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Africa: Many Hills to Climb

Michelle Sieff

Africa in 2033 will look somewhat like Africa in 2008: it will still face challenges, but different challenges than today. Internal wars, such as in Sudan, will no longer be the primary threats to the security of Africa's populations. Instead, transnational organized crime syndicates and radical Islamist groups will become the greatest threats to civilian life in Africa. But there are positives too: economic growth will continue, democracy will spread, though its progress may be halting and unpredictable.

Today, some 50 years after the beginning of the independence era, Africa is far more complicated than the image of Africa in the popular imagination. All too often, Africa is still seen as the basket-case continent of Darfur and Zimbabwe, of "blood diamonds," "resource curses," and "poverty traps." In reality, however, Africa is a humdrum continent, and is part of the general trend towards economic and political progress shared by other parts of the world.

Over the past 20 years, the number of internal wars and their civilian death toll have actually decreased globally, according to specialists who systematically track this sort of data. Africa is a part of this trend, especially since 2003, which roughly marked the end of three bloody regional wars that raged through the 1990s: the West African civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone; the Central African wars in Rwanda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and the civil war in Angola. All of these countries have since held elections: Sierra Leone in 2002 and 2007; Liberia in 2005; Rwanda in 2003 and September 2008; Burundi in 2005; the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2006; and Angola in September 2008.

In African countries not ravaged by civil war and genocide, since the end of the Cold War, the majority of leaders have abandoned military rule and one-party dictatorships and grudgingly embraced the idea of democracy. This trend began in 1989, at the same time liberal revolutions swept the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Benin's military ruler, Mathieu Kérékou, began reforms in 1989 and held elections in 1991, which he lost, making him the first African leader to be defeated at the polls. In 1990, South African President F. W. De Klerk released Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners and began official talks with the African National Congress, culminating in the country's first democratic elections in 1994. Also in 1990, one of Africa's most notorious Big Men, the Côte d'Ivoire President Houphouët-Boigny, legalized opposition parties for the first time and held elections, which he won. In 1992, Ghana's military ruler, Jerry Rawlings, also held multi-party elections, which he won handily.

As the examples of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana suggest, democracy did not immediately lead to a transfer of power. But since the early 1990s there has been a clear trend towards more democratic elections, both in terms of their number and competitiveness. Political scientists Daniel Posner and Daniel Young have examined how every African head of state left power between independence and the end of 2005, sampling 227 leaders from 46 countries. They found that, from the early 1960s through the 1980s, most African rulers left office through coups or assassinations. Since 1990, the majority left voluntarily at the end of a constitutionally defined term or after losing an election. In the 1960s and 1970s, Africa held about 28 elections each decade. Through the 1980s, that number climbed to 36, and to 65 in the 1990s. The upward trend has continued: from 2000 through the end of 2005, 41 elections had already been held in Africa. The striking conclusion? African countries are clearly part of the "third wave" of democratization that Samuel Huntington first identified in 1991.

There is good economic news in Africa as well. After three decades of stagnation from the 1960s through the 1980s, Africa's economies have been growing. In November 2007, the World Bank released its African Development Indicators report, which noted that, from 1995 to 2005, African countries recorded an average growth rate of 5.4 percent, reversing the trend of economic stagnation from 1975 to 1995. This growth is not limited to Africa's oil, gas, and mineral exporters, such as Nigeria and Angola. The report observed that 18 of Africa's non-mineral economies are also growing, led by sectors such as telecommunications, tourism, construction, and banking. The World Bank's chief economist for Africa concluded that he was "broadly optimistic" that there is a fundamental change going on. It now appears that Africa is poised to join in the economic rise of emerging markets outside of Europe and North America, such as China and India.

Economic growth is pulling more Africans into the middle class, especially in countries such as Uganda, Ghana, and Kenya. Economists estimate that one-third of all Africans, about 300 million people, are now middle-income consumers, which in Africa means they earn around $200 a month. Though Africa always had a modest middle class made up mostly of government workers, now the middle class has begun to expand with private sector employees.

