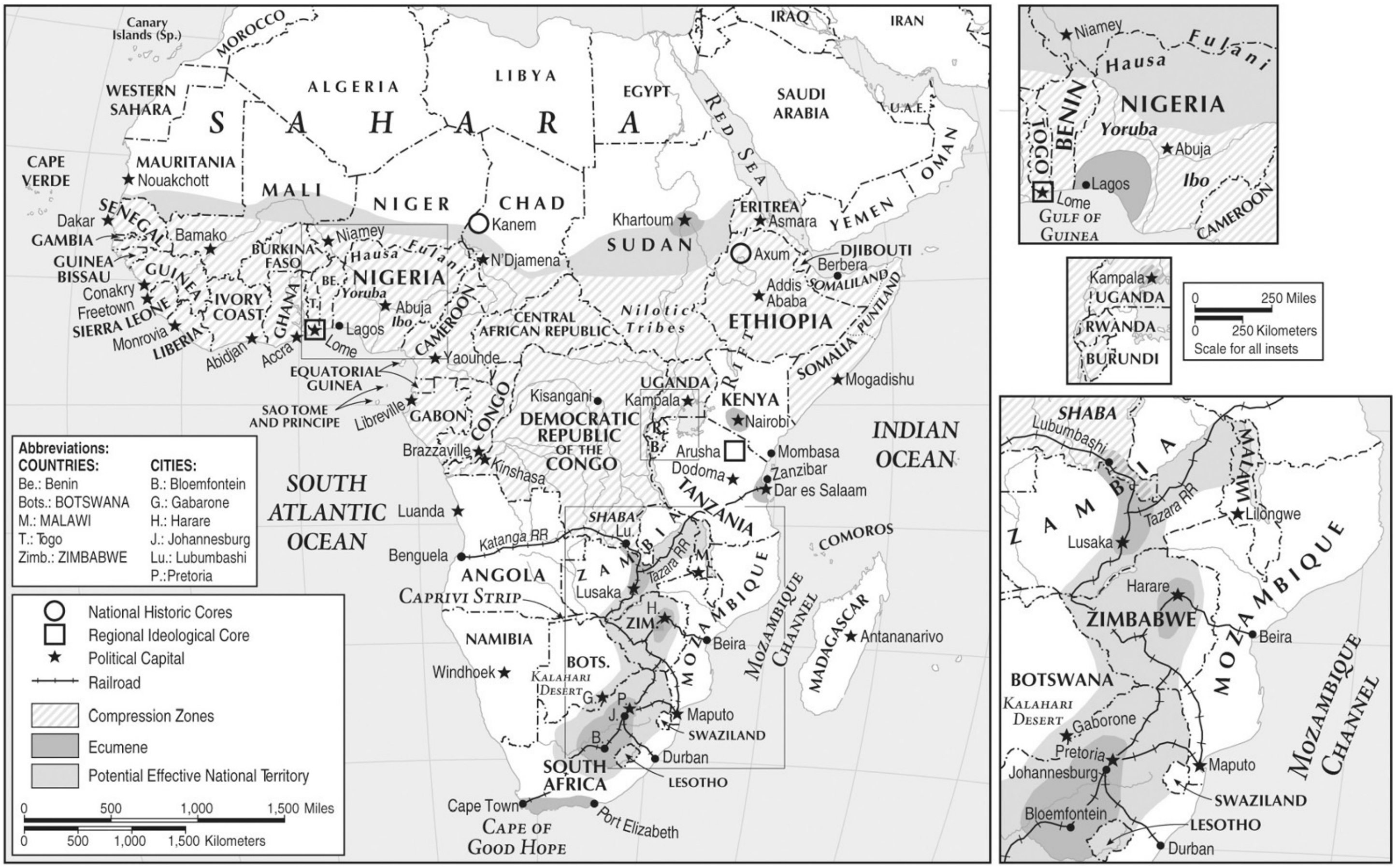

Figure 13.1. Sub-Saharan African Shatterbelt: Major Geopolitical Features

ECUMENE

Since national ecumenes are so weakly developed, it is little wonder that there are few traces of a regional ecumene in Sub-Saharan Africa. The subcontinent's only well-developed national ecumene is in South Africa. This economic and population core area extends across the Transvaal from its hub in greater Johannesburg, northward toward the border of Zambia and southeastward across the Drakensburg Mountains to the coast, from Durban southward to Port Elizabeth. However, the main South African ecumene has no physical connection with the economic core area of adjoining Zimbabwe.

One development that may someday lead to a Southern Africa regional core is the potential extension of South Africa's ecumene into Mozambique via the Maputo Development Corridor. This is an improved rail and toll highway corridor that runs northeastward from Johannesburg through Swaziland to the Mozambique coast at Maputo. A natural gas pipeline from fields in the Transvaal also extends through the corridor. Maputo's economy has been strengthened by steel and aluminum plants anchoring the eastern end of the corridor, while a ribbon of dense population is beginning to form along the transit way. However, intensive industrial development in Swaziland and the interior sections of Mozambique are still in the distant future. A smaller transnational ecumene—the Copperbelt—extends from northeastern Zambia into Congo's southeastern Shaba.

EFFECTIVE REGIONAL TERRITORY

Two vast grassland areas—the Southern African savanna, which extends from the Transvaal through Zimbabwe and Zambia, and the West African Sahel and Savanna grasslands have the potential for becoming effective regional territories. However, the obstacles to the mergers of the effective national territories in these areas are formidable. Scarcity of rainfall, disease (both cattle and human), and distance from open seas thwart the potential for oceanic trade. The semiarid Sahel, which extends from Senegal through Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and northern Nigeria and thence into Sudan and Ethiopia, suffered disastrous droughts and famines in the 1970s and 1990s. This brought devastation to the region and resulted in the depopulation of vast areas rather than absorption of the additional populations that effective national and regional territories must be able to attract.

BOUNDARIES

Another major geopolitical feature—boundaries—also reflects the geopolitical immaturity of the region. Some of Sub-Saharan Africa's borders have never been clearly demarcated and remain in dispute. Others, while demarcated, separate territories that are claimed by two or more states and are the sources of often bitter conflict. These boundaries cut across ethnotribal, linguistic, or religious groupings, leaving substantial minorities on one side of the border who seek to reunite with transborder kinfolk (see table 13.1).[9] Tables 13.1 and 13.2 present current and latent boundary and territorial disputes and note their status.[10]

Table 13.1. Sub-Saharan Africa: Current Boundary and Territorial Disputes

Countries	*Disputed Boundary*	*Disputed Territory*
Cameroon	International boundary—delimitation in Lake Chad (involves Chad, Niger, Nigeria)	
Comoros		Claim Mayotte Ile from France; Iles of Mwali and Nzwani secessionists seek return to France
Congo/DRC–Congo/Brazzaville	Most of Congo River boundary indefinite except in Stanley Pool area	
Eritrea-Djibouti	Ras Doumeira Red Sea headland and island	
Ethiopia-Somalia		Somalia claims southern half of Ethiopia's Ogaden Desert region
Gabon–Equatorial Guinea	Maritime boundary—oil-rich waters of Gulf of Corisco Bay	
Gabon-Nigeria	Maritime boundary—oil-rich waters of Gulf of Guinea	
Gambia-Senegal	Short section of boundary indefinite	
Madagascar		Glorioso Iles and Juan de Nova Island, from France
Niger		12,000 square miles of northern Niger claimed by Libya
Somalia		Divisions between Somaliland, “Puntland,” and rest of Somalia
Swaziland		Claims territory held by South Africa

