

Impact of the U.S.'s Indo-Pacific Strategy on Africa's Security and Korea's Diplomacy

Ki-Chul Park

The United States security strategy towards Africa is transforming. Whereas the Obama administration prioritized containing China in the Asia-Pacific by scaling back military involvement in Africa and emphasizing economic and diplomatic overtures, the Biden administration, acknowledging Africa's resurgent geopolitical and strategic significance, is expanding its Indo-Pacific strategy to incorporate the African continent, unequivocally signaling a renewed commitment to re-engagement. This policy shift is shaped by the activist African agendas of China and Russia – China is undertaking sundry security cooperation initiatives encompassing peacekeeping support, constructing naval bases to consolidate maritime footholds, arms transfers, and military training to countervail the U.S. and amplify political leverage, while Russia is augmenting its military and diplomatic sway by furnishing security capabilities through paramilitary organizations to African nations embroiled in civil wars and insurgencies. The impetus for according priority to Africa is that African countries receiving security assistance from authoritarian regimes engender a predicament regarding multilateral security cooperation – as exemplified by South Africa and 16 other African nations abstaining from the March 2022 UN resolution criticizing Russia's invasion of Ukraine, confounding the U.S. and Western allies. The U.S. is tasked with making amends for neglecting African countries, accordingly evolving its Indo-Pacific strategy inherited from the Asia-Pacific framework. This article elucidates the evolving African security cooperation milieu becoming an arena of great power rivalries. It examines how the U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy shapes African security, furnishing implications for Korea-Africa military cooperation.

Keywords Indo-Pacific Strategy, US-China Competition, African Security Dilemma, African diplomacy

INTRODUCTION

In January 2024, John Mearsheimer, a realist international relations scholar in the United States, argued that the unipolar era that began with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 came to an end in 2017. The Ukraine war is a clear vestige that signals the

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beginning of a multipolar era, and the liberal international order led by the United States is now a thing of the past that can only be seen through the rear-view mirror. Today we live in a realist international order (Mearsheimer, 2024). The three major powers in this multipolar era are the United States, China, and Russia, and the international politics of these great powers are now unfolding vigorously on the African stage.

In 2012, the Obama administration of the United States released a new national defense and diplomacy policy paper titled *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for the 21st Century*, which promised to maintain the status of the world's strongest military while pursuing global leadership and a leaner military. The Asia-Pacific strategy articulated in this policy paper aimed to contain China's rise by pivoting to Asia so that the United States could maintain its hegemonic status in the Asia-Pacific region. To this end, the United States focused its diplomatic and security efforts on four pillars: first, strengthening alliances with traditional allies like Japan, South Korea, and Australia to contain China; second, incorporating India as a central pillar of the Asia-Pacific order to contain China; third, enhancing relations with ASEAN countries to expand U.S. influence in the South China Sea; and fourth, strengthening U.S. influence through economic revitalization and increasing regional trade and investment. The Indo-Pacific strategy of the Obama administration expanded to the Indo-Pacific strategy after the emergence of the Trump administration, and now under the Biden administration, it is incorporating Africa into its scope (Mawdsley 2022; Muekalia 2021).

With the outbreak of the Ukraine war in 2022, a competitive courtship of Africa, which holds the casting vote in multilateral diplomacy, has unfolded. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, French President Emmanuel Macron, and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz toured sub-Saharan Africa, and in December of the same year, U.S. President Joe Biden invited nearly 50 African leaders to Washington for the U.S.-Africa Summit to regain U.S. influence in Africa, which had been wrested by China over the past decade. In January 2023, U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang, and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov all visited Africa in the same month, engaging in a diplomatic battle (KBS 2023).

The intensified diplomatic competition by major powers to win Africa's heart stems from looking beyond the perspective of simple hegemonic rivalry among imperial powers and examining Africa's geopolitical dynamics, how great power international politics affects African security and the resulting security dilemma in Africa. Africa is strengthening its influence in international decision-making through strategic calculations rather than taking sides between the U.S.-Western democratic bloc and the China-Russia authoritarian bloc amid the U.S.-China hegemonic competition. The U.S. geostrategic security policy called the Asia-Pacific strategy has evolved and developed into the geopolitical Indo-Pacific strategy encompassing the Indian Ocean and Africa. Considering that existing research on African diplomacy in Korean society has focused relatively more on economic aid and development cooperation¹, this paper examines the

¹ For notable papers on Africa and economic cooperation and aid, see: "Korea's Development Cooperation with Africa: Priorities and Partnerships" (2023) by Jeong et al. This paper analyzed South Korea's Official Development Assistance (ODA) flows to Africa, highlighting priority sectors like infrastructure, health, and rural development. It recommended deepening public-private

impact of the U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy on Africa with a focus on military cooperation amid the changing security environment and delivers implications for Korean diplomacy preparing for the 2024 summit with African countries.

This paper analyzes administrations' policy in the historical context and shows pieces of evidence of rivalry by using secondary data. The structure of this paper is as follows: Chapter 2 focuses on African security policies and Great Power competition. In Chapter 3, the Indo-Pacific strategy is discussed concerning the African security dilemma. Chapter 4 concludes with some implications for Korea's diplomacy in Africa.

GREAT POWER'S AFRICA SECURITY POLICIES

U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy and Africa Security Policy

In February 2022, the Biden administration announced the "U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy", laying out a basic strategic framework for the Indo-Pacific region. The key principle is to pursue "connectivity", "prosperity", "security", and "resilience" with regional allies for a "free and open" Indo-Pacific (White House 2022a). The Indo-Pacific strategy differs from the Asia-Pacific strategy in that it is a geopolitical concept rather than a geographical one. In essence, the Indo-Pacific strategy is the U.S.'s traditional maritime strategy connecting the Pacific, Indian Ocean, and Atlantic to contain China's attempted changes to the status quo and expansion of influence (Moon 2023). Given that African countries bordering the Indian Ocean share key challenges such as maritime security, geopolitical competition, and climate change, the geopolitical importance of Africa is increasing, making expansion of the Indo-Pacific strategy inevitable (Sneyd 2022).