It might seem strange to praise ten years of economic growth and a growing middle class when we constantly hear about the millions of Africans living in desperate poverty. In an August 2008 World Bank report on world poverty, the economists Shaohua Chen and Martin Ravallion concluded that, in Africa, the percentage of those living in poverty (which the Bank now defines as an income of less than $1.25 a day) remained at 50 percent in both 1981 and 2005. Because of increasing population, this means that the number of poor in Africa rose from 200 million in 1981 to 380 million in 2005. But behind the bad news was a glimmer of hope. Between 1981 and 2005, the poverty rate increased; but, from the mid-1990s, it then began to decrease. If this trend continues, they predict that the rate of poverty in Africa will decline to 32.5 percent by 2015.

To observe that African countries are part of history's upward corkscrew progress is not the same as saying that Africa has solved its problems, or reached its "end of history." Humbug! Africa's human development indicators are unacceptably low; of


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Cruising the Nigerian Delta.

course, incumbent leaders still rig elections; of course, judiciaries and electoral commissions continue to be subject to political pressure. But to highlight the larger, progressive historical trend is important, because, at least in America, the voices of Afro-pessimism consistently drown out other interpretations.

Security in 2033

If this is Africa in 2008, what will Africa look like in 2033? For a start, the current threats to security will expand into transnational problems that have the potential to spread beyond the continent itself. Though studies show that deaths from relatively contained, internal wars have declined globally, deaths from other forms of armed violence—such as transnational organized crime—are increasing. One recent report from the Geneva-based watchdog group Small Arms Survey argues that the vast majority of the annual victims of armed violence now die from organized crime rather than war: 52,000 people from war, 490,000 at the hands of organized crime.

South American drug cartels, which have operated for years in South Africa, have started using West African nations to transit cocaine to lucrative European markets. West African body couriers transport the drugs via land, air, and sea routes. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime estimates that, in 2007 alone, 40 tons of cocaine passed through West Africa. A quarter of all the cocaine consumed in Europe now transits through the region.

In particular, drug cartels have targeted Guinea-Bissau, a former Portuguese colony with hundreds of miles of unpatrolled coastline. United Nations officials say the country has become the textbook example of an African "narco-state," where corruption, negligence, and diminished security capacity combine to pave a road for the drug trade. Drug cartels are also using other West African countries, such as Senegal, Mauritania, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, Cape Verde, Sierra Leone, and Ghana, to transit cocaine to Europe. That traffic seems likely only to expand over the next quarter century.

In Nigeria, organized crime cartels control vast swaths of land in the oil-producing Niger Delta. Theft is rampant. Gangs in the delta illegally install valves on pipelines and load the oil onto barges. The barges then move out to sea where they rendezvous with tankers. The tankers blend the stolen oil in with legitimate oil and carry it away for sale to world markets. Nigeria's oil theft is a lucrative business: hundreds of millions of barrels are stolen each day, earning syndicates an estimated $60 million a day. Over the past few years, gang warfare over turf and smuggling routes has killed or displaced thousands of people living in the main Niger Delta city of Port Harcourt and the villages scattered across the delta. As the price of oil rises over the next quarter century and its suppliers become increasingly tied up in nation-to-nation contracts, such piracy will become at once more lucrative and better-organized.

High-seas piracy is also a growing problem. In East Africa, off the coast of Somalia, pirates regularly seize ships and demand ransoms of millions of dollars to release the cargo and crews. This seafaring mafia has attacked everything from sailing boats, oil tankers, and—perhaps most notoriously—a Ukrainian vessel carrying 33 Russian T-72 main battle tanks, tons of ammunition, and dozens of rocket-propelled grenades.

This type of organized crime will continue to flourish in Africa over the next quarter century for several reasons. As the continent continues its integration into the global economy, organized criminal businesses (which often take advantage of the same market forces as legitimate corporations) will increasingly integrate African countries into their syndicates.