Table 13.2. Sub-Saharan Africa: Latent Boundary and Territorial Disputes

Countries	*Disputes*
Cameroon-Niger	Bakassi Peninsula and nearby island divided between the two countries. Military clashes in 1990s. Rich offshore oil deposits.
Chad-Libya	43,000 sq. mi. Aozou Strip in northern Chad claimed by Libya. War in 1980s. Awarded to Chad by ICJ in 1993. Rich in uranium.
Ghana-Togo	Pan-Ewe secessionist movement in southern Togo. Quiescent since 1980s.
Kenya-Somalia	Dormant dispute in Kenya's northeastern province over rights of Somalian majority to join Somalia.
Lesotho-South Africa	South Africa sovereignty over Transkei, which received independence in 1976 and was absorbed by South Africa in 1994.
Namibia-Botswana	Sovereignty over Kasikili Island in Linyanti River resolved in favor of Botswana by ICJ in 1999.
Senegal-Mauritania	Dispute over grazing rights in southern Mauritania. Clashes in 1989.
Tanzania-Malawi	Dispute over Lake Malawi.

Note: ICJ = International Court of Justice.

Many of the boundary conflicts cannot be separated from broader disputes over control of natural resources, access to the sea, and reunification of peoples. Nor can they be disentangled from civil strife and governmental instability in a particular country, which may lead to the porousness of its borders—a major contributor to conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa. Uncontrolled borders permit guerrilla groups to operate from bases outside a country and to make transborder strikes, drawing adjoining states into the conflict. Congo/DRC and Zambia were used as bases for Angolan rebels in their battle for independence against the Portuguese. Later Angola served as the organizing center for Namibian rebels in their campaign to gain freedom from South Africa. Zambia was accused by the Angolan government of permitting the UNITA rebel movement to maintain itself by selling diamonds across the porous Zambian border and bringing back military supplies. As another example, Mozambique provided a secure headquarters for the leadership of the Zimbabwean rebel guerrillas in their fight for independence.

Guinean rebels operating from Sierra Leone and Liberia have launched transborder attacks against Guinea's army, devastating parts of the country's southwestern and southeastern border regions. Botswana shelters Lozi tribesmen from Namibia, who use bases there to attempt to create a separate Lozi state in Namibia's Caprivi Strip and parts of southwest Zambia. The narrow Caprivi Strip, fifty miles wide and three hundred miles in length, juts into Botswana and Zambia several hundreds of miles from Namibia's major centers and is highly vulnerable to border incursions by the Lozi rebels.

The civil war in Sierra Leone, which raged from 1992 to 2002, was fueled by support from Charles Taylor, the Liberian dictator, who enabled the rebels to purchase their arms. The rebels controlled the southeastern part of the country, the heart of the diamond mining and trading industry. It was only with Taylor's resignation and exile that Sierra Leone was able to achieve peace and hold elections in 2002 and 2007, with the participation of the former rebels. Taylor, the warlord who kept his own country in turmoil for years, had plundered Liberia, leaving the country in abject poverty from which it is only beginning to emerge owing to revenues from its international shipping fleet and rubber. In 2012, Taylor was found guilty by a Special Court at The Hague for his brutal crimes and sentenced to life in prison in Britain.

One of the most volatile of recent conflicts has raged along the border between Congo/DRC and Rwanda. Rwandan Hutu guerrillas who had fled into eastern Congo have used bases there to launch transborder raids against the Tutsi-controlled government in Rwanda. Burundi rebels, also operating from Congo territory, have mounted raids against Burundi's Tutsi regime. It was because of the inability, or lack of desire, of Congo's president, the late Laurent Kabila, to put an end to the Rwandan Hutu raids that the Rwandan government, joined by Uganda, sided with the Congolese rebels seeking to overthrow Kabila. Ironically, the Tutsi president of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, had initially sided with the Kabila insurgency, which overthrew the Congolese dictator Mobutu Sese Seko in 1997 because Mobutu had permitted the Rwandan Hutus to take refuge in eastern Congo.

The Central African Republic has been torn by civil war between its Muslim and Christian populations. In 2012 Muslim rebels from the North, who are mainly herders and nomads, encroached upon the lands of Christian farmers to their south, overthrowing the government. With the help of two thousand French troops, the Muslims were ousted the following year and the government restored. Christian militias then took vengeance with wanton killings of Muslims, causing thousands of Muslims to flee the country. The AU then sent in six thousand troops as peacekeepers, including detachments from Chad, some of which were accused of siding with the Muslims. This became a controversial issue, leading to withdrawal of the Chadians from the peacekeeping force. In an effort to stabilize the country, the French troops remained, and the EU has promised to augment them with another one thousand soldiers.

In the Horn of Africa, the long-running rebellion of the Eritreans against Amharic Ethiopian rule spanned the regimes of both Emperor Haile Selassie and Mengistu Haile Mariam, who overthrew Selassie in 1974. In the 1980s the Eritreans joined forces with Ethiopian rebels from the province of Tigre, and together they eventually overthrew the Soviet-supported Marxist government of Mengistu, spelling the end of centuries of Amharic domination. In 1993 the new Ethiopian government, now controlled by the leader of the former rebels, Meles Zenawi, agreed to the independence of Eritrea. Inasmuch as the separation left Ethiopia landlocked, the Eritreans granted it a free port at Aseb, which is connected to Ethiopia by highway. It appeared that peace had finally come.

However, the former allies soon stumbled into war with each other over parts of the 625-mile boundary that had never been delineated. The focus of the fighting was possession of the Badme (Yirga) Triangle. With large numbers of battle-hardened troops on both sides, what started as minor skirmishes in 1998 developed into full-scale war. A cease-fire brokered by the OAU in the summer of 1999 was broken a year later, when the Ethiopians pushed into Eritrea, displacing upward of a million Eritreans. A second cease-fire was signed in September 2000, with both sides agreeing to return to the line that existed before the initial Eritrean invasion.

A small UN peacekeeping force was deployed within a sixteen-mile buffer zone along this line, and both countries have agreed to the demarcation of the border by the United Nations. An Independent Boundary Commission completed the demarcation in April 2002, awarding the disputed town of Badme to Eritrea. While Addis Ababa initially rejected this decision, it has since accepted outside mediation, which confirmed the placement of the boundary. The cost of the conflict between these former allies has been one hundred thousand soldiers killed, widespread devastation of the landscape, and massive displacement of Eritrean refugees. The economic development of two of the world's poorest countries has been pushed backward even further.