During the Cold War era, U.S. Africa security policy focused on two goals maintaining regional stability and preventing the spread of communism. Maintaining regional stability entailed supporting local security agencies to protect civilians and mediate conflicts between countries amidst the turmoil following African nations' liberation. Meanwhile, the U.S. competed with the Soviet Union to secure alliances with African countries and provided them with economic and military assistance to strategically manage allies, aiming to secure U.S. security interests and enhance African countries' security capabilities (Brierley 1995).

The Clinton administration, which opened the door to the unipolar era after the Cold War, championed human rights and democratic values but faced criticism for not directly intervening in the 1994 Rwandan genocide. Triggered by ethnic conflicts between Hutus and Tutsis, the massacre lasted 100 days and resulted in 1.17 million deaths. The UN and countries like the U.S., UK, and Belgium were powerless to stop the

partnerships; "Korean Investment and Technology Transfer in Africa's Agricultural Sector" (2022) by Kim and Bochtis. This examined increasing Korean foreign direct investment in modernizing African agriculture through technology transfer; "Evaluating Korea's Knowledge Sharing Program in Ethiopia" (2021) by Gebre et al. An evaluation of South Korea's knowledge exchange initiative to promote capacity building in Ethiopia's public sector. However, little research has been conducted on security cooperation between Africa and Korea. Shim and Lee (2012) is the only study by KIDA, Korea Institute for Defense Analysis, on Korea-Africa military cooperation.

mass killings, while France faced condemnation for supporting the perpetrator Hutus. The Rwandan genocide prompted the U.S. to pay more attention to African security issues. The Clinton administration was seen as having little understanding of African security issues and lacking interest due to Africa's low priority in U.S. foreign policy (Dallaire 2005).

The Bush administration also initially showed little interest in African security but shifted to an active stance after 9/11 to address terrorism in the region, intervening militarily in Somalia's civil war in cooperation with the Ethiopian government in 2006. However, the U.S.' unprepared military intervention was seen as domestic interference in Somalia, exacerbating factional conflicts and only inflaming anti-American sentiment among Somalis, thus failing. From 2006 to 2007, the Bush Administration cooperated with the Ethiopian government to conduct military interventions to eradicate extremist terrorist groups associated with Somalia's Islamic Courts Union (Malito 2015).

The Obama administration's 2011 Congressional-Mandated Defense Budget Reductions and Strategic Reviews readjusted U.S. global security priorities and sought solutions for economic woes in the U.S. In this process, the U.S. provision of security cooperation to Africa was reduced, and the strategic importance of Africa was re-evaluated by the U.S. in terms of responding to international security and terrorism.

U.S. interest in Africa diminished further when the Trump administration emerged in 2017. Emphasizing America First, Trump did not recognize African interests as connected to U.S. interests. The 2018 National Security Strategy² mentioned Africa's strategic importance only as part of its counterterrorism strategy, concentrating U.S. security efforts in the Middle East and Korean Peninsula. Trump was seen as rather neglectful of improving relations with Africa, as he did not make a single visit there during his term.

The period between 2011 and 2020 under the Obama and Trump administrations became a painfully lost decade for the U.S. During this time, China and Russia, through various military and economic cooperation, secured uncatchable influence in Africa for the U.S. In June 2021, President Biden's Strategic Re-engagement report proposed four key policy pillars 1) strengthening democracy and governance, 2) promoting peace and security, 3) facilitating COVID-19 pandemic recovery and economic development, and 4) building climate change response capacities (Schneidman and Signe 2022). The U.S. Strategy toward Sub-Saharan Africa released in August states that from the perspective of U.S. national security interests, Africa will play a crucial role in resolving global issues going forward and that the U.S. will also strengthen partnerships across defense, diplomacy, and development (White House 2022b). In December 2022, Biden held the first U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit, inviting leaders from 49 African countries to Washington D.C. and reaffirming the U.S. commitment to enhanced cooperation. Biden's overtures towards Africa can also be confirmed through the U.S. Agency for International Development's Africa assistance plans (USAID 2022) and reports and hearings by the House Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations. Key examples of the Biden administration's security

² Full text is available at <https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf>

Table 1. Security Cooperation in Africa since Biden came to power

When	Security Cooperation	Result
2021.03	Mozambique Terrorism Arbitration	On-going
2021.05	Sanctions against Chad Rebel	Done
2021.11	Ethiopia civil war Arbitration	On-going
2022. 02	Support to implement Peace Agreement in South Sudan	On-going
2022.04	Cyber security cooperation with Tunisia	Done
2022. 06	Joint Military Exercise with Morocco	Done
2022. 08	Support Military exercise to SADC	On-going
2022. 11	Security cooperation meeting for stabilizing Syria	Done
2022. 12	U.S.-Africa Summit	Done
2023. 11	Cooperation meeting with President of Angola	Done

Note: Author edited

cooperation are as follows (see Table 1).

The background for the Biden administration expanding engagement with Africa can be summarized as: 1) Africa's strategic value is increasing in addressing global issues like climate change and terrorism; 2) Close security cooperation with Africa is necessary to respond to terrorism concerns following 9/11; 3) U.S. foothold in Africa is narrowing as authoritarian regimes like China and Russia accelerate involvement in African affairs; and 4) Changes in U.S. strategy are inevitable as African countries make progress in self-reliance efforts like creating regional cooperation mechanisms (Schneidman and Signe 2022).

