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Review by R. Joseph Parrott, University of Texas at Austin

With the State Department's recent release of its *Foreign Relations of the United States* volume on southern Africa, the series' examination of Nixon/Ford policy below the Sahara is complete. This long-anticipated collection documents the superpower intervention in Angola and the continued debate over minority rule in the southern sixth of the continent – two of the most popular topics in the history of Africa's Cold War. Despite the value of this publication, the limited scope can provide only a partial picture. American policy in the south had continental implications, and it existed alongside a number of other factors that spurred increased interest in Sub-Saharan Africa. Therefore, the State Department's earlier *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976: E-6, Documents on Africa* serves as a valuable companion to this latest addition. *Volume E-6* focuses on the four-year span between the final months of the Nixon administration and the end of the Ford period in the nations north of the Frontline States: Zaire (The Democratic Republic of the Congo), Nigeria, Kenya, Guinea-Bissau, and Ethiopia among others. It demonstrates that revolution, terrorism, economic development, and natural disaster worked in unison with Cold War competition to inspire a renewed American attention to the continent as a whole.

The value of Africa within the larger geostrategic picture underwent an important transition in this period, which effectively set the stage for the remainder of the Cold War. Initially though, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and President Richard Nixon dismissed Sub-Saharan matters much as they had during their first four years in office. Memoranda of conversations from State Department records, the Presidential Libraries, and the Kissinger Papers at the Library of Congress highlight the laughable value American officials placed on relations with Africa and reveal Washington's deep ignorance of regional affairs. In September of 1973, the African Development Bank continued to wait for the long-promised American contribution to its coffers, while the

embassy in Addis Ababa lacked an ambassador for months due to the inattention of policymakers in Foggy Bottom. The Congressional Black Caucus and Congressman Nathaniel Diggs (D-MI), whose private papers held at Howard University provide a welcome if brief legislative viewpoint, pushed Kissinger and later Ford to take a greater role in African affairs, but they made little headway until 1976. The American government preferred to define its interests in the region in the most limited terms, concentrating primarily on maintaining access to natural resources.

The specter of southern Africa forced a new approach toward the nations of the region after President Gerald Ford began his tenure. Discussions of the white minority governments and Angola appear only intermittently in this volume, but the problematic relationships with the former and the unsuccessful intervention in the latter convinced Kissinger and Ford that a more active and visible American strategy was necessary to prevent additional Soviet gains. Sections on policy for the Africa Region and Zaire reveal that both men feared the radicalization of the continent and the possibility of local conflicts upsetting détente. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's 1976 trip to Kenya and Zaire, American work on behalf of a multinational African Development Fund, and Ford's decision to waive Congress' \$40 million ceiling on military assistance to Africa all were designed to reassure friendly governments that the United States would hold firm against growing Soviet and Cuban presences. As Kissinger explained after a May 1976 speech in Lusaka, more dynamic political and economic initiatives aimed to "give the moderate regimes something to hold on to and the radicals something to think about" (Document 44).

Zaire became a particular beneficiary of this shift in policy. Mobutu Sese Seko's dictatorial state acted as advocate and American middleman in support of the Angolan factions led by Holden Roberto and Jonas Savimbi. The consolidation of power in 1975 by the communist-backed Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) actually benefited the Zairian regime, making it a key bulwark against what military adviser James Rockwell called the Soviet "grand design to control southern Africa" (Document 298). In contrast to Mobutu's earlier requests, the new strategic situation convinced Kissinger to arrange for the financial assistance and military aid necessary to preserve the corrupt foundations of the pro-Western state. These documents confirm Odd Arne Westad's contention that the internationalization of African conflicts in the 1970s helped reinvigorate the ideological divisions of the late Cold War. They also highlight the deficiencies of recent surveys that minimize the continent's role in American foreign policy during the period.¹ With the Soviet Union seemingly emboldened by the triumph

¹ The edited volume *Nixon in the World* provides one example. This otherwise excellent and wide-ranging collection of essays does not contain a single chapter wholly or partially devoted to African issues. Fredrik Logevall and Andrew Preston, *Nixon in the World: American Foreign Relations, 1969-1977* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008). Jussi Hanhimäki deserves credit for discussing African affairs in his examination of Kissinger, but the documents do not fully support his assertion that the secretary abandoned support for unpopular regimes after the Angolan debacle. The statement is partially accurate in terms of the south, but it does not account for the U.S. relationship with the black dictatorship of Mobutu.

in Angola, Kissinger, Ford, and their successors felt obliged to reinforce and expand existing relationships in order to prevent the dominoes from falling in Africa and elsewhere.