As a result of the conflict and despite the peace accord, landlocked Ethiopia has shifted from using the Eritrean port of Aseb as its main outlet for trade to using Djibouti and Berbera. A large share of the country's imports and exports now move via the 487-mile railroad from Djibouti to Addis Ababa. This slow and antiquated line, completed in 1929, must climb a tortuous mountain route to reach the capital on the Ethiopian plateau, eight thousand feet above sea level. The smaller port of Berbera in Somalia's breakaway state of Somaliland, has become increasingly important as an *entrepôt* for Ethiopia. The former British Somaliland has become politically stable through the establishment of a representative, clan-based government. While Berbera has no railway, its highway connection to Addis Ababa via the Ethiopian commercial center of Harar is the easiest and fastest of the transit ways. Large food shipments for famine relief entered through Berbera in 2000, and the Ethiopian government has cautiously developed other economic relationships with Somaliland.[11] Following the terrorist destruction of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, Washington established a US Naval Expeditionary Base at Djibouti, which remains a centerpiece for US strategic oversight of the region.

Most of Sub-Saharan Africa's border disputes are the legacy of colonial boundary making, just as so much of the civil strife within the region's various states is a product of dividing up territories to suit European colonial aims or to accommodate competing aims. As noted earlier, there is a difference of opinion about whether to tamper with these borders to make states more ethnically cohesive or to enlarge them to create more economically feasible states.

LANDLOCKED AREAS

The especially large number of landlocked countries, sixteen in all, is a unique geopolitical feature of Sub-Saharan Africa. These countries are Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho, and Ethiopia. Their populations represent 40 percent of the total population of the region. The only other region that begins to approximate such a density of landlocked states is Central Asia, Afghanistan, and the Caucasus, which in combination have eight such national units.

Sub-Saharan Africa's landlocked states are among the poorest in the world, possessing lower per capita incomes than even their own coastal neighbors, most of whom rank among the world's least developed countries. These landlocked countries are dependent upon costly, slow, and often unreliable land and river corridors to the open seas. Rising oil costs and plunging prices of commodities play havoc with already fragile economies, while transit fees levied by coastal states add to the costs of imports and exports. Lack of direct access to the oceans also inhibits economic specialization and thus adds to the economic weakness of these states.

In the center of the region, Lake Chad has shrunk to 5 percent of its 1963 size because of the construction of large-scale irrigation projects that have diverted the waters from the feeder streams. What is left of the lake is a series of small ponds and islands. The problem has been compounded by less-than-normal monsoon rains during this period, exacerbated by the encroachment of the Sahara due to climate change. The ecological damage that has been done to the lake's fisheries and the impact of shoreline retreat are causes of considerable political tension among the four states that border the water body—Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, and Chad—as well as affecting the lives of twenty million farmers.[12]

In Rwanda, the genocide of up to eight hundred thousand minority Tutsis and moderate Hutus was perpetrated by extremist Hutus after the airplane carrying Hutu president Juvénal Habyarimana was shot down and he was killed. Paul Kagame, leader of the rebel Tutsis, put an end to the killings. He then became president, stabilizing and uniting the country. Kagame has raised living standards, attracted investments, reduced corruption, and improved women's rights. Today, the official policy of the country is "No Tutsis and no Hutus, only Rwandans"—it is working.

Without secure access to the sea, the sovereignty of landlocked states is often compromised and they are subject to military as well as economic pressures from their neighbors. A driving force behind the various attempts to establish federations in both East and West Africa has been the incentive for their landlocked countries to link up with coastal states to gain such access. This was also a major factor in the establishment of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), for it offers the landlocked states of Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Botswana, Swaziland, and Lesotho not only the promise of lower common tariffs but also cheaper and more efficient transportation to the sea.

Even the coastal states have landlocked interior sections, and these are the least-developed parts within those countries. The southern coastal parts of the West African countries that adjoin the Atlantic Ocean were developed by the European colonial powers for their agricultural, forest, and mineral resources. In the process, these sea-oriented regions were also Christianized. However, the Europeans had little interest in developing the northern grassland portions of their colonies and allowed them to languish economically. The fact that the populations of these interior regions were Muslim added a religious dimension to the schism.

The current bitter struggles between northern and southern Nigeria are a reflection of this economic/religious rift.

Ironically, the northern belt was once the locus of great medieval Muslim kingdoms (the Mali, Sengali, and Kitari) founded by Arab traders who had drawn their wealth from the trans-Saharan trade in gold, salt, and slaves. However, the mobility of the desert- and grassland-based camel men and horsemen lost its effectiveness when they tried to penetrate the coastal equatorial rain forests. This left these areas open to sea power and allowed the Portuguese, at the end of the fifteenth century, and the other European powers who followed to establish coastal bases. From there, European imperialism eventually took control of the interior. The Europeans created the trade that led to the control of mineral and slave wealth and to the establishment of cities and commercial agriculture. This shifted the economic balance from the interior to the coast, a condition that continues to this day. With the discovery of coastal and offshore oil and gas deposits in recent decades, the gap between coast and interior has widened.

Regional Subdivisions

While Sub-Saharan Africa is divided into six subregions—East, West, Central, Northern, Southern, and the Horn of Africa—only two of them, West and Southern Africa, have the potential to become cohesive geopolitical units led by a regional power.

Central and Northern Africa are the most geopolitically problematic of the subregions, now that Congo has imploded as an organized state. Central Africa constitutes a compression zone that extends from East Africa and the African Horn to West Africa.

A second compression zone, Northern Africa, has developed along the northern fringe of Sub-Saharan Africa. It embraces the short-grass Sahel and the tall-grass savanna belts that are bordered by the Sahara to the north and the rain forest to the south. The zone extends from Mauritania on the Atlantic eastward through the Sudan. Muslim herders and nomads occupy the northern part of the zone, and Christians the southern part. Jihadists and other Muslim extremist groups operating from northern bases wage civil war against the governments of the more populous south. Their ranks are reinforced by extremists from the Sahara and lands to the north, such as Algeria, Libya, and Tunisia. These rebels have fostered rebellions in Mali, Niger, Chad, and northern Nigeria, supporting themselves through smuggling cigarettes, weapons, and drugs to Europe via coastal countries like Guinea-Bissau.

The governments of this zone are too weak to quash the rebels and depend upon outside troops to retain control. ECOWAS has sent troops to help, but they are dependent upon Western logistics and intelligence. It is essentially French military intervention, especially in Chad and Mali, which has kept the Muslim extremists in check. Of all of the Sub-Sahara African shatterbelts, this zone is the most highly fragmented.

Several factors prevent East Africa from developing a cohesive core. One is the fairly even balance in population and resources among its three large states—Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. Another is the civil strife between the Hutu and Tutsi populations that tore Rwanda and Burundi apart and spilled over to eastern Congo. Historically cool relations between Uganda and Tanzania have also played a role. In 1978 Uganda invaded Kagera, the tin-mining and coffee-producing region of northwest Tanzania, seeking to annex it. The Tanzanians counterattacked the following year, liberating Kagera and then capturing Kampala, Uganda's capital. They drove Idi Amin from office and kept their occupation forces in Uganda until 1981.

It was Uganda's 1998 invasion of eastern Congo, where Ugandan rebels had found safe haven, which helped precipitate the war within Congo that has cost over five million lives. While a formal peace was signed between the government and the rebels in 2004, the conflict between the Congolese Tutsi and the central government continued to rage. Another peace agreement was reached with the rebels in 2008, but the fighting continues to simmer. Another point of contention between Uganda and Congo is their water boundary within Lake Albert, and particularly the ownership of Rukwanzi Island at the southern end of the lake, where oil was discovered in 2006.