China and Russia's Africa Security Policies

During the Cold War era, China supported African independence movements under the pretext of anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism and provided economic assistance for infrastructure construction in African countries since the 1960s. In the post-Deng Xiaoping era, China expanded engagement with Africa as part of its reform and opening-up policy and strengthened diplomacy with Africa after the 1973 and 1979 oil crises to diversify oil imports. The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation inaugurated in 1996 focused on exploring African markets and securing resources. After coming to power in 2003, Hu Jintao announced the "China-Africa Cooperation Plan" with massive investments and loans at the 3rd Forum in 2006, widening the gap with the U.S. in African diplomacy and emerging as the most influential power in the region. At the 6th Forum in December 2015, Xi Jinping elevated China-Africa relations to a "Comprehensive Strategic and Cooperative Partnership" and promised to double China's loan and funding support to Africa in the next 3 years to \$60 billion while deepening cooperation in politics, economy, society, security and other areas. By establishing a

Table 2. Security Cooperation in Africa since Xi came to Power

When	Security Cooperation	Result
2016. 11	Zimbabwe Airforce Base Construction	Done
2017. 02	Gambia Military Dormitory Modernization	Done
2017. 11	Zimbabwe Military Dormitory Modernization	Done
2019. 11	Eritrea Naval Base Construction	Done
2020. 09	Provide Weapons and Equipment for Mali Armed Forces	Done
2021. 06	Counter Terror Ops for Chad Government	Done
2021. 12	Burundi Cyber Security Center Construction	Done
2022. 05	Mauritius Naval Base Construction	Done
2022. 12	Namibia Naval Base Construction	Done
2023. 08	The 3rd China-Africa Forum	Done

Note: Author edited

strategic partnership with the African Union (AU) and accelerating infrastructure investment under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China is strengthening ties. A notable feature of China's cooperation projects under Xi is the recognition of Africa's geopolitical significance, reflected in the emphasis on military cooperation. China has supported air force bases in Zimbabwe, naval bases in Eritrea, Mauritius, and Namibia, the modernization of military barracks in Zambia and Zimbabwe, and the provision of weapons and equipment to countries like Mali and Chad under the intent of reinforcing counterterrorism capabilities (See Table 2).

Meanwhile, during the Soviet era, Russia provided large-scale military assistance to countries like Angola and Mozambique to expand the communist sphere of influence amid ideological competition with the U.S., and actively exerted influence by dispatching military advisors to countries like Ethiopia and Sudan to strengthen socialist international solidarity. Although its influence in Africa diminished significantly after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia has been restoring its foothold since Putin came to power in the 2000s by increasing military cooperation such as arms exports. Putin provided military helicopters to Sudan in 2003, weapons worth \$1 billion to Libya in 2009, and air defense missiles called "Kometera" to Ethiopia the same year. In 2018, Russia provided small arms, grenades, and field medical equipment to the Central African Republic, followed by 4 Su-35 fighter jets to Sudan in 2019 and 2 Mi-17 helicopters to Mozambique. A notable feature of Russia's security cooperation in Africa is the Wagner Group, a paramilitary organization whose activities are condoned by the Russian government. The Wagner Group secured a firm foothold by intervening in the Central African Republic's civil war in 2014 and has undertaken training, reconnaissance, and combat support missions by intervening in civil wars in Sudan in 2018, Mozambique in 2019, and Libya in 2020 (See Table 3). Although the Russian government denies connections, Wagner is essentially a quasi-military organization backed by Russia (Seth

Table 3. Russia's Security Cooperation in Africa Putin came to power

When	Security Cooperation	Gov/Wagner
2000.02	Russia-Angola Military Cooperation Signing	Gov
2001.06	Russia-Namibia Joint Military Commission	Gov
2002.07	Military Sale to Sudan (Su-29 Fighter jet)	Gov
2003. 09	Military Sale to Sudan (Mi-24 Helicopter)	Gov
2009.08	Military Sale to Ethiopia (Kometa Missile)	Gov
2014. 12	Military Intervention to Central Africa Republic	Wagner
2018. 01	Military Intervention to Sudan	Wagner
2018.03	Military Sale to Central Africa Republic (Weapons)	Gov
2018. 07	Military Sale to Sudan (Su-35 Fighter jet)	Gov
2019. 03	Military Intervention to Mozambique	Wagner
2019.04	Military Sale to Mozambique (Mi-7 Helicopter)	Gov
2019.06	Support Haftar forces in Libya	Wagner
2020.09	Strengthening Military Cooperation with Mali Gov.	Gov
2021.04	Joint Military Ops with Mali Armed Forces	Wagner
2022.02	Provide Military Training for Burkina paso Armed Forces	Wagner
2022.09	Invite Algeri Navy to "Vostok" Exercise	Gov
2022.10	Russia-Algeri Joint Navy exercise	Gov
2022.11	Russia-Algeri Joint Army exercise	Gov

Note: Author edited.

2021).

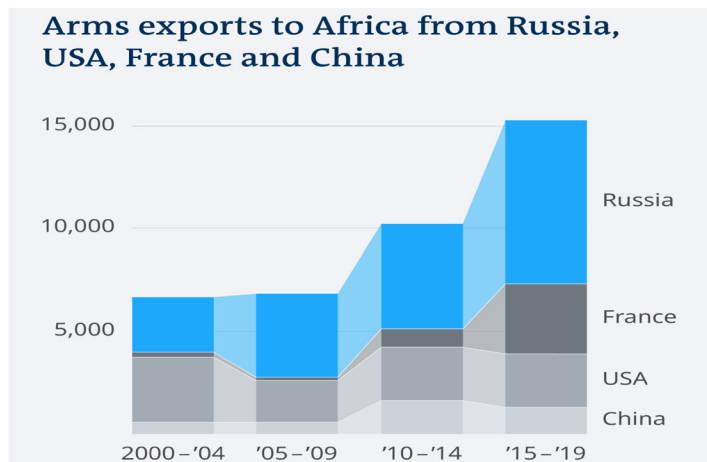
Great Power Rivalry in Africa

China and Russia's expansion of military cooperation in Africa has triggered a security dilemma by exacerbating the regional arms race and making it difficult to build a united front in the decision-making processes of the African Union (AU). It has also put African countries in a dilemma where they have no choice but to remain silent about the neo-imperialist actions of authoritarian regimes. This dilemma prompted the Washington establishment to improve its awareness of Africa's geopolitical importance. As the analysis emerged that securing dominance in Africa, with its enormous population, resources, and economic potential, is imperative to gain an edge in the global hegemonic competition, the U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy is also transforming towards actively engaging Africa (McKenzie 2022).

