African Union Intervention Capacity: Implications for Air Power

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This article looks at the contemporary topic of humanitarian, peacekeeping and military intervention in Africa under the auspices of the African Union (AU). Over the past decade the AU has disappointed the international community in its willingness and ability to intervene in times of humanitarian crisis on the Continent despite many opportunities to do so since its inception in 2002. The importance of developing the AU's intervention capabilities, from both an Air power perspective as well as from the wider, strategic viewpoint for the region, are discussed with the author arguing that a more balanced, partnered approach with the UN could have the effect of transforming Africa's approach to managing internal conflicts.

Introduction

> *'We are deluding ourselves if we believe that having something on the ground is better than doing nothing. In the absence of the necessary capabilities, such an approach brings a high level of risk, not only of failure but also of raising people's expectations that cannot be fulfilled. Worse still, it undermines the credibility of peacekeeping and weakens the organization that is responsible.'*[1]

The creation of the African Union (AU) in 2002 was hailed as a pivotal moment for the Continent. One of the key tenets of the AU's predecessor - the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) - was peacekeeping intervention. However, the performance of the OAU in this role was generally considered to have been poor.[2] Hopes that the AU would improve the Continent's ability to manage its own affairs and reduce external influences therefore remain largely unfulfilled. The academic Adam Branch argues convincingly that the consequences of Western human rights interventions have not only 'failed to bring about positive change, but also *prevented* such change from occurring…directly and destructively [enflaming, enabling and prolonging wars], displacement and suffering.'[3] Accordingly, he suggests that Western intervention should be reduced in favour of greater African responsibility. This demand for a return to regional solutions to humanitarian crises is echoed in the popular press regarding the Syrian crisis. Africa has been subjected to the World's most destructive conflicts since 1945 and increasing globalisation means that we are less isolated from their consequences. The recent French intervention in Mali and ongoing US activity in Africa demonstrate the role of Air power in a region where warfare has been almost entirely land focused since the colonial era. In these cases, Air power allowed a limited and cost-effective but nevertheless influential contribution which avoided the long term commitment of significant ground forces. Given the success of such a relatively limited application Air power in Mali, to what extent are AU aspirations to manage regional tensions realistic? Moreover, what are the implications for Air power?

Implicit to Branch's argument is the need for 'Africanizing coercive intervention' via the AU as a means of avoiding 'neo-colonialism' and the use of humanitarianism as justification for Western aggression.'[4] Branch suggests that such interventions should occur under 2 broad circumstances: to halt or prevent genocide, and where 'tentative…solidarity between Africa and the West' is required.[5] This narrative seeks to assess the AU's potential to assume greater responsibility for coercive interventions within Africa, with a particular emphasis upon Air power. To achieve this, I will first evaluate the extant architecture supporting such operations before highlighting the principal obstacles to Branch's aspirations. I will then consider the broader implications for Air power. In concluding, I will briefly suggest potential solutions to AU weaknesses and the opportunities they may provide. I define 'coercive intervention' as action taken by the AU to 'authoritatively allocate [acceptable] values'[6] and behaviour upon actors.

Branch tacitly acknowledges the limitations of his aspirations but asserts that the possibility exists for AU intervention to be made more effective.[7] However, this narrative indicates that

far greater obstacles exist than are acknowledged. Indeed, not only are such challenges significant, it is argued that the AU has failed to meet capability targets set at the 2002 Durban Assembly regarding specific intervention scenarios despite its claims to the contrary.[8] Nevertheless, it is suggested that whilst greater realism is required if the AU is to develop a credible intervention capability, the opportunities arising from such an evolution are significant for both the Continent and Air power and deserving of greater examination. Moreover, the implications for Air power suggest the potential for new roles and capabilities to gain traction.