This problem of managing alliances in the midst of revolution also dominates the largest chapter of *Volume E-6*, which examines the Horn of Africa and the rise of the Derg in Ethiopia. Historian Donna R. Jackson has emphasized Jimmy Carter's strategic realignment in this area, but the documents reveal that Carter's regionalist foreign policy had intriguing precedents in the realism of the late Ford era.² In 1973, the impending closure of the Kagnew communication station partially attested to the waning value of what was traditionally the United States' strongest African ally. The removal of Emperor Haile Selassie by the revolutionary Derg changed matters. The State Department could not assume that the new reformist government would automatically cooperate with the United States as had its predecessor, so Kissinger set about wooing the seemingly moderate regime with military sales and developmental assistance. Concerned about the waning perception of American power already in October 1974, the secretary wanted to reassure Middle Eastern and African allies that the situation in Ethiopia would not result in "another American abdication" (Document 115). But the bloody radicalization of the Derg, the conflict over Eritrea, and a budding relationship with the Soviet Union worried the State Department. Even as diplomats hoped that shipments of military equipment might yet win over the regime, the United States began to examine other avenues of support. As early as 1975, Foggy Bottom attempted to mend relations with the Soviet client state of Somalia. The failed overture hinted at the next administration's embrace of the government in Mogadishu and adds nuance to previous depictions of a resolute pro-Ethiopian policy under Ford.³ Established alliances remained intact at the end of 1976, but some American diplomats had already come to the conclusion that "the U.S. should keep an open mind on the evolving situation in the totality of the Horn of Africa" (Document 168).

Jussi M. Hanhimäki, *The Flawed Architect: Henry Kissinger and American Foreign Policy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 425. The omission of Africa in many discussions of détente and 1970s foreign policy might stem from the relative scarcity of international relations monographs studying the Ford era on its own merits.

² Donna R. Jackson, *Jimmy Carter and the Horn of Africa: Cold War policy in Ethiopia and Somalia* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2007), 29, 36-46.

³ Questions surrounding the future of the American-Ethiopian alliance complicate the admittedly brief depictions of events by Westad and Peter Woodward, and the documents beg for a deeper investigation of Pre-Carter American strategy in the region. Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 259-261 and Peter Woodward, *The Horn of Africa: Politics and International Relations* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2003), 136-141.

Beyond the demands of the Cold War, contemporary problems of international terrorism, humanitarian intervention, and regional bloodshed also demanded American consideration in the 1970s. Kenya's support of Israel's July 1976 raid on the Ugandan airport at Entebbe helped cement its increasingly close Cold War relationship with Washington. In the aftermath of the anti-terrorist strike, the United States Navy positioned a carrier task force in the Indian Ocean, and the American officials discussed the possibility of direct military intervention to protect Kenyan territory from a possible invasion by an unpredictable Idi Amin. Further north, the Sahel drought that affected countries from Mauritania to Chad reached its peak in 1974, and the United States took a leading role in the international coalition that sent food and development aid to the affected areas. Finally, a small section on Burundi witnesses the State Department effectively avoiding any role in halting the Tutsi-Hutu ethnic conflict in favor of an African solution. These documents demonstrate that the current role of the United States as Africa's ambiguous interlocutor and inconsistent patron have important historical precedents in the 1970s – a theme notably absent from books depicting the decade as a trendsetting moment in recent history.⁴

FRUS: Volume E-6 provides few if any grand revelations, but it documents in detail a transitional period in both the history of Africa and the late Cold War. Its publication as part of the E-series, which is only available online, is unfortunate for those readers who prefer traditional printed materials; nonetheless, the excellent organization of the site partially atones for the inconvenience. Short summaries linking to the complete texts and a respectable search feature allow readers to quickly ascertain the topics discussed in individual memos and cables. This will prove an especially valuable tool for those researchers interested in southern Africa and the smaller countries that are not specifically highlighted in the volume. PDF reproductions of the documents permit investigation of the scribbles and comments of policymakers that have traditionally been relegated strictly to footnotes. Nonetheless, digitized images of photos, tables, and maps described in the text – including those referenced in Director of Central Intelligence George H. W. Bush's April 1976 memo on the Cuban presence in Africa – remain absent and would have made valuable additions. Finally, the volume, as with the series more generally, remains overly focused on bilateral relationships as recorded by the State Department, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Department of Defense. The inclusion of more material from affiliated agencies like the Agency for International Development and the embassies of smaller states concerning the concrete response to transnational events like the Sahel drought could have provided a more complete image of U.S. policy abroad.⁵ Small criticisms aside, the volume is well constructed and provides

⁴ As an example, the publication from Harvard's "The Global 1970s" conference only references the continent and its individual countries sporadically. See Niall Ferguson, *et.al. The Shock of the Global: The 1970s in Perspective* (Cambridge, Mass: The Belknap Press, 2010).

⁵ *FRUS: Volume E-3, Documents on Global Issues* does expand on some of these African topics within its discussions of transnational policy, most notably how the murder of two American diplomats in Sudan by the Black September Organization affected the global approach toward terrorism. William B.

items of interest for a diverse array of international scholarly pursuits, from Cold War studies to the roots of anti-terrorism. It stands as an important reference for understanding the political history of postcolonial Africa and the continent's growing importance to American policymakers.

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McAllister, ed. *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1969-1976, Volume E-3, Documents on Global Issues, 1973-1976* (Washington: United States Government Printing Office: 2009).
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