The Biden administration reconvened the "U.S.-Africa Summit" from December 13-15, 2022, inviting leaders from 49 African countries and the Chairperson of the African

Union Commission. This was the first convention in 8 years since 2014. President Biden pledged active support for Africa’s future prosperity, emphasizing that “Africa’s success is synonymous with global success.” In particular, measures to strengthen African security and democracy were discussed, and Biden promised unwavering diplomatic support for Africa to become a G20 member. The U.S. will provide \$55 billion in total over the next three years starting in 2023 to support various areas including climate change, food security, and health, and commit an additional \$2.5 billion to overcome food insecurity. Through a Memorandum of Understanding on enhancing trade cooperation via the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), it will invest \$170 million to vitalize trade and also signed \$15 billion worth of investment agreements in the public and private sector beyond government assistance (EMERiCs 2022). The U.S.’s bolstered cooperation with Africa is seen as a tactic to curb the influence of China and Russia on the continent. China and Russia have already pledged to provide \$40 billion and \$12.5 billion respectively in assistance to African nations by 2021. U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan emphasized that, unlike Chinese and Russian economic support, U.S. aid to Africa does not have political motives or conditions and is not intended to control African countries (Park 2022).

On the other hand, China and Russia’s security cooperation with Africa is highly diverse and substantial. Under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China is concentrating investment on transportation, ports, energy, and pipeline infrastructure projects across Africa like the railway from Djibouti with a Chinese naval base to Ethiopia, Kenya’s high-speed rail, and Nigeria’s Abuja development. Despite criticism that Chinese firms source raw materials, components, and labor locally, benefiting China’s economy rather than Africa’s, China maintains a good reputation among African nations – surveys by British research firm YouGov-Cambridge Globalism Project in 2022 found 83% of



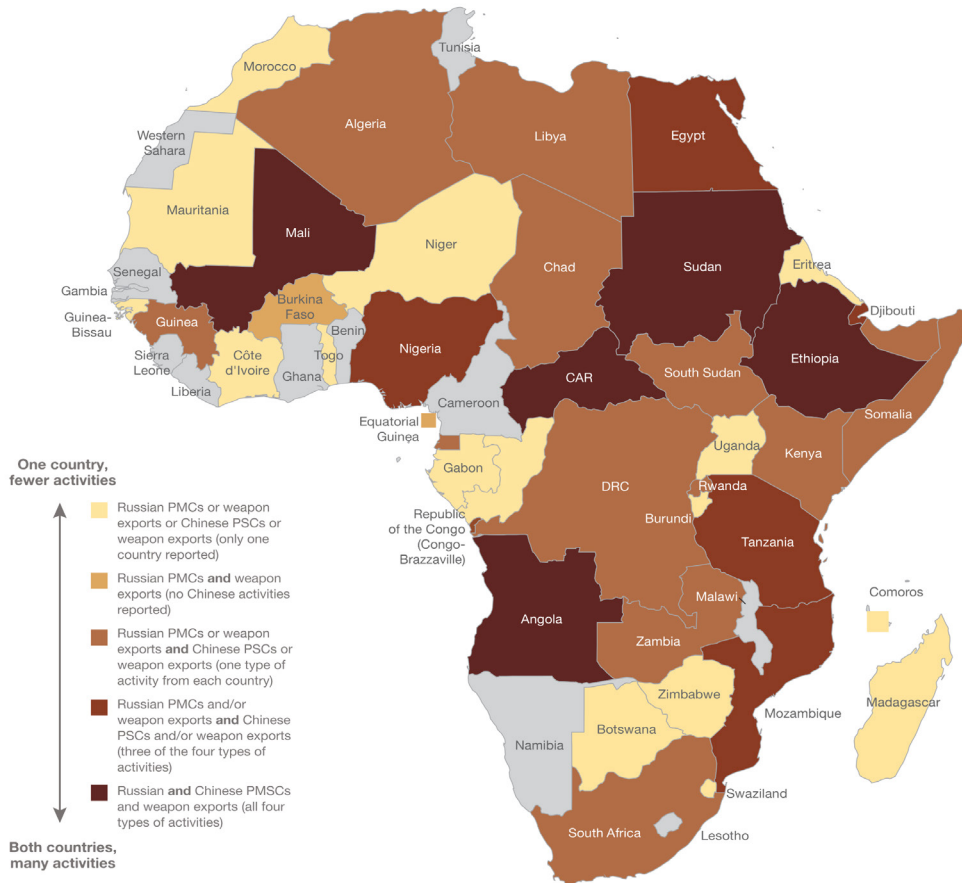
Note: * Million dollar

Source: SIPRI (<https://www.dw.com/en/russian-arms-exports-to-africa-moscows-long-term-strategy/a-53596471>)

Figure 1. Military sales to Africa in 2000-2019

Nigerians, 82% of Kenyans, and 61% of South Africans view China favorably (VOA 2022).