African Peace and Security Architecture

> *'Lack of institutional capacity within the African Union Commission remains a significant constraint to the development of a sustainable continental peacekeeping capability.'* [9]

As International Defence Engagement (IDE) and related IDE strategy (IDES) increases in emphasis across UK Defence, it is necessary for Air power to be increasingly framed within regional dynamics and mechanisms. The AU's founding documentation envisaged an intervention capability via the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).[10] Routine operational management of the APSA is allocated by the AU's Heads of State and Government to the 15 elected members of the Peace and Security Council (PSC).[11] The constitution of the PSC assumes impartial and 'equitable regional representation and rotation with candidates elected from…[all]…regions of the continent' meeting several times per month.[12] However, the disproportionate representation of nations[13] with dubious democracies or human rights backgrounds has weakened the credibility of the PSC and sometimes resulted in the abrogation of responsibilities, particularly regarding Darfur.[14] Notably, the PSC was forced to adopt a vague definition of 'unconstitutional change' which has arguably diluted the AU's ability to intervene in electoral crises such as those in Zimbabwe. Whilst democratic obscuration is inevitable in such organisations, lack of constitutional rigour initially created a further problem for the PSC regarding Article 4(h) of the AU's Constitutive Act.[15] This specifically covers the AU's right to intervene unilaterally regarding war crimes in possible contravention of the United Nations (UN) Charter's Article 53.[16] Although this has now been addressed, the unease of some member states regarding such ambiguities suggests underlying tensions within AU intervention policy.

The PSC itself is advised by 2 further groups, the 'Panel of the Wise' and the Military Staff Committee but the relationship between the Council and these bodies is indicative of broader APSA fragility. The Panel of the Wise consists of 5 'highly respected African personalities from various segments of society who have made outstanding contributions…[to] the continent.'[17] Tasks include preventative diplomacy and 'advice regarding the promotion of peace, security and stability in Africa' with meetings 'as required' to meet its mandate.[18] However, the Panel meets irregularly and has only 2 professional staff with one administrative assistant supporting its activities. Unsurprisingly, an internal assessment acknowledged that the relationship with the PSC has been 'very limited' despite its important advisory function.[19] The Military Staff

Committee (MSC) meanwhile is established for senior military personnel from PSC member states to provide operational advice to the Council. However, this is similarly ineffective, meeting infrequently and being hampered by limited support from nations who often fail to send Officers or who substitute civilian representation.[20] Moreover, the MSC is dominated by Land forces personnel with expertise from the Air and Maritime domains routinely absent. This risks two dimensional defence thinking with Air power's potential for application across to the Continent's enormous physical size largely overlooked.

Underpinning the PSC are the operational elements of APSA architecture. The AU Commission's Peace Support Operations Division (PSOD) is responsible for the planning, coordination and sustainment of all AU operations. However, with only 40 personnel covering the entire Continent, the manpower available is insufficient for purpose.[21] Such under-manning inevitably hinders AU operational tempo and prevents the APSA maintaining a proactive stance to emerging crises. This problem is exacerbated by similar limitations evident with the AU's Continental Early Warning System (CEWS). The CEWS is not an air or missile defence C2 facility as its name may suggest to Western military personnel. Rather, it is an intelligence facility consisting of a central Situation Room facility in Addis Ababa responsible for the collection and analysis of data from regional personnel and mechanisms.[22] Although good progress has been made on this ambitious concept, the commitment of member states regarding funding and manpower has been limited by concerns surrounding spying on national activity. Indeed, only 10 Situation Room personnel are allocated to processing reports from 13 field officers covering the entire Continent.[23] Again, that intelligence collection which is conducted is largely limited to land and economic viewpoints; airborne ISTAR is almost entirely absent. With effective intelligence fundamental to any military deployment, such limitations have inevitably undermined the PSC's decision making processes. During the 2007 Kenyan elections and 2008 instability in Guinea-Bissau the CEWS proved unable to provide actionable intelligence for PSC briefings.[24] More dramatically, an airborne surveillance capacity has until recently been almost entirely absent from the principal African conflicts such as that in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).[25] Overall, it is feared that CEWS may prove ineffective, despite the expense of the system further dictating external funding.[26] This inevitably results in the AU having to rely on intelligence provided by external actors such as US Africa Command (AFRICOM) with AU perceptions and priorities influenced as a direct consequence.