The financial incentives that fuel the growth of criminal businesses like drug trafficking are significant in any country. But in the poorer West African countries, where high unemployment will continue and the salaries of law enforcement officers will remain relatively low, the incentives are huge. One statistic illuminates the challenge: in Guinea-Bissau, just 6 grams of cocaine has a value equal to the average annual salary. Even in the many West African countries that will continue to grow economically, such as Ghana and Nigeria, organized crime syndicates will prey on the economic inequalities that result from open markets.

Alone, African states will be unable to fight organized crime. Most West African governments lack the tools: laws with strong penalties; well-paid and trained police; intelligence, customs, and coast guard officers; improved surveillance and communication technology; systems for increasing cross-border cooperation; and independent, elite security agencies, such as the Scorpions, a South African squad with the power to investigate and prosecute corrupt police officers and other public officials.

Though these governments will require sustained Western assistance to fight organized crime, this aid will not be soon forthcoming. Donor states will be slow to recognize the threat, and, by the time Western governments act, crime cartels will be deeply entrenched. The experiences of Latin American countries show that the battle against organized crime requires extraordinary resources, intelligence, courage, tenacity, and time.

But why will Western donors be slow to respond to organized crime in Africa? The main reason is conceptual. The journalists, advocacy groups, and scholars that shape the public's understanding often interpret armed violence as a political conflict between two sides—"rebels" and the "government"—rather than as a result of gangs or organized crime syndicates with close links to high-level politicians and members of the security forces.

Well-intentioned and intelligent people make these mistakes for several reasons. First, the pursuit of criminal agendas by armed groups is genuinely difficult to distinguish from other political objectives that are commonly assumed to drive conflict. Second, many observers of these conflicts are simply stuck in old analytical prisms. Finally, the well-intentioned writers and activists who dare to report on these dangerous conflicts in faraway lands are usually of a liberal persuasion, and continue to see "freedom fighters" when, in truth, most are common thugs.

The example of Nigeria illustrates these conceptual errors. There are dozens of armed groups in the Niger Delta and a few of them seem to make political demands. One of the most vocal and media-savvy armed groups, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), even sounds vaguely political. For years, the group has claimed it desires "total control" of Nigeria's oil wealth in order to end the poverty and misery in the Delta. But MEND is not the Robin Hood it makes itself out to be. Its main activity is the kidnapping of foreign oil workers, held for large ransoms; and, to my knowledge, these revenues are not distributed to the men, women, and children who live in horrific poverty across the region.

Another of MEND's revenue-generating activities is oil theft. As part of a Human Rights Watch mission in 2005, I interviewed Mujahid Dokubo-Asari, the leader of MEND's predecessor group, the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force. In the interview he proudly admitted to stealing oil "because it was his birthright." At this point, one has to question whether the vague rhetoric of "resource control" is simply a pretext to legitimate lucrative criminal behavior. Aside from MEND, most of the other armed groups in the delta are simply gangs-for-hire that install illegal taps on the pipelines (called "hot-tapping"), provide "security" for the oil theft syndicates, force local leaders to let the oil-laden barges pass through their territory, and bribe the Nigerian military.

> "Sustained Western assistance will be needed to fight organized crime, but donor states have been far too slow to recognize the threat."

Over the next 25 years, oil theft cartels could also create a thriving business in sub-Saharan Africa's other leading oil producer, Angola. The human element is already in place: there are still large numbers of disaffected former UNITA rebels and separatists from the oil region of Cabinda. Mineral theft cartels—smuggling gold, diamonds, coltan, and uranium—could also flourish in other West African countries. As mineral and oil theft cartels battle for control of smuggling routes, they will terrorize civilians, just as they have done in Nigeria and the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The Rise of Al Qaeda

Beyond the destruction wrought by organized crime syndicates, by 2033 the populations of several African countries are likely to be subjected to another, very different type of catastrophic threat: rule by radical Islamists. The National Intelligence Council's *Mapping the Global Future* report, released in 2004, showed that radical Islamist groups already exist in most African countries with large Muslim populations. Two regions are most at risk: the countries bordering the Sahara, called the Sahel (which includes Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad, Burkina Faso, northern Sudan and Nigeria), and the countries in the Horn of Africa, especially Somalia.