Russia is actively pursuing military intervention and arms sales through cooperation between the government and private paramilitaries. Figure 1 shows the changing distribution of arms-exporting countries to Africa since 2000. Looking at 2015-2019 statistics, the value of Russia's arms exports to Africa has surpassed the U.S. since 2004, accounting for over half of total exports in 2019. Considering unrecorded profits from mining rights in the Central African Republic through military support, Russia's economic gains from military cooperation with Africa are presumed to be substantial. Although the value of China's arms exports to Africa is lower than Russia, France, and the U.S., it has been steadily rising since 2009. Given China's concentration on infrastructure support like building military bases, Africa's security dependence on China is very high.

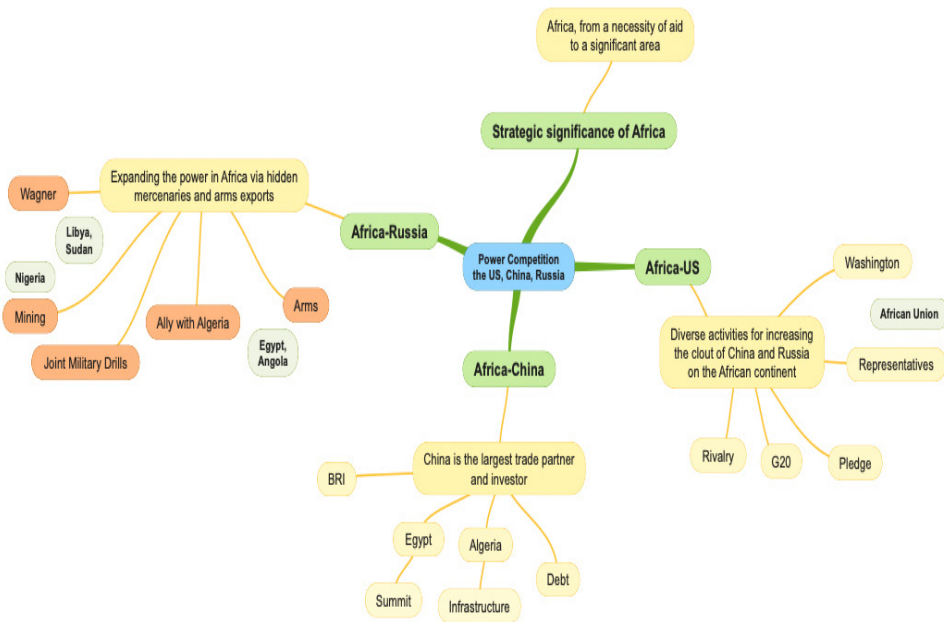


Note: PMC(Private Military Company), PSC(Private Security Company)
 Source: RAND Corporation 2022 (<https://www.rand.org/pubs/tools/TLA2045-3.html>)

Figure 2. Russia and China's Military Security Cooperation in Africa

Figure 2 illustrates China and Russia’s military cooperation – the darker the color, the higher the frequency and intensity of cooperation. Except for Tunisia, Western Sahara, Namibia, and Cameroon marked in grey, all countries receive security cooperation from Russia and China. Especially countries like Mali, Nigeria, Sudan, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Angola, and Tanzania obtain arms exports and military security cooperation from both Russia and China through combined governmental and private sector efforts. In particular, the Sahel region south of the Sahara Desert has seen decades of conflict stemming from various political, ethnic, economic, and environmental factors. The problem is that as conflicts spread from the Sahel region to coastal nations, Russia and China’s military intervention and security cooperation are also expanding to coastal countries (Tastsu 2023).

Figure 3 illustrates the complex power dynamics and rivalries among major global powers like the United States, China, and Russia in their competition for influence in Africa. The node labeled “Strategic significance of Africa” at the center highlights the continent’s growing geopolitical significance. Diverse nodes and connections stemming from this central point illustrate different aspects of this strategic significance. One major branch relates to the “Africa-Russia” dynamic, with nodes like “Exploiting the power in Africa via hidden mercenaries and arms exports” highlighting Russia’s covert



Note: This map provides a data-driven visualization of the multifaceted rivalries and power plays unfolding in Africa, mapping the economic, political, and military dimensions of this great power competition through an intricate network analysis of 1,470 online issues from September to December 2022.
 Source: Author edited

Figure 3. Big Data Analysis for Great Power Dynamics in Africa

activities and arms dealings in the region. Another prominent thread focuses on the “Africa-China” relationship, with China being depicted as “the largest trade partner and investor” in Africa through initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and investments in infrastructure and debt financing the “Africa-US” connection illustrates the diverse activities of the United States aimed at countering Russian and Chinese influence, such as bolstering ties with African nations and their representatives. Other nodes like “Joint Military Drills,” “Arms,” “Mining,” and “Ally with Algeria” point to military partnerships, resource extraction interests, and strategic alliances fostered by external powers across Africa.

SECURITY DILEMMA & U.S. INDO-PACIFIC STRATEGY

African Civil War

The African continent consists of 54 countries, each comprising diverse ethnic and racial groups. Hundreds of different ethnicities and races have distinct languages, cultures, and traditions, making it a diverse continent. Due to the history of imperialist division and colonial rule by European powers, dependence on Europe remains high, and African countries continue to be greatly influenced by rapidly changing international dynamics. In particular, most African nations have yet to escape the category of developing countries and remain the most vulnerable group in the 21st-century multilateral international order (Thomson 2022). The legacy of imperialist partitioning and colonial control has persistently exposed African countries, which gained independence in succession afterward, to security threats like territorial disputes, civil wars, and terrorism.