The most visible aspect of the APSA and central to any intervention is the African Standing Force (ASF). The ASF was established to enable the AU to respond to crises via the rapid deployment of peacekeepers in accordance with Article 4(h) and (i) of the Constituent Act. Encompassing 5 regional brigades, each consisting of approximately 4300 troops and 500 light vehicles, the ASF envisaged 6 military scenarios under the auspices of one of the 8 Regional Economic Communities (REC) as follows:[27]

1. AU/military advice to a political mission. Deployment required within 30 days of an AU mandate.

2. AU/regional observer operations co-deployed with a UN mission within 30 days of an AU mandate.

3. Stand-alone regional AU observer mission. Deployment required within 30 days of an AU mandate.

4. AU/regional peacekeeping force for UN Chapter VI, preventative deployments and peace building operations. Deployment required within 30 days of an AU mandate.

5. AU peacekeeping in 'complex, multi-dimensional…operations' involving low level spoilers. Deployment required within 90 days of an AU mandate.

6. Urgent AU intervention operations (eg genocide prevention) where the international community is not acting promptly. Deployment of military elements required within 14 days.[28]

In March 2005 the AU declared that the ASF would be capable of deployments up to Scenario 4 by July 2006 with full scenario 5 and 6 capabilities established by July 2010.[29] The timelines dictated within the scenarios are ambitious and significantly complicated by the multinational and ad hoc nature implicit in any ASF deployment. This is a key obstacle to any aspiration for the AU to bear a greater burden for intervention operations. The Union incorporates nearly twice as many states as NATO, an established organisation which - despite 50 years of experience - has continued to demonstrate interoperability and political weaknesses in recent operations. Between its inception in 2002 and June 2011, the AU has conducted 9 operations which the Union claims to prove its intervention capacity across the full spectrum of scenarios; however, the UN describes at least one as a 'hybrid [UN/AU] mission.'[30] Moreover, examination of these operations highlights significant capability failings and it is suggested that none have been conducted in a truly autonomous manner.

The common factor which runs throughout APSA shortfalls is inevitably financial and budgetary restrictions have repeatedly been cited as having 'undermined multinational efforts of the [Continent] and engendered sub-regional polarization.'[31] Inevitably, few states can afford many Air power capabilities and most lack the training to seize the asymmetric opportunities available. Unlike bodies such as the UN and NATO, the AU lacks a reliable method of reimbursing the financial penalties of member states' contributions to operations despite the Union's inheritance of the OAU established Peace Fund.[32] Even were assets to be deployed therefore, this is yet another disincentive to member states committing scarce financial and military resources to AU interventions; between 2006 and 2011, just 5 AU states have provided 75% of the budget.[33] The fact that 2 of these nations (Egypt and Libya) are experiencing significant turmoil suggests that the financial outlook for AU aspirations remains uncertain. As a result, extant AU operations rely heavily upon external contributions; AMISOM received some $840M from the UN up to 2012.[34] If Branch's concept of Africanized

intervention capacity is to be realised, such funding shortfalls must be overcome, not least to finance the capability demands highlighted elsewhere in this paper. However, implicit in such challenges are opportunities for Air power. As it has done for a century, Air power can provide the asymmetric advantage to financially and resource limited ground forces.

Summary

The APSA exhibits numerous institutional, financial and resource weaknesses which significantly undermine its claimed ability to conduct truly autonomous interventions. In particular, the PSC and its supporting advisory bodies lack dynamism, coherence and an appreciation of the potential of Air power. Such strategic leadership problems are exacerbated at the operational level by a paucity of manpower within the PSOD and CEWS. These are fundamental to effective decision making and such failings ensure that the PSC lacks situational awareness regarding evolving crises. As a result, influence often has to be accepted from external actors such as AFRICOM. However, it is in the ASF that arguably the most significant failings of AU intervention capacity - and Branch's aspirations - are exposed.