PROSPECTS FOR REGIONAL POWER CENTERS

It is in the remaining two regions—Southern Africa and West Africa—that prospects for regional cohesion are greatest, because each has a large and relatively powerful leading state, with Nigeria in West Africa and South Africa in Southern Africa. However, even though these countries are much stronger than their neighbors militarily and economically, each has internal weaknesses that will have to be overcome before it can play a successful regional power role. Moreover, the fragmentation in West Africa is so great that regional integration there is highly elusive.

No single state within Sub-Saharan Africa has the potential to become a major, or first-order, power that can gain ascendancy over the subcontinent. At best, the prospects are for regional, or second-order, powers to emerge that will be able to dominate the subregions within which they are located.

Southern Africa

South Africa is, by far, the most powerful state economically, not only in Southern Africa but also within the subcontinent as a whole. With its population of fifty million, or half of the subregion's total, it has an economy that is three times as large as the combined economies of the thirteen other members of the SADC and accounts for 40 percent of the GNP of all of Sub-Saharan Africa. Nevertheless, the South African government throughout the 1990s was unwilling to influence SADC with respect to the war in Congo. It opposed sending troops there to help the Kabila regime and has failed in its aim of having SADC act by consensus on security matters or in developing common tariff and banking arrangements.

In only one instance in the 1990s did South Africa turn from diplomacy and economics to influence affairs within SADC countries. This was in 1998, when it sent troops into Lesotho to reinstate the elected government of Ntsu Mokhehle, which had been toppled in a coup. The reason for intervention in this case was strategic, because Lesotho is totally enclosed within South African territory. Most recently, South Africa has modified its position with respect to involvement in regional conflicts. While it remains reluctant to impose its will upon warring states and peoples, it has adopted a proactive role as mediator and peacekeeper. Thus it has become involved in mediating the Congo civil war and has dispatched peacekeeping troops to Burundi, Congo, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and the Comoros. However, in 2008 it reverted to previous disengagement when it refused to press openly for the removal of Robert Mugabe, whose dictatorial rule brought Zimbabwe to the brink of economic collapse, reverting instead to ineffective diplomacy.

South Africa is far closer to becoming a regional power than is Nigeria. Economically, its per capita income is twice that of Nigeria and its manufacturing sector seven times as large. Unique among African states, it ranks as a middle-income, developed country, blessed with abundant natural resources, such as gold, diamonds, chromium, platinum, coal, iron, uranium, and copper. South African corporations have invested heavily in Southern Africa. In addition, it has a broad agricultural base that includes maize, wheat, sugarcane, fruit, vegetables, beef, poultry, dairy, and fish products.

South Africa not only has by far the strongest industrial manufacturing and service base of any African country but also is a major manufacturer of military arms and possesses excellent transportation and financial service networks. Moreover, the vicious apartheid system was dismantled through peaceful means when Nelson Mandela was elected president, replacing white with black rule and sparing South Africa the violence that has torn apart so many other African nations in their quests for independence. And stability has been maintained since Mandela's retirement from the presidency in 1999.

Despite the breadth of its human and material assets, South Africa contends with major problems. The diversified economy continues to be controlled by whites, who constitute under 15 percent of the country's population of fifty million people. There is an enormous income gap between blacks (who are 75 percent of the population) and others ("coloureds" and Asians, as well as whites), as 10 percent of the population owns half the wealth. Other serious problems are unemployment (30 percent of the workforce), poverty, crime, and HIV-AIDS. (This disease has spread so widely that the country's population has the highest infection rate in the world.) Because manufacturing is so advanced and employs only 15 percent of the workforce, opportunities for the black majority are limited. Another problem is that 90 percent of the arable land requires irrigation, while periodic droughts reduce employment opportunities in commercial agriculture. This marginalizes the many subsistence farmers who still make up a sizable portion of the rural populace, which is half of the country's total.

In the regional arena, the very fact that the economy of South Africa is so much more highly developed than that of the rest of Southern Africa, and indeed the entire subcontinent, means that South Africa has little reason to pursue intraregional trade. Its remoteness from the geographical center of Sub-Saharan Africa and poor continental transportation links make a significant increase in such trade unlikely, except for the growth of trade with nearby countries. This growth has been promoted through establishment of the Southern African Customs Union

(SACU) in 2011. Led by South Africa, the union includes Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, and Swaziland.

Most of the country's foreign trade is with China, maritime Europe, the United States, and Japan, but trade with China is rapidly increasing. The EU countries collectively are the largest trading partner, drawing 40 percent of total South African trade. Commerce is facilitated by a free-trade agreement between the EU and South Africa. South Africa also receives $600 million in annual economic aid from the EU as well as $300 million in military assistance. The fear of many African states is that South African manufactures would overwhelm their incipient industries were SADC to become a vehicle for reducing tariffs. They also perceive the strength and sophistication of South Africa's armed forces as a source of possible political and economic pressure against them. These considerations, in addition to South Africa's domestic racial and economic disparities, suggest that it will be many years before South Africa is able to exercise fully its capacities as a regional power. Without an improvement in the economic status of the black population of South Africa, internal political and economic turmoil is always a possibility.

With so much of the South African economy being white controlled, the potential for interracial strife remains. In their relations with their former masters, the black majority has thus far adhered to the nonviolent philosophies of such leaders as the late Nelson Mandela, Bishop Desmond Tutu, and Thabo Mbeki. However, a more radicalized generation of younger black South African leaders could try to redress current economic disparities by seeking to gain partial control of large industries or through large-scale land expropriations, as has occurred in Zimbabwe under the authoritarian regime of Robert Mugabe. There, the large landholders, who are mostly whites, owned 75 percent of the Zimbabwean farmland, although they number only 4.5 percent of the farmers. Mugabe encouraged black squatters to seize white-owned properties, adding to the turmoil in a country whose economy is in a state of near collapse.

In 2007, Zimbabwe's economy reached hyperinflation heights. This moved Mugabe to impose price controls, only to cause shopkeepers to remove goods from their shelves. Despite the dire circumstance of the country and despite the flawed elections of 2008 in which the opposition outpolled him, so far Mugabe has managed to hold onto power. Zambia, on the other hand, is relatively prosperous, owing to its rich Copperbelt deposits. Copper production continues to increase, finding a ready global market, especially in China. The country benefits from a strong infrastructure of railways, roads, and modern airports, which are supported by these exports.

Next to South Africa, the two largest countries in Southern Africa are Angola and Mozambique. Both have been torn by major civil wars, and both were deeply impoverished. Of the two, Angola has succeeded in strengthening its economy and becoming a strong force within the region. It has rich natural resources, including its leading exports of petroleum and natural gas as well as diamonds, timber, and foodstuffs. In fact, it is Sub-Saharan Africa's second-largest oil producer.