Moreover, while striving to address security concerns through military buildup, African countries have fallen into a dilemma where security anxieties have only been exacerbated. For instance, arms races are underway between <Algeria vs. Morocco>, <Ethiopia vs. Eritrea>, <Sudan vs. South Sudan>, <Nigeria vs. Cameroon>, <Uganda vs. Rwanda>, and <Angola vs. South Africa>, with tensions particularly escalating between Algeria and Morocco over the Western Sahara issue and between Ethiopia and Eritrea over border disputes. There are also border conflicts between Sudan and South Sudan as well as Uganda and Rwanda, while Nigeria and Cameroon are at odds over the Boko Haram problem.³

³ Relevant references regarding the arms race and security dilemmas between various African countries are as follows: Kielsingard, M.D. (2015). “*Addressing the African Security Dilemma*” National Defense University Press. This book analyzes the security dilemma facing African states and the resulting arms build-ups between rivals; Omitoogun, W. (2003) “Military expenditure data in Africa: A survey of Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and Uganda” SIPRI Research Report No. 17.” This report looks at military spending trends in select African countries like Nigeria, Cameroon, Ethiopia, and Uganda; Kimenyi, M.S., et al. (2010). “The Latest Armed Conflict in Sudan” Brookings. This examines the tensions and conflicts between Sudan and the newly independent South Sudan; Handy, P. (2015). “The Recurring Morocco-Algeria Conflict and Prospects for Resolution” Middle East Policy, 22(1), 107-116. This paper analyzes Morocco

Among these, what is exerting great influence not only on African security but also on international politics are the civil wars that have continued incessantly for decades. To summarize the major ongoing conflicts that remain unresolved, they are as follows. First is the Darfur civil war in Sudan. Sudan is located with the Red Sea in the middle, Saudi Arabia and Yemen to the right, and other African countries surrounding the rest. The Darfur conflict has persisted from 2003 until now in the Darfur region of Sudan. Darfur is located in the western part of Sudan where Arab and African ethnic groups coexist. In 2003, the Sudanese government at the time was pursuing a nationalist policy centered on the Arab population, which provoked the African ethnic groups to organize a rebel army and clash with the government forces. Darfur is a region where Arabs and Africans live together. However, there have been longstanding racial, religious, and economic conflicts between the two groups. The Arab residents of the Darfur region are mostly Sunni Muslims while the African residents mainly believe in Sufi Islam. Also, despite Darfur's abundant natural resources, the benefits went to the Arab population, causing feelings of economic deprivation among the Africans (Brosche, 2022). The regional conflict has created millions of refugees and stagnated Darfur's infrastructure and economy.

Second is the Tigray civil war in Ethiopia. The Tigray civil war in Ethiopia began on November 4, 2020, when the Ethiopian government forces attacked the Tigray region. The conflict was between the Ethiopian federal government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). The TPLF overthrew Ethiopia's communist regime in 1991 and took control of the Ethiopian federal government, thereafter wielding strong influence in the country's economy, politics, and military. However, after Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed came to power in 2018, the TPLF was excluded from the government which built up much resentment. In fact, the Tigray region was one of Ethiopia's major economic regions, but economic development in Tigray stagnated after Abiy's rise to power. Additionally, the local residents believe in Christianity while the government has pursued policies centered on Islam, further fueling the residents' discontent into civil war (Tronvoll 2022). Grain production in Tigray has suffered and infrastructure including hydroelectric power has been destroyed, impacting not just the regional issues but the entire country's economic development.

Third is the civil war in Somalia, famously known as the backdrop for the Korean film *Black Hawk Down*. The civil war that began in 1991 was caused by conflict between the Somali government and rebel groups. In 1991, the dictatorship of Mohamed Siad Barre collapsed due to a coup by a military junta led by Mohamed Farrah Aidid, formally starting the civil war. Afterward, warlord factions formed in Somali regions as conflicts intensified. The following year in 1992, famine and drought caused by the civil war became severe, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Somalis which prompted the deployment of UN and US military operations. However, in 1993 the US forces failed operations in Mogadishu and in 1995 the UN forces also withdrew. But in

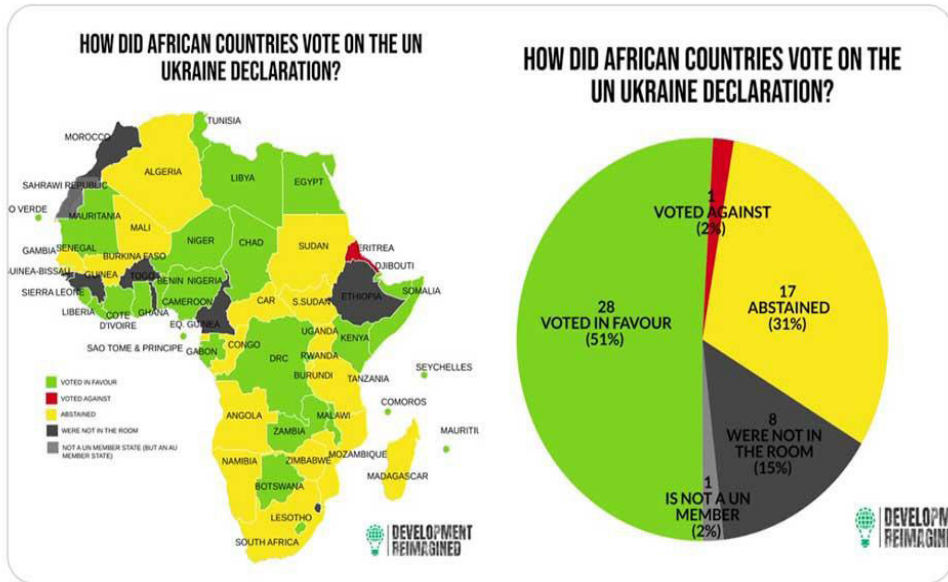
and Algeria's long-standing rivalry and conflict over Western Sahara; Cliffe, L. (1999). "Regional Dimensions of Conflict in the Horn of Africa" *Third World Quarterly*, 20(1), 89-111. This study discusses border disputes and conflicts between Ethiopia, Eritrea, and others in the Horn of Africa region.