Obstacles to Autonomous ASF Intervention

> *'…the full deployment of African Union missions has been often limited by a lack of equipment, inadequate transport capacities, and other operational weaknesses.'*[35]

The importance of a coordinated approach in developing a coherent AU security apparatus was elucidated clearly during the inaugural AU summit in 2002.[36] Given the disparate nature of AU nations, doctrine and commonality is essential to the credibility of any military capability. Following subsequent agreement of the 2005 roadmap for ASF intervention capability, responsibility for areas of development was therefore allocated to specific AU regions to address the following:

1. Doctrine.
2. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).
3. Command, Control, Communications and Information Systems (C3IS).
4. Logistics.
5. Training and evaluation.

Further effort was allocated to development of those aspects not explicit in the ASF roadmap such as finance, medical and civilian support.[37] Initially, promising work was made regarding ASF doctrine and training in particular. However, a more detailed examination of the specific areas listed above in the light of AU operational experience suggests institutional weaknesses. Indeed, it is suggested that the ASF can in no way be said to have a coherent intervention capability for the full spectrum of scenarios as claimed by the PSC.

Doctrine and Standard Operating Procedures

Common, unambiguous doctrine and related SOPs are an underlying principle for any military capability, a lesson particularly relevant to Air power operations within coalitions. Moreover, such doctrine must be coherent with and driven by associated civilian led concepts to avoid the risk of military adventurism. However, key doctrinal weaknesses are evident in AU capabilities at a basic level. Most fundamentally, the APSA has not agreed on a common language to be employed. Whilst Africa has numerous linguistic communities, such a decision is central to interoperability. Although an AU wide common language is arguably unrealistic, such a decision at regional levels must be seen as essential. Aside from doctrinal and operational documentation, lack of a common language has major implications where differing languages may provide a significant barrier to communications and effective coordination. Similarly, even though English remains the official language of aviation around the World, it is common to hear other dialects spoken in African air traffic radios. Related to this is the failure to agree a unified C2 architecture. As a result, each nation is largely persisting with its own C2 procedures and familiarity regarding alternative models is tenuous or absent.[38] Such doctrinal weaknesses are particularly damaging as they act as the foundation upon which planning and operational capabilities are constructed and they have been heavily criticised by the UN.[39] Inevitably, where shortcomings are offset, it is by external contributors such as AFRICOM.

That ASF doctrine which does exist is also heavily biased towards land operations; little consideration is made of Air power beyond logistics and none is evident regarding maritime tasks. The AU intervention in the Comoros in 2008 and current operations in Somalia highlight the limitations of such an approach. In the former case, AU assets were forced to rely on French amphibious and airborne assets for insertion and sustainment during which the limited understanding of African peacekeepers became evident.[40] In Somalia, linkages between Al Shabab terrorists and piracy in the Indian Ocean have inevitably seen AMISOM mission creep as it sought to deny this lucrative source of funding to the militias. As a naval dimension has been introduced to AMISOM, lack of AU maritime doctrine and capability has been similarly exposed. AU chartered supply ships have been threatened and the ASF has proved unable to interdict Al Shabab controlled pirate vessels and ports.[41] However, with African nations lacking a credible maritime surveillance capability, policing of sea lanes and the littoral remains elusive. Inevitably, Somali militias are exploiting such weaknesses to circumvent AMISOM land operations. With the AU forced to request Western support, this is a typical example of the second category of intervention envisaged by Branch. Similar doctrinal weaknesses are evident regarding post conflict security sector reform such as policing;[42] nor is the potential contribution of women to conflict management evident in AU thinking.[43] Addressing such asymmetry requires the PSC to adopt a more Joint approach to doctrine which looks beyond the purely military land environment if AU influence – both against enemy forces and within a coalition – is to be maintained.