What undermined both its economy and society was the bitter civil war that raged after its independence from Portugal in 1975. The Marxist government that then gained control with the help of the Soviet Union and its Cuban surrogate maintained its position against the rebels, even after its patrons withdrew at the end of the Cold War. At the same time, South Africa and the United States ceased their support of the UNITA rebels, led by Jonas Savimbi, who are essentially drawn from the Ovimbindu, Angola's largest ethnic group, with 40 percent of the total population. Nevertheless, peace remained elusive, as a UN-sponsored peace initiative broke down in 1999. The struggle continued between the government based in Luanda and UNITA, with the latter financed by its illegal sale of diamonds from the areas under its control. The economic development of the country remained stalled; the United Nations peacekeepers left; the rebels controlled the countryside; the government controlled the cities; and the stalemate continued. Savimbi's death in battle in February 2002 brought dramatic change. The stalemate was broken, and peace was achieved.

Recovering from its civil war, which devastated the country and caused the loss of half a million lives, a now prosperous Angola now plays a role as a regional intervener. Not only has it participated in the SADC-Congo/DRC military venture but also, in 1997, it dispatched troops to the Republic of Congo (Congo-Brazzaville) to intervene in a civil war there. Its interest in the Congo was twofold: (1) during the Cold War, the "People's" Republic of the Congo was ruled by a Marxist party that had signed a treaty of friendship with the Soviet Union and looked to Angola as a model and (2) the Republic of the Congo adjoins the northern border of Angola's Cabinda exclave (Congo/DRC surrounds it from the south). Securing Cabinda from internal separatist movements as well as from threats from both Congo/DRC and the Congo-Brazzaville is of the highest priority for Angola. The exclave accounts for two-thirds of Angola's petroleum, while its rich offshore fields have considerable development potential.

Oil has catapulted Angola into geopolitical prominence as the world's tenth-largest oil producer, as well as the second-largest producer in Sub-Saharan Africa. International oil companies have invested heavily in its offshore oil fields, increasing annual production to two millions barrels per day in 2007 with increased production targets. Although Angola joined OPEC in 2007, the country has given little indication that it accepts quotas that might slow production growth. Since half of the offshore South Atlantic oil reserves lie within Angola's territorial waters, which also contain rich natural gas deposits, it is likely that it will reach its long-term targets.

Given political uncertainties in the Middle East, the United States expanded its oil imports from West Africa, mainly from Nigeria and Angola. This has proved to be only a transitional measure, as US domestic production, combined with imports from Canada and Mexico, has made African imports far less important. China, for its part, is now investing heavily in the development of Angola's offshore fields. It imports one-third of its oil from Africa, mainly from Angola, which is China's single largest supplier.

Mozambique, which had also gained independence from Portugal in 1975 under the leadership of a Marxist party, the Frelimo, was torn apart by civil war as well. The new Marxist regime was backed by the Soviet Union and Cuba, while the main supporter of the rebel Renamo movement was South Africa. A lengthy campaign of guerrilla warfare devastated the country, and the struggle continued throughout the decade. Frelimo formally abandoned Marxism, adopting a free-market economy, but the civil war did not end until 1992. The country continues to struggle with the return of more than one million war refugees and ravages from the worst droughts of the century. With a resource base far more limited than that of Angola, prospects are that Mozambique will continue to be mired in poverty and torn by civil strife.

West Africa

NIGERIA

Nigeria, by far the most populous of African states (175 million and climbing), has the highest GDP, nearly 40 percent greater than that of South Africa. Rich in resources, especially oil, its economy has grown by 7 percent per annum over the past decade. Nevertheless, most of this wealth has not trickled down to the bulk of the inhabitants, whose per capita income averages only $2,700 per annum, or half that of South Africans.

While telecommunications, banking, filmmaking, and construction are fast-growing industries, the rest of the economy languishes. Development is stymied by poor infrastructure, including an unreliable electrical grid system and widespread corruption. The country is also weakened by rebellion of the militant Islamic Boko Haram in the northeast. While Nigeria has the resource base and oil wealth to be the core state of West Africa, it falls short of being able to realize its geopolitical power potential.

This has not prevented Nigeria from aggressively intervening in the affairs of other West African states. As the region's military giant, it has organized and led military interventions in Liberia and Sierra Leone and has been the major contributor to the AU's peacekeeping forces in Darfur. In other displays of regional power, it maintains military advisers in Gambia and Chad and has used trade as a weapon to secure the compliance of the regimes of Benin and Niger.

Nigeria's entry into the Liberian conflict started with the rebellion by Charles Taylor in 1989. Nigerian jets and gunboats sought to stop Taylor's invasion and keep President Samuel Doe in office. The conflict raged until 1997, when Nigeria shifted its support to Taylor, enabling him to get the upper hand, impose a cease-fire, and gain the presidency through an election. While the cost of the Nigerian involvement was estimated at $2 billion, the Nigerian military has profited richly from control of Liberia's diamond and hardwood trade.

Sierra Leone, long torn by unrest, became a battleground when a military coup overthrew President Joseph Mobutu in 1992. The Nigerian intervention was mounted that year, when the Sierra Leone government requested help in defending itself against rebels based in Liberia and aided by arms that funnel through that country. In the ensuing year, the Nigerians succeeded in preventing the rebels from gaining control of Sierra Leone's various governments. However, they could not quell the rebel campaign of terror, maimings, and kidnappings that devastated the country.

Wearying of the continuous support of the conflict, Nigeria brought the two sides together in 1999 and forced the government to share power with the rebels. The truce was soon broken, as the rebels took five hundred UN peacekeepers hostage and attacked Freetown. The Nigerians, the core of the UN's single largest peacekeeping force, withdrew their troops in June 2000 in response to the disenchantment of the Nigerian populace with the costly and unproductive nine-year intervention. However, the war weariness of the Sierra Leoneans brought about peace in 2002, and national elections followed.

Despite these displays of regional power, the Nigerian domestic scene has been in turmoil because of corruption and mismanagement and has been fragmented by ethnic and religious strife. While a civilian government was established in 1999 after years of Muslim military rule, the regime remains unstable. The country has been divided nearly evenly between Muslims and Christians, but the former are becoming the majority due to higher birthrates. The Muslim Hausa and Fulani of the North, who make up nearly 30 percent of the population, are perennially at odds with the Christian Yoruba of the southwest and the Ibo of the southeast, each of which makes up approximately 20 percent of the populace. The massacres of the Ibo that touched off the Biafra civil war continue to haunt the country, and rebel activities in the Niger delta region continue to cause stoppages and reduction in the country's oil production. Introduction of Shariah (Islamic law) in a dozen of the northern Muslim states has sharpened the divide between north and south. This divide could eventually lead to the breakaway of the south, which remains impoverished despite its vast oil resources.

The north-south division is compounded by the volatility of the "Middle Belt"—the "breadbasket" of central Nigeria, which lies between the middle courses of the Niger and Benue Rivers. There the region is torn apart by ethnic, religious, and intercommunal fighting aggravated by drought, starvation, and poverty. While the Niger dams projects that were begun in the 1960s have helped to develop farming in the Middle Belt, the friction among the different tribes and clans, many of which have migrated from the north, keeps the region in continuing turmoil at a local communal level and is the source of increasing numbers of refugee camps within the belt. Massacres of Muslims by Christian militias in 2004 sharpened the sectarian conflict in the country. The reverse situation now occurs as Christians in the north are subject to widespread killings and kidnappings.