2006, Ethiopian forces supported by the US became involved in the civil war along with the deployment of the African Union (AU) peacekeeping forces. After 2009, the Islamic terrorist group Al-Shabaab took control of Somalia and continued terror activities (Ingiriis 2021). Even after US forces assassinated an Al-Shabaab leader in 2022, conflict with Al-Shabaab forces continues. This is more than just a domestic civil war, as Somalia is located along major maritime trade routes in Africa, threatening maritime safety. Furthermore, politically the central government still has limited authority, leading to frequent armed clashes between the government and rebel groups, and the economic situation remains very poor.

Fourth is the Séléka rebel conflict in the Central African Republic (CAR). The Séléka rebels, named after a group meaning “alliance” in the Sango language, were formed in 2012 primarily by Muslim residents in northern regions to resolve political and social instability in the CAR. The rebels captured the capital, ousted the government forces, and established a new government in the CAR. However, after taking power, the Séléka was criticized by the international community for inciting religious conflict between Muslims and Christians and massacring and pillaging civilians. In response, France and the African Union (AU) deployed peacekeeping forces to the CAR in 2013 to drive out the rebels and establish a new government. Although the rebels have been slowly regaining strength since 2017, frequently carrying out armed provocations and resuming terrorist attacks, seizing control of western and central regions of the CAR (James 2020). The CAR has enormous reserves of diamonds, uranium, gold, and more. Amidst the chaos, the Russian mercenary group Wagner has recently been implicated as behind civilian massacres in the CAR, causing another serious issue (BBC 2022).

Lastly, there is Boko Haram in Nigeria, an Islamic extremist armed group operating in the northeastern region of Nigeria. Founded in 2002, Boko Haram initially started as a movement opposing the corruption of the Nigerian government and religious persecution. However, it gradually transformed into an extremist armed group aiming to establish a society based on Islamic law. Boko Haram has been involved in terrorist activities such as school bombings, civilian massacres, and hostage-taking. Their activities pose a serious threat to Nigeria's political, economic, and social instability, as well as the nation's terrorism issues. Nigeria is divided into the northern and southern regions, and Boko Haram, representing Islamic forces in the northern region, harbors resentment towards the Christian forces in the southern region. Furthermore, they enforce adherence to Islamic law while rejecting Western education and culture, and they exploit Nigeria's precarious economic situation to expand their influence (Ajah, Chinedu, and Kabiru 2020). Particularly, in recent times, their influence has expanded to the border regions of neighboring countries. For instance, in Niger, due to Boko Haram, the border areas with Nigeria have become volatile, and in Cameroon, kidnappings and attacks frequently occur near the border. Moreover, following Boko Haram attacks on Lake Chad, there have been instances of mass killings by Chadian forces, leading to the declaration of a state of emergency in the region.

As the cases listed above show, African countries suffer from civil wars due to various races, religions, and historical backgrounds. Civil wars are the biggest obstacle to Africa's integration. Divided African countries are hard to unite as in the international community, and this is also evident in the United Nations (UN). African countries,



Source: Staden, Cobus van 2022, “Why did African Countries Sidestep the UN’s Vote on Ukraine?” (<https://chinaglobalsouth.com/analysis/why-did-25-african-countries-sidestep-the-uns-vote-on-ukraine/>)

Figure 4. How did African Countries vote on the UN Ukraine declaration?

which constitute one-third of the member states of the UN, exercise their voting power in the UN General Assembly. Reflecting the influence of China and Russia in Africa, the voting results on the UN resolution condemning the annexation of Crimea in 2014 were 100 in favor, 11 against, and 58 abstentions. In this resolution, African countries such as Egypt, Algeria, South Africa, Mali, Rwanda, Senegal, and Gabon abstained from voting. In March 2022, during the UN General Assembly vote to condemn Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, South Africa, along with 16 other African countries, abstained from voting to maintain a neutral stance. Furthermore, Eritrea, along with Russia, North Korea, Belarus, and Syria, voted against the resolution (refer to Figure 4). This result contradicts the declaration of the African Union (AU) Chairperson, as it indicates that out of the 44 AU member states, 24 did not support the UN resolution (Staden 2022). Moreover, it confirms the difficulty of joint responses between the African Union (AU) and multilateral international organizations such as the UN, potentially leading to conflicts among AU member states and exacerbating regional security concerns, thus presenting a dilemma.

In the UN Human Rights Council resolution passed in April 2022, which suspended Russia’s membership, the pattern of division among African Union (AU) countries was repeatedly evident. The resolution was adopted with 93 votes in favor, 24 against, and 58 abstentions. Among the 24 countries that opposed the resolution were the Central African Republic and Algeria, both receiving security support from

the Russian quasi-military organization Wagner Group. Senegal and South Africa abstained from the vote. While, in principle, Russia's invasion of Ukraine should draw condemnation from African countries that have experienced colonialism, the reality is that countries receiving military cooperation and security assistance from Russia are unable to voice the same concerns as other African nations. Countries threatened by Islamist extremist insurgents, such as Libya, Mali, Sudan, and the Central African Republic, rely on Russian Wagner mercenaries for their security. Consequently, they maintain silence regarding Russia's invasion due to this dependence on Russian military support (Staden 2022).

Impact of the Indo-Pacific Strategy on Africa

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the U.S. has enjoyed the status of the sole hegemonic power leading the liberal international order. However, during this period, U.S. interest in Africa was relatively lacking compared to China and Russia, as evidenced by the security cooperation examples of the U.S., China, and Russia in Africa provided earlier. Trump did not visit Africa during his term, which has been evaluated as allowing China to expand its influence in Africa (Lee 2022). To respond to terrorism threats and maintain security and stability in the African region, the Bush administration installed the Africa Command (AFRICOM) in 2007. However, AFRICOM headquarters is located in Stuttgart, Germany, and operates distributed bases, limiting direct intervention in Africa – all African countries except Liberia refused to host AFRICOM (IHT 2008).