C3IS

This lack of overarching doctrine and SOPs and the eclectic mix of nations involved in AU operations means that there is little commonality in C3IS, an area of particular relevance to

Air power. Although some use can be made of commercial networks, this may prove expensive and introduces security concerns. Moreover, most commercial systems are unsuited to the austere environments common to deployed operations where air-conditioning may not be available or reliable. The significance of such factors is increasingly evident as global media expands and the numbers of actors with whom the AU interacts increases. Lacking appropriate AU direction, nations continue their own national procurement processes. This inevitably results in incompatible architecture which significantly hinders coordination and the exploitation of information. Although pre-dating the AU, Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) operations in Liberia were significantly hindered by lack of access to appropriate information architecture. As a result, geographical understanding was restricted to photocopied maps provided by the US, or a single 'outdated general political map' at a battalion headquarters. This resulted in ECOMOG forces deploying into the field with deficient or no maps whatsoever and directly contributed to losses of men and materiel.[44] The situation today is little changed with no agreed configuration or accords regarding common intelligence architecture.[45] Appropriately applied aerial survey is therefore urgently required for many areas where AU assets are operating on the ground. Arguably, such a product could be applied across a limited – but nevertheless sufficient – area rapidly and effectively by a variety of platforms.

Even where nations are willing to adopt common practices, the widely differing levels of equipment standards and procurement throughout Africa present further obstacles.[46] A prime example is where contributing nations equipped with former Soviet air traffic control and C2 systems deploy alongside those with Western equipment. In this case, the former utilise metric instrumentation whilst the latter are equipped with imperial displays. This creates obvious dangers in the most basic of flight coordination (eg altitude in metres as opposed to the internationally recognised imperial norms).

The implications for aerospace in this area would be similar to the challenges experienced by NATO forces in the First Gulf War and Balkans. Here, rapid installation of mission essential equipment had to be accomplished to assure interoperability. In 1991, the early lack of Mode 4 IFF from non-US aircraft initially hindered the development of effective RoE and coalition C2. Throughout the Balkan conflicts, lack of common, secure communications was a similar challenge which was ruthlessly exploited by hostile forces. In Africa, the challenges are likely to be more mundane due to the nature of the operations envisaged. However, legacy Soviet ATC systems and avionics - as well as a variety of incompatible communications - illustrate the fundamental challenges remaining.

The lack of indigenous C3IS interoperability within APSA illustrates the inability of the AU to conduct autonomous operations. Moreover, the critical ability to exchange data between RECs and with other actors such as AFRICOM and NGOs is a significant problem. In such operations, 'knowledge is power' and the need to rely on information flow from external sources can inevitably prove damaging.

Logistics

Logistics underpin any military ability to deploy and sustain operations and is arguably the factor which most obviously undermines AU claims that the ASF can meet all envisaged scenarios. Moreover, its significance is magnified by AU emphasis upon rapid interventions to prevent genocide. In both of Branch's envisaged intervention scenarios, logistics are the enabler for entry and the means by which AU forces can be sustained. Lack of logistics capacity dictates that any Africanized intervention potential will remain subject to external influence, veto or premature termination.

The immense distances and poor communications characteristic of Africa dictate that in any deployment, the movement of even small numbers of personnel and military vehicles requires a strategic heavy lift capability.[47] The preferred option is maritime transport which offers unparalleled capacity to lift an entire brigade in a single voyage. Whilst many commercial vessels are available for charter, these are costly, often unresponsive, and predominantly designed for berthing in well-established port facilities. As in the case of Somali anchorages denied by Al Shebab, such facilities may not always be available with the result that specialised amphibious vessels may be required to conduct landings in unprepared locations. Yet, with the exception of Egypt and Nigeria whose amphibious assets lack the 'blue water' capabilities required for lengthy transits, such capabilities are absent from the inventories of AU member states. The AU is similarly limited in terms of Air Transport. Whilst several nations possess tactical transport types[48] capable of lifting personnel and small vehicles, none possess the wide-body, heavy lift capability required for armoured vehicles and plant.[49] As a result, the AU is forced to hire commercial or UN chartered aircraft, or again rely on external military support. The former are extremely expensive and often unavailable in the timelines dictated by rapid intervention whilst the latter are inevitably subject to political influence and alternative priorities.