Revenues from vast petroleum resources in the Niger delta in southeastern Nigeria and in the Gulf of Guinea (the Bights of Guinea and Biafra) have done little to allay the poverty that grips nearly half of the region's population or to reduce the nearly 25 percent unemployment rate. Oil production is falling because of turbulence, and oil revenues are looted or squandered by governmental leaders, who are responsible for Nigeria's reputation as one the world's most corrupt countries.

Prolonged droughts in the Sahel of northern Nigeria, as well as the collapse of fishing in Lake Chad, which has shrunk as a result of the droughts, have pushed hundreds of thousands of migrants to the cities of the south. They cannot be readily absorbed there, and their presence further exacerbates the civil strife.

With the decline of agriculture, especially at the subsistence level, Nigeria, once a food exporter, must now import food. While the democratically elected regime in the federal capital of Abuja may be able to take the lead in mounting major peacekeeping efforts among its strife-torn neighbors, as it did in Liberia and Sierra Leone, its political and economic staying power as a regional influential state remains tenuous. Civilian governments that have led the country since 1999 have raised hopes among Nigerians that internal conflict will fade, but thus far it is still a hope, and the violence has continued. Until Nigeria coalesces around widely accepted national goals, stabilizes its government, and learns to use its oil revenues wisely, its role as a regional power is likely to be limited and its regional policies unpredictable.

The greatest danger facing the country is that the current wave of rebellion and terrorism will develop into full-scale war between the Islamic north and Christian south. Samuel P. Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" may well be played out in Nigeria and extended into the rest of West Africa, which is also divided between Muslims and Christians.

OTHER WEST AFRICAN COUNTRIES

Elsewhere in West Africa, civil wars in Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea have ended. However, much of the rest of the region continues to be caught up in civil strife and border wars. Côte d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) was West Africa's most stable and prosperous nation from its independence until 1993, when its founding father, Félix Houphouët-Boigny, died. At that time, the impoverished, mainly Muslim Sahelian northern half of the country broke away from the south, claiming that its people were discriminated against by the Christian and traditional animist believers. Many of those living in the north come from neighboring Sahelian lands and lack citizenship. A UN "confidence zone" divides the rebel and government-held zones, manned largely by French peacekeepers. In 2007 an accord was reached by the two sides. Elections were then held, only to be challenged once again in 2011 by rebels. French troops intervened to restore democracy. The fundamental problem is that the country's wealth is in the south, where its main export crops, coffee and cocoa, and light industries are located in the coastal zones and nearby forests. Most of these economic activities center on Abidjan, the main port and former capital, which enjoys growth and prosperity. However, the Muslim north remains mired in poverty.

Senegal also has suffered from instability, as separatists from the Cassamance Province in South Senegal waged a twenty-two-year insurgency for independence. The secession ended in 2004 with a peace agreement that maintained the unity of the country. The rebel movement was both geographically and economically inspired. Cassamance is nearly isolated from the rest of the country by being wedged between Gambia and Guinea-Bissau and thus cut off from the main economic centers of northern Senegal and major investment opportunities.

Only three countries stand out as having gained stability since their early years of turmoil and strife—Ghana, Benin, and Gabon.

Ghana was led by Jerry Rawlings, who first seized power in a military coup and then assumed the presidency in 1982. The country overcame its period of disunity and economic distress to stabilize its economy and expand it through free-market innovations. Subsequent elections have confirmed the country's political stability through peaceful transfer of power by free elections. Agriculture remains Ghana's economic base, but its mineral and forest products, clothing industries, software development, and aluminum smelting have been expanded with the help of outside investment. Revenues from a recently discovered, vast oil field have stimulated the country's GDP. All of this has moved Ghana closer to being a middle-income country, and its ties to the West appear firm.

Benin abandoned its Marxist system in favor of private enterprise a decade ago. Since that time it has moved to popular elections and a multiparty system that has made it a model of an open society in West Africa. While Benin, with a population of nine million, is dependent on subsistence agriculture and cotton, its prospects for economic development have improved with the discovery of oil off its shores. Tiny Gabon (population 1.5 million), with a GDP per capita of $8,000, enjoys stability thanks to a sturdy economy. Oil accounts for 40 percent of its budget, and the rest is derived from other abundant natural and food resources and foreign investments.

However, these three countries, as well as South Africa, do not mirror the dismal conditions that characterize the region as a whole. There are works, exemplified by Dayo Olopade's *The Bright Continent*,[13] that try to put an optimistic gloss on the prospects for the region based on Ghana's success. But Ghana is not representative of the violence, poverty, and corruption that hampers development in so much of Sub-Saharan Africa.

Important oil reserves have also been found in tiny Equatorial Guinea and Chad. The former, with a population of just over half a million, has doubled its per capita income in the past decade. Landlocked Chad, with a population of ten million, is one of the world's poorest countries, but it has vast reserves in its south. A large pipeline was completed in 2003 to transport oil from the fields near Kome to Douala on the Cameroon coast. However, little of the oil revenue reaches the general population. Instead, it flows from governmental coffers to the political, military, and business elite, as has been the case in much of Africa and the Middle East. The upheavals in Darfur have spread across the border to Chad as Darfurian refugees have fled into southwestern Chad, where they are preyed upon by both Darfurian rebels and Janjaweed militias. France has had to intervene with military force to stabilize the situation.

Central Africa

The bellwether of Central Africa is Democratic Republic of the Congo—the largest country of the region. Its population of seventy-five million is 70 percent of Central Africa's total, and its land area of nine hundred thousand square miles represents 60 percent of the total. The conflict in Congo/DRC resumed in 1998, the year after Laurent Kabila had toppled the dictatorial regime of President Mobutu Sese Seko, with the strong support of Rwandan Tutsi government troops as well as forces from Burundi and Angola. Although Congo's neighbors claim that their interests lie in bringing peace to the country, their main motives seem to be gaining access to its rich resources and cutting off the bases of rebels who operate against their own countries from different parts of Congo.

Domestic dissatisfaction with the Kabila regime soon led to the outbreak of civil war in the eastern part of the country. Many of the rebels were Banyamulenge Tutsi, born in Congo but denied citizenship by both Mobutu and Kabila. Kabila's army was then backed by Hutu refugees who had been driven out of Rwanda in 1994 and had been using Congo as a base for cross-border incursions aimed at destabilizing Rwanda's Tutsi government.

Aided by mass defections from the Congolese army, the rebels swept across eastern Congo to the gates of Kinshasa and also seized the port of Matadi, the capital's lifeline for food, arms, and electric power. Kabila was saved by the military forces from Zimbabwe, Angola, and Namibia, acting in the name of SADC, which were then joined by troops from Chad and Sudan. The rebels were pushed back to their eastern bases. Fighting continued until September 1999, when a tentative peace accord, brokered by Zambia, was reached, but the accord was soon breached, and fighting resumed. A large UN force has remained in Congo since then, helping to oversee elections.

Despite the strengthening of the central government in recent years, upheavals continue to plague the eastern part of the country. Congolese Tutsis have maintained a separate army and administration in North Kivu, clashing with the Rwandan Hutu rebels, who have found refuge within the province. The 2008 peace agreement between the government and the Congolese Tutsis calls for the Tutsis to turn in their arms and for some units to be integrated within the Congolese army, but as with the 2004 agreement, this proved ephemeral. Currently a number of armed rebel groups operate around Lake Kivu, which lies between Rwanda and eastern Congo. The largest of these groups, M23, kills and harasses the local Congolese inhabitants with impunity while forcibly recruiting child soldiers. The Congolese military has been unable to control the rebels, and peacekeepers from the AU, led by South African troops, have unsuccessfully sought to quell the mayhem.