In the Sahel, Al Qaeda is already a threat. In April 2008, local Algerian Islamists formed Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). In the last year, the group has instigated deadly attacks in Algeria that evoke the horrors in Iraq, such as a suicide attack against the United Nations Office in Algiers, the killing of European tourists, and the bombing of a train station east of Algiers. AQIM also attempted to assassinate Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika in 2007. The group already uses Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Chad for recruitment and training, according to the most recent State Department report on global terrorism. In December 2007, AQIM killed five French tourists in Mauritania. Members of the group also shot at the Israeli embassy in the Mauritanian capital, Nouakchott.

In Somalia, another fanatical Islamist group, Al Shabaab, terrorizes the population. It frequently carries out suicide bombings, plants landmines, and assassinates Ethiopian and Somali government officials, journalists, and civil society leaders. Most recently it declared a "jihad" against aid workers, calling them "infidels."

Though the Ethiopian military and African Union peacekeepers have tried to defeat the Islamist insurgency in Somalia, and the Bush administration has launched the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative in the Sahel, victory will prove elusive for several reasons. First, over the next 25 years, radical Islamist groups will find a new generation of recruits in Africa. These groups are motivated by ideology, not poverty or greed. In many African countries, the Saudi petro-dollars have funded Islamic schools that teach Wahhabi, a fundamentalist religious interpretation very different from the local, more moderate versions of Islam in Africa. These schools will create a population more receptive to the fanatical doctrines espoused by Islamist groups like AQIM and Al Shabaab.

Second, if history is any guide, Western governments will find it difficult to muster the political will and material resources necessary to defeat totalitarian ideological threats such as radical Islam. Without a more sustained and forceful ideological war—not a military war—against the fanatical doctrines that these groups promote, by 2033, radical Islamist groups based in North Africa could topple moderate regimes and create Islamist states, or perhaps one large Islamist Caliphate, stretching from Mauritania to Sudan. Somalia too could be ruled by an Islamist dictatorship. These regimes would govern in a similar fashion to the Taliban in Afghanistan: a truly frightening prospect.

I have said little about the future of Sudan, the violent African country that all too often dominates media coverage of the continent. In the next couple of years, two scenarios are possible. Outside actors could persuade Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir to turn away from the National Congress Party's (NCP) hardliners, secure a negotiated peace in Darfur, and implement the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), the 2005 deal which ended the war between the forces of the north and south. On the other hand, as Andrew Natsios, the former U.S. Special Envoy to Sudan, has warned, the country could return to full-fledged war, with the southern Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and the various rebel groups in Darfur allied against the NCP.

Such a war would be far bloodier than the previous conflicts in Sudan—that already have killed and displaced hundreds of thousands of people. If the CPA is implemented, the south could still vote to secede in a referendum due to be held in 2011. If, instead, there is a return to war, it is hard to imagine the country holding together in its current form, as violence would be likely to engulf the capital, Khartoum, and the country's Arab population. In either scenario, by 2033, Sudan could split in two, with the Nile River valley around Khartoum ruled by a radical Islamist dictatorship, and the south and Darfur joined together in an independent, secular state.

African Democracy in 2033

Over the next 25 years, most governments in Central, Southern, East, and West Africa will continue to become more democratic and accountable, but progress will be uneven, halting, and often imperceptible to Western eyes. Make no mistake: in the late 1980s, Africa's Big Men did not initiate democratic reforms because of their Walt Whitman-esque beliefs in the poetry of democracy. Reform was born of necessity: students, businessmen, and labor unions—inspired by the mass street protests in Eastern Europe in the spring of 1989—took to the streets to demand change.