Under the Obama administration, as the U.S. shifted the central axis of its rapidly growing diplomatic and military policy toward Asia (rebalancing), it reduced ground forces and military intervention in the Middle East and Africa while avoiding direct involvement in terrorism and civil war threats in the African region, pivoting to providing necessary capabilities through partnerships with countries concerned. Accordingly, the scale of military training and equipment support to African countries was drastically cut, concentrating on humanitarian aid and development assistance. The Trump administration expanded security and economic cooperation to compete with China's growing influence, but focused security cooperation on responding to terrorism and extremism, and conditioned economic cooperation on purchases of American goods and services, failing to win over African countries due to passive stances on promoting democracy, human rights, and development assistance in the region. The Biden administration held the 2022 U.S.-Africa Summit to expand its influence in Africa, where it lags behind China and Russia and promised an Africa visit in 2023 which remains unfulfilled.

Considering the domestic and international circumstances of the U.S. ahead of the 2024 presidential election, the prospect of expanding U.S. influence in Africa through extending its Indo-Pacific strategy and actively re-engaging is not very promising. Domestically, Biden faces low approval ratings, while Trump is likely to become the Republican candidate amidst a pileup of international security issues like the Ukraine war, the Israel-Hamas conflict, the Iran nuclear problem, and North Korean provocations. U.S. concerns have deepened further with the recent clashes with the

Houthi rebels in Yemen.

If Trump returns to power in the 2024 U.S. presidential election, China and Russia's influence in Africa is forecasted to grow stronger. The 2020 Congressional Research Service report "Renewed Great Power Competition: Implications for Defense" shows that Trump emphasized reducing troops in Africa and concentrating security capacity on containing China in India and the Pacific region (2022). Under Trump, security cooperation with Africa focused on responding to terrorism and extremism, while economic cooperation was conditioned on purchases of U.S. goods and services and took passive approaches to promoting democracy, human rights, and development assistance, failing to win over African countries. Trump was also criticized for disparaging remarks about Africa during his inauguration and neglecting Africa as he did not visit during his term.

CONCLUSION

The implications for South Korea's diplomatic and security cooperation with Africa are significant given that the U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy is an expanded version of the Asia-Pacific strategy reflecting geopolitical dynamics. India and Africa face each other across the Indian Ocean, and in the Indo-Pacific strategy connecting the Indian and Pacific Oceans, the U.S. cannot address Africa separately as South Korea is a key country in the strategy.

As the security competition between the U.S., China, and Russia unfolds in Africa, resolving conflicts between regional nations does not seem easy. The vicious cycle of prolonged civil wars and strengthened terrorism continues, increasing instability. Security woes lead regional countries into the quagmire of fierce arms races, and African nations receiving military security assistance from authoritarian states end up exercising their voting rights against international common sense – an ironic scene for Africa with a painful history of imperialist aggression being forced into silence amid the emergence of neo-imperialism.

In 2024, the Yoon Suk-yeol administration of South Korea is preparing to meet with African leaders. The Korea-Africa Forum, held at the ministerial level, will be upgraded to a summit and the Korea-Africa Summit is slated for 2024. Recognizing the growing prominence of the "Global South", it is worth welcoming that Africa is being re-evaluated as a resource treasury and pivotal global country for South Korea's contribution diplomacy. Since the 2000s, South Korea's diplomatic approach to Africa has concentrated on economic aid and development cooperation, with the most notable security cooperation case being the participation of peacekeeping troops in South Sudan as a member of the UN. Now, South Korea should designate its Africa-friendly major countries as new strategic cooperative partners to discover and implement comprehensive measures to enhance security cooperation (Shim and Lee 2012).

From Africa's perspective, South Korea is seen as a non-hegemonic nation with sufficient capabilities to assist in Africa's reconstruction. As economic and security cooperation with China and Russia intensifies, debt repayment pressures on infrastructure investment and concession of key mineral resource development rights

are generating unfavorable African public sentiment, allowing South Korea to become a new security cooperation partner for African countries. Looking at the security cooperation cases of the U.S., China, and Russia, South Korea's approach to Africa security cooperation can entail cooperation through regional multilateral institutions as well as bilateral cooperation with key target nations. Cooperation through the African Union (AU) is mostly done via UN peacekeeping activities. As the international community becomes more divided into democratic and authoritarian blocs, requests for South Korea's contributions are expected to increase. Amid rising demands for more participation in peacekeeping operations in African conflict zones, the Ministry of National Defense should meet international expectations in consideration of accurate demand forecasts and defense capabilities.

In addition to the AU, the region has various minilateral communities like the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Southern Africa Customs Union (SACU), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), East Africa Community (EAC), and South African Development Community (SADC). However, due to complex political and economic dynamics, and linguistic and cultural differences between member states, integration faces difficulties. It is not easy to build consensus, resulting in poor implementation of regimes. Hence, direct security cooperation with these minilateral communities is unlikely to be very effective.

South Korea needs to focus on strengthening Africa's autonomous security capabilities, increasing participation in UN peacekeeping activities, and cooperating with the international counterterrorism system. If South Korea perceives conflict zones as potential markets for K-defense and pursues short-term profits through arms exports, it will be difficult to win over African countries. Considering Africa's diversity and particularities, it is also necessary to designate strongholds by region and establish tailored defense cooperation measures. Concentrating on the security cooperation demands of African nations, in the West region, South Korea can provide support centered on cybersecurity, defense IT education, and dismantling of aging ammunition, focusing on Ghana and Nigeria. In the Central region, South Korea can focus on supporting infrastructure such as defense, public order, and information networks, focusing on DR Congo. In the East centered on Ethiopia, South Korea needs to accelerate weapons export cooperation for "Surion" helicopters and K-9 self-propelled artillery that began in 2023 on the precondition of Ethiopia terminating military cooperation with North Korea. In the South centered on South Africa, active participation in projects is requested to improve overall systems related to defense, public order, and information networks.

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