Centrality of location often offers strategic advantages to a country, but for Congo it is a serious handicap. Its government has been unable to form a cohesive unit because its threefold physical divisions—east, west, and south—are separated by an impassable interior. This leaves Congo prey to outside pressures, especially from well-armed states to the east and south lured by Congo's rich resource base, which includes gold, copper, diamonds, other minerals, and timber.

East Africa and the Horn of Africa

The Horn of Africa, consisting of Somalia, Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Eritrea, has been drawn into the great power struggle. Somalia and Ethiopia have fought over the Ogaden, Ethiopia and Eritrea plunged into a bloody war, and Somalia has broken apart. In Somalia, the United States and the United Nations failed in their efforts during the early 1990s to quell the interclan and intertribal fighting. Since then, no central government has existed, and Somalia has frequently been cited as a failed state.

Rebels in northern Somalia (the former British Somaliland) seceded in 1991 and established the independent, although not internationally recognized, state of Somaliland. This country fronts on the Gulf of Aden and contains Berbera, the former Soviet naval and missile base that is one of the few pieces of real estate in Sub-Saharan Africa with geostrategic importance. Together with Djibouti (former French Somaliland) and Aden (on the opposite shore), it commands the southern gateway to the Red Sea.

Along the northeastern coast of the Horn, another rebel group broke away to create "Puntland," taking its name from the Red Sea coastland called "Punt" by the ancient Egyptians. The new territory, a buffer between Somaliland and Somalia, centers on the port and commercial center of Bossasso, where the Gulf of Aden enters the Indian Ocean, and trades in food and frankincense. The separatist leaders there have not declared independence but resist control by a central government. Meanwhile, they have brought stability to Puntland, as have the Somaliland rulers to their land, where they have been able to create a modicum of harmony among the mainly nomadic clans and bring basic services to their people. They have done so through a complex system of government that balances strong clan leaders in an upper house of parliament with an elected house of representatives.

In 1992 the United States had unsuccessfully intervened in the civil war in Somalia, sending troops to protect food deliveries to a starving population caught by war and famine. The killing of eighteen US troops, along with several hundred Somalis, resulted in a speedy withdrawal and Washington's abandonment of peacekeeping efforts. Its return to this scene in 2006 was prompted by the seizure of the government by Islamic militants who drove out the secular warlords backed by the United States. The concern of the United States was that, under an Islamic regime, Somalia would become a haven for terrorists, posing a threat to the security of shipping through the Gulf of Aden as well as providing a base for al-Qaeda.

The large, well-armed troops of America's military ally, Ethiopia, then intervened with US support. They quickly drove the Islamists out of the country, reestablishing the secular provisional government that had been ousted by the rebels from Mogadishu, the capital. The conflict is far from over. The Islamists have forged new alliances with some of the warlords, promoting unrest in Mogadishu, and have supported the Somalian Oromo Liberation Front rebels in Ethiopia's Ogaden desert region.

Ethiopia, an impoverished country of over ninety million people, with a GDP of $1,300 per capita, is an ally of the United States. The United States backed Addis Ababa in a war launched in 2007 against the Oromo rebels. In a replay of its Cold War policy of alliances with right-wing dictators, the United States continued to expand its strategic alliance with the dictator of Ethiopia, Prime Minister Meles Zenawi—a policy that evoked considerable African and international criticism. He died in 2012 and was replaced by Hailemariam Desalegn. Ethiopia plays an important role in America's war against global terrorism, receiving considerable economic and military aid, despite its poor record on human rights.

The leading nation in East Africa is Kenya, which enjoys political stability and steady economic growth. The country has enjoyed significant economic aid from its close ally, the United States. It has provided bases for US forces, cooperating in the war on terrorism and in joint military exercises. Kenya's port of Mombassa also serves as the gateway to landlocked Uganda, South Sudan, Rwanda, and parts of northern Tanzania via combinations of rail and road. This is a significant support to the economies of these countries. South Sudan has negotiated with Kenya to build an oil pipeline from its productive fields to the Kenyan port of Lamu, where a refinery is planned.

Kenya's stability was disrupted in 2007 by the dispute that arose over the presidential elections late that year. Charges of electoral fraud by incumbent Kikuyu president Mwai Kibaki, who declared himself the victor, caused the followers of his Luo opponent, Raila Odinga, to go on a rampage. Hundreds of Kikuyu living in the Luo and Kalenja tribal areas in the western Rift Valley and in the southern slums of Nairobi were killed, as were many opposing tribal peoples living in Kikuyu. Kibaki served as president until 2013, when he was replaced in a peaceful election by Uhuru Kenyatta, the son of Kenya's founding father, Jomo Kenyatta.

The Kikuyu, who are the largest of Kenya's forty-two tribes, with 22 percent of the population, have dominated the country from its independence, controlling its politics and commerce. While their tribal base is in the verdant, rolling hills of the Central Highland district and in Nairobi, they also gained control of substantial farmlands in the Rift's grassy plains. These lands were cut from large plantations formerly owned by colonialists and were distributed to Kikuyu by the government. The outburst of violence was as much over land as over tribal politics.

Kenya has been distinguished from its neighbors by its sense of nationhood despite its many tribes. The Kikuyu overreached in their refusal to share not only political control but also the fruits of economic development. The quick response of the international bodies and the United States in efforts to mediate the dispute attested to the importance of Kenya as an island of stability within the shatterbelt. A measure of democracy survived the crisis, as demonstrated by the election and seating of the parliament with a majority of opposition members. This suggests that prospects for emergence of a political power-sharing system between prime minister and president may overcome the tribalism that has atomized so much of Sub-Saharan Africa. The displacement of over three hundred thousand persons in the wake of the violence has created more homogeneous ethnic provinces and districts and could well lead to the emergence of a federal system of governance replacing the centralized national system that vested so much power in the presidency.

Conclusion

During the Cold War, Sub-Saharan Africa was the scene of intense competition for influence between the Soviet Union and the United States and its European allies. In seeking to gain or retain geopolitical control, these outside powers exploited the deep tribal, religious, racial, and ideological differences within most of the region. Both sides ignored the violence and corruption of client states. With the collapse of the USSR, the United States and its European allies concluded that Sub-Saharan Africa was no longer a geostrategic asset and reduced their economic and military assistance accordingly. Within the world geopolitical system, Africa (as well as South America) had become a zone of geostrategic marginality.[14]

With the turn of the century, great power interests in the region were rekindled, and Sub-Saharan Africa has reemerged as a shatterbelt. Now the major competitors are China and the United States in partnership with Europe. This is a competition for economic and political influence rather than the Marxist-capitalist struggle that characterized the Cold War shatterbelt era. Washington's strategic attention in Africa is now focused on Islamic terrorist groups that recruit and train followers who infiltrate Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Gulf states, as well as Europe. Securing the shipping lanes that link the Suez Canal and the Middle East, especially against pirate attacks in Bab el Mandeb and the Gulf of Aden, is a key strategic goal. Its other interest lies in expanding and securing access to Angola's oil and gas resources, which are fast outstripping America's declining and unstable oil imports from Nigeria.