One reason for optimism is that pressure from journalists, students, and the growing business sector will continue to push African governments in a more democratic direction. Indeed, during Kenya's 2008 post-election crisis, these groups pressured President Mwai Kibaki and opposition leader Raila Odinga to find a negotiated solution to the politically motivated violence. From the beginning of the crisis, all of the major Kenyan newspapers, including the *Daily Nation* and *East African Standard*, published passionate, eloquent editorials calling on their leaders to place the national interest above their personal interests. In addition, business leaders, doctors, and lawyers created a group called Concerned Citizens for Peace and pressured political leaders to negotiate an agreement.

More widespread use of cell phones will help these journalists, activists, and business owners to ensure fairer elections. In the Kenyan election, citizens used mobile phones to text real-time information from their districts. Today there are about 350 million mobile subscribers in Africa and analysts predict that number will rise to about 500 million by 2010. By 2033, the cell phone market in Africa is likely to be saturated. Over the next quarter century, as citizens increasingly use cell phones and mobile devices to distribute information from election districts, governments will find it more difficult to rig outcomes.

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Africa's multilateral institutions, such as the African Union, will also push member governments towards more democratic outcomes. Since it replaced the Organization of African Unity in 2001, the African Union has started to take a leading role in resolving conflicts and calming electoral struggles. For example, the African Union chairman at the time of the Kenyan election, Ghana's President John Kufuor, asked former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan to mediate the Kenyan crisis. Because the African Union—not the United Nations—invited Annan to intervene, the intervention was considered more legitimate, probably contributing to his eventual success. Over the next quarter century, the African Union will use its newly created institutions, such as the Peace and Security Council, to push member states towards more peaceful and democratic outcomes.

Another reason for optimism is that a new generation of leaders from the private sector will gradually replace the African despots of the past. The visionary Ghanaian economist, George Ayittey, calls these leaders the "cheetah generation," in sharp contrast with their predecessors, the "hippo generation." Many have been educated in colleges, business schools, and law programs in the United States and Europe. The cheetahs are not stuck in the anti-colonial, anti-Western ideologies of the past; they are agile, pragmatic, clear thinking, and have no patience for corruption, inefficiency, and ineptitude.

Over time, opposition parties will continue to gain strength, leading to more competitive elections across Africa. Though most Western observers of the Kenyan election viewed the outcome as a sign that democracy in the region was faltering, another interpretation is possible. All the polls predicted the election would be extremely close, which turned out to be true. To stage elections in Africa where two candidates basically split the vote is a huge achievement.

Over the next 25 years, opposition parties will gradually grow stronger and begin to challenge ruling parties across Africa. The increasing competitiveness of these elections will lead to the creation of more power-sharing governments, such as in Kenya and now Zimbabwe. Elections will be close; ruling powers will try to cling to office. But under pressure from opposition parties and democracy activists, they will accept the compromise of power-sharing.

Power-sharing is obviously a mutation of the democratic ideal, and thus will have positive and negative consequences over the next quarter century. In the short term, if leaders from opposing parties—such as Kenya's Kibaki and Odinga, or Zimbabwe's Mugabe and Tsvangerai—can really work together to solve problems, then power-sharing will produce tangible benefits. But in the medium term, say by 2015, power-sharing could seriously reduce government accountability. Opposition parties are instrumental in holding governments accountable. By 2033, however, it is likely that the need for power-sharing solutions should diminish. Beyond ego alone, today's African politicians desperately cling to power for financial reasons. There are no "golden parachutes" or cushy consultancies for former despots in stagnating economies. But as Africa's economies grow, and opportunities for personal enrichment and status in the non-state sector increase, politicians will start to accept defeat, leave office, and establish businesses or philanthropies.

As for the human rights and accountability so critical to democratic governance, by 2033, African states are likely to have established a regional court to prosecute human rights atrocities perpetrated on the continent. Indeed, having only indicted Africans in its ten years of work, the International Criminal Court has lost legitimacy across Africa. It is perceived as a white man's court. African leaders will be more inclined to support legal institutions established by local governments and located on the continent, not far off in The Hague.

African Economies in 2033

To foretell Africa's economic future requires some analysis of the continent's recent economic improvements. After some 50 years of post-colonial history, it is easy to see the disastrous impact of state planning on Africa's economies. Many of Africa's post-colonial leaders, such as Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah and Tanzania's Julius Nyerere, were in the grip of socialist ideologies and thus adopted economic policies based on strong government control and intervention, once known as "African socialism." Different leaders embraced various components of the model—state-owned public utilities and manufacturing companies, socialist, rural villages called *ujamaas*, and agricultural marketing boards that forced farmers to sell products at below-market prices. The end result was the same: by the 1980s, in one country after another, living standards collapsed.

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One plausible explanation for Africa's improved economic performance is its leaders' change of policies. In the late 1980s, African leaders began to regard the state as the principal cause of their development failures and embraced market-oriented strategies. Over the past two decades, they slowly implemented economic reforms, such as privatizing inefficient state-owned enterprises, trimming bloated state bureaucracies, cutting budget deficits and public borrowing, lifting restrictions on foreign investment, and eliminating bureaucratic impediments to starting and running businesses. These economic reforms have begun to unleash the creative energies of Africa's greatest resource: its people. Once liberated from the shackles of "vampire states," Africa's citizens could channel their creative energies into the private sector, whereas before they had retreated into the informal economy.

Another factor is the influence of Chinese investment across the continent. China's economic boom has driven Africa's growth, and will only expand and intensify over the next quarter century. The Chinese have rapidly become the biggest importer of African raw materials—oil, copper, uranium, cobalt, and, timber. In return, billions of dollars have flowed to state coffers. Chinese consumers are also buying Africa's agricultural products—coffee, tea, and other goods—benefitting farmers from agricultural exporters, like Kenya. And, through both direct investment and lending, China is financing the construction of Africa's roads, dams, railways, and telecommunications infrastructure. Finally, middle-class Chinese entrepreneurs are moving to Africa to seek their fortunes, opening restaurants, shops, and alternative medicine stores, hiring Africans and selling useful goods and services.

Though there are costs to China's investment in Africa—its brutal labor conditions and financial support of Sudan's regime are but two examples—there are also tangible benefits for the continent's economies and populations. China's economic growth—as well as the growth of other Asian economies such as India—will continue to fuel Africa's economic expansion. As labor becomes more expensive in India and China, innovative Chinese, Indian, and Western companies will increasingly shift parts of their supply chains to Africa. The cheetah generation of African leaders will continue to implement pragmatic, market-friendly economic policies that will attract foreign direct investment in the service, processing, and manufacturing sectors. For these reasons, the economic future looks bright in countries such as Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, Tanzania, Mozambique, Ghana, Botswana, Mauritius, Rwanda, and Côte d'Ivoire.

South Africa's economic future is more unpredictable, primarily because political groups that espouse socialist ideologies remain powerful. Though both Presidents Mandela and Mbeki implemented pragmatic, market-oriented economic policies, it is not clear that Jacob Zuma—who will probably become president in 2009 and could remain in power until 2019—will do the same. In an interview with the *Financial Times* in August, one of Zuma's close advisors, Zwelinzima Vavi, who heads the powerful trade union federation COSATU, called for "a complete review of the conservative strategies that we've pursued—all of them."

Technology, such as cell phones, will also accelerate Africa's economic expansion over the next 25 years. A growing body of evidence suggests that access to cell phones boosts incomes and makes local economies more efficient. Farmers in Kenya now use cell phones to check commodity prices and contact buyers. Cell phones are used to transfer wages among family members. Though it is hard to calculate the macroeconomic impact, it is apparent that Africa's economic growth has coincided with a surge in cell phone use.

Sustained economic growth in Africa will boost millions of Africans out of poverty over the next quarter century. The example of China—where three decades of growth has lifted more than 400 million people out of poverty—demonstrates that economic growth undoubtedly benefits the poor. There is no need for bureaucrats and academics to huddle in conference rooms, drafting millennium plans and sustainable development manifestos. African countries will reduce poverty just like every other country has reduced poverty: by fostering domestic and foreign private investment, creating jobs, and putting money in the hands of individual Africans.