China has made strong headway in Sub-Saharan Africa, negotiating substantial energy, mineral development, and construction contracts and more than tripling its trade with the region. Beijing has become the region's single largest trade partner, even though the EU as a whole exceeds it substantially. China's trade amounts to over $170 billion per annum. Its imports are mainly petroleum and agricultural products, while its exports are largely manufactured goods. As noted, nearly one-third of its oil now comes from Africa, mainly Angola. While there is a modest amount of military sales, the main relations that Beijing has forged with the region are based neither on arms nor on ideology, but on economics. Chinese companies are engaged in building ports and railway networks, mining coal and iron ore in Tanzania, leasing farmland in Sudan, and investing in the port of Djibouti.

The competition between China and the West for Sub-Saharan Africa is asymmetrical. Both seek raw materials and investment opportunities and offer development assistance. However, while Europe, especially France, and the United States provide military aid to selective countries, China's arms sales are minimal. The strategic partnership that the Chinese have with the region is strongly based on loan and debt relief programs, with few of the strings that the West imposes, particularly in terms of the latter's demand for political and economic reform. As it floods Africa with cheap consumer goods, the Chinese presence is highly visible owing to a market-based labor migration organized by Chinese overseas companies. Anywhere from half a million to a million Chinese workers, managers, and technicians engage directly with Africans in construction projects, while Chinese merchants are active throughout the region.

China has surplus labor as well as capital to forge its strategic partnership, using these resources to extend its influence across the subcontinent. Its construction projects, which are organized both by the Chinese state and increasingly by private companies, use cheap construction materials from China. An essential element in this partnership involves training of local labor and management working side by side with the Chinese.

Ding Fei points out that the strategy of partnering through construction projects can, if successful, lead to the building of a well-trained and experienced African workforce and therefore provide a sustainable contribution to African development. She emphasizes the need for African states to develop effective regulatory and legal mechanisms to protect labor rights

—not an easy challenge under the current system, which focuses on maximizing profits and minimizing labor costs.[15] Nevertheless, this kind of egalitarian partnership between China and Sub-Saharan Africa strengthens Beijing's hand in its competition with the West for geopolitical influence.

Washington's strategies in Sub-Saharan Africa face other challenges as well. The United States is viewed with suspicion by many Africans, especially Muslims, for its intervention in Somalia and Iraq. Its reluctance to use its political power to halt bloodletting within the region, as in Rwanda, Congo, and Darfur, is widely criticized. The US quagmire in Iraq and its failure to have eliminated Taliban and al-Qaeda operations in Afghanistan have undermined Washington's ability to be an effective peacemaker and peacekeeper in Africa.

Despite a surge in US aid, the high prices of commodities exports to Europe, China, India, and Brazil, as well as to the United States, have contributed more to Africa's economic development than does direct aid. This by no means suggests that continuing development aid is not a critical necessity. However, over the past forty years, well over $700 billion in such aid went to Africa, much of which was lost to corruption or poorly conceived and managed. It does point to the need for using development aid to build cooperative regional and subregional infrastructures that can stimulate economic exchange and move Sub-Saharan Africa into a differentiated stage.

Sub-Saharan Africa remains a highly atomized shatterbelt, but geopolitical structures are not immutable. Looking into the distant future, we can anticipate geopolitical changes coming to Sub-Saharan Africa partially as a result of political developments in neighboring regions. Also, global warming is likely to have a severe impact on Africa because its farm and fishing economies are so highly dependent on natural resources whose biodiversity would be greatly affected by climate change. The region is already suffering from drought, high prices of imported food, and declining food production. Increasing drought in the interior and flooding in such coastal areas as the Niger delta would upset the current fragile biodiversity balance that now sustains most Africans. Resultant forced migrations in search of grazing and farmlands, as well as water, would intensify conflict in this already war-torn shatterbelt.

The coastal countries and offshore islands of eastern Africa, especially Tanzania, Zanzibar, Madagascar, the Seychelles, Comoros, Maldives, and Mauritius, might be drawn into a new Indian Ocean geostrategic realm. Such a realm would be dominated by India, as discussed in the chapter on South Asia. The Horn of Africa is likely to remain under the shadow of events in the Middle East. The southern and western half of Sub-Saharan Africa might also, in the long run, emerge from its current shatterbelt status to become a new geopolitical region linked to the maritime realm. This would depend upon the abilitiy of South Africa to achieve strong internal cohesiveness and take the lead in making ECOWAS and SADC tightly knit economic and political subunits that could then be linked within a broader geopolitical region and the ability of Nigeria to stave off disintegration from its religious and ethnic conflicts. Such a unified region might also be strengthened by the addition of new states in the lower Congo and Shaba, in the eventuality that Congo/DRC either federates or divides into three states. These would consist of one centering on Kinshasa and western Congo, a second centering on Lubumbashi and Shaba in the southeast (Katanga), and a third in eastern Congo or the upper Congo basin that would probably be oriented to East Africa and the Indian Ocean realm. South Africa signed a free-trade pact with Mercosur in December 2000 with the express goal of decreasing its trade dependence on Europe and the United States. However, it is highly unlikely that this accord could lead to a set of strong economic and geopolitical links between Africa and South America.

Notes

1. John O'Loughlin and Herman Van der Wusten, "Political Geography of Panregions," *Geographical Review* 80 (1990): 1–20.
2. Norman Harris, *Intervention and Colonization in Africa, 1884–1914* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1914), 3–19.
3. A. S. Gakwandi, "Towards a New Political Map of Africa," in *Politics, Economy and Social Change in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. A. I. Asiwaju (London: Hurst, 1996), 252–59.
4. Peter J. Taylor, ed., *World Government* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 188–201.
5. Morag Bell, *Contemporary Africa: Development, Culture and the State* (London: Longman, 1986), 98–111.
6. World Bank, *Global Development Finance* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 2006).
7. Population Reference Bureau, *2007 Population Data Sheet* (Washington, DC: Population Reference Bureau, 2007).
8. Norimitsu Onishi, "African Bloc Hoping to Do Better as the 'African Union,'" *New York Times*, July 12, 2001, A3.
9. J. V. R. Prescott, "Africa's Boundary Problems," *Optima* 28 (1980): 3–21.
10. Central Intelligence Agency, "Disputes International," in *World Factbook 2007* (Washington, DC: GPO/CIA, 2007); and Alan J. Day, ed., *Border and Territorial Disputes* (Longman, 1982), 95–178.
11. "Somaliland, the Nation Nobody Knows," *Economist*, April 14, 2001, 42.
12. Andrew C. Revkin, "Lake's Rapid Retreat Heightens Troubles in North Africa," *New York Times*, May 27, 2001, F4.
13. Dayo Olopade, *The Bright Continent: Breaking Rules and Making Change in Modern Africa* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2014), 272.
14. Saul B. Cohen, "Global Change in the Post–Cold War Era," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 81, no. 4 (1991): 551–80.
15. Ding Fei, *Labor Relations with Chinese Construction Projects in Sub-Saharan Africa* (paper presented at Association of American Geographers annual meeting, Tampa, FL, April 2014), 18.