It is more difficult to predict whether economic growth will lead to more equitable access to decent public healthcare, clean water, and education by 2033. These outcomes will depend on the implementation of sound policies, especially those that increase penalties on offical corruption.

I am optimistic that most African governments will reduce the most extreme forms of corruption, such as the wholesale looting of public funds. In recent years, the development industry has decided that corruption is the root cause of Africa's "underdevelopment." Though I think some activists are indiscriminate in their application of this term to the whole of Africa, they are correct when they focus on the looting of public funds. Under pressure, many governments—such as Nigeria and Tanzania—have removed and prosecuted public officials for the theft of state funds. Other governments are likely to adopt similar policies. By 2033, we probably will cease to hear about leaders plundering state assets in the manner of Generals Mobutu, Babangida, and Abacha. But the fine line between "earmarking" and "patronage" will remain, ensuring that some types of what Western activists call "corruption" won't be eliminated in Africa by 2033.

Africa Rising

Africa's progress through 2008 is not a result of foreign aid. It has been achieved indigenously. As Africa continues to evolve and rise over the next quarter century, its relationship to the international community must also change. Other countries must also adapt the style, tone, and content of their engagement with Africa.

The well-intentioned instinct of Western liberals to "save" Africa is increasingly repulsive to the continent's politicians, entrepreneurs, writers, and artists. Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade and Rwandan President Paul Kagame, young African writers like Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Uzodinma Iweala, and the prominent young Ugandan journalists like Andrew Mwenda all express resentment about the patronizing attitudes of western donors toward Africa.

Because the Chinese government and many European leaders, such as French President Nicolas Sarkozy, already comprehend Africa's rise, by 2033 they are more likely to have consolidated mutually beneficial partnerships with African countries. President Sarkozy's idea of "Eurafrique," which he discussed in a speech last year in Dakar, describes a relationship between European and African countries based on partnerships. The 2007 Lisbon European-African summit—the first in seven years—was one step toward establishing a framework for such relationships. But with its astonishing economic investments in Africa (China-Africa trade is projected to total $100 billion by 2010), China is way ahead of European countries. If Beijing has its way, by 2033 it will be linked to Africa through a series of industrial hubs: in metals, trading, and shipping, as the writer Mark Leonard has described in his book *What Does China Think*?

The United States is way behind. The mythology of the exotic, basket-case continent has prevented a more serious engagement with Africa. In addition, America's 2008 financial meltdown is also likely to alter its style of engagement with the world, including Africa. I am persuaded that African finance ministers will politely decline any advice in the future about the benefits of total financial deregulation. The days of Americans lecturing Africans about human rights, democracy, and now the economy are over.

As Africa rises, it will demand reforms of key international institutions, such as the G-8, the International Monetary Fund, and the United Nations Security Council. By 2033, the United Nations Security Council will have been reformed to include at least one permanent African member, probably South Africa or Nigeria. And, the G-8 also will have been enlarged to include an African country.

In the world of 2033, Africa will look quite similar—and just as complex—as other regions of the world. It will face the same challenges that other regions face, such as maintaining economic growth, creating more robust democracies, and battling organized crime and radical Islam. African countries have always faced the same threats and challenges as other countries in the struggle to develop. But the Western interpreters of Africa—anthropologists, journalists, and writers such as Ryszard Kapuscinski—have emphasized Africa's exoticism rather than its banalities.

Perhaps there is no other person more equipped to comprehend Africa's past and future than Nelson Mandela. At the end of his autobiography, entitled *Long Walk to Freedom*, he writes: "I have walked that long road to freedom. I have tried not to falter; I have made missteps along the way. But I have discovered the secret that after climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb."

Mandela doesn't often speak out about Africa today, but I think he would take the long view and see each step since Africa's independence—even the giant missteps, of which there have been many—as part of a difficult journey that every other sovereign country has undertaken. By 2033, Africa will have climbed more hills, and will have many other hills to climb. ●