Once established in a theatre, further logistic challenges are evident in AU aspirations. Whilst tactical air transport will be suitable for some tasks, helicopter support remains at a premium for deployments away from airfields.[50] Moreover, there is little evidence that the AU possesses the deployable infrastructure such as fuel 'pillow tanks', ground handling equipment, accommodation, catering, environmental health and medical facilities for sustainable operations. A graphic illustration of the dangers of these capability gaps was seen in Somalia. For a 12 month period from April 2009, some 241 AMISOM military personnel were hospitalized suffering from beriberi. This led to 4 fatalities and 52 aeromedical evacuations including 31 who suffered heart failures. This lamentable situation was only diagnosed after AMISOM sought World Health Organization assistance due to a lack of deployed medical expertise. Moreover, the cause of the outbreak was the poor diet and conditions which soldiers were enduring as a result of inadequacies in deployed AU infrastructure and logistics.[51] Without such logistic and sustainment capacity, the AU may be prevented from operating in austere locations. Moreover, inadequate infrastructure forces reliance on local or external support, significantly reduces combat effectiveness and raises serious questions regarding the

duty of care exhibited by AU leadership. Logistics and deployed infrastructure is therefore one key area of Air power expertise which is particularly relevant to supporting AU activity.

Training and Evaluation

Some progress has been made in training the ASF as an entity with several command and field exercises to brigade level.[52] Notably, policy was established which broadly defined training doctrine whilst some regions designated centres of excellence to enable evaluation and certification of brigade capabilities.[53] However, such activity varies significantly and there is little standardisation between regional brigades. Doctrinal and staffing limitations also mean that significant knowledge shortfalls remain, notably in terms of financial, logistics and administrative personnel[54] and in the quality of specialist skills such as medical, intelligence and engineering.[55] Nor can such training regimes remain fixed. Rather, they should be dynamic and closely linked to the evolution of AU doctrine and procurement cycles to ensure that emerging threats are anticipated and met. An example is the recent introduction of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) to Somalia by Al Shebab.[56] IEDs have long been the preferred tactic for insurgents in Iraq and Afghanistan yet few AMISOM personnel have completed mine awareness courses. Moreover, even fewer AU nations have demonstrated an awareness of how Air power can contribute to challenging such asymmetric threats. Similar training deficits are implied by the paucity of night vision goggles, helicopters and communications systems available to the ASF.[57] At present, there is little evidence that ASF operational experience is either shared or informs training and doctrine via an appropriate learning cycle.

Implications for Air Power

What then are the implications for Air power? Although Africa has traditionally been low down on the UK IDE priority list, this is likely to gradually change. Nations such as Nigeria are expected to grow exponentially in their economic capacity and Africa remains one of the fastest growing regions for IT, particularly mobile phones. Over the next decade, its relevance to the UK's prosperity agenda – of which the MOD and services are inextricably linked – will expand. Simultaneously, Africa has seen a surge of Islamic extremism in recent years which has become the focus for discrete operations by a variety of nations. With focus sharply increased as a result of the Arab Spring in North Africa as well as operations in Mali and CP off the Horn of Africa, it is likely that Air power may see a resurgence in the Continent. As with RAF Sentinel and C-17 support of French operations in Mali, this offers an ability to intervene discretely while gaining significant influence of regional and coalition activity. Moreover, when deployed to appropriate locations, the 'tethered goat' risks so often associated with Land forces are avoided. Examination of the AU's 5 pillars of development provide an appropriate method of considering how Air power can better influence the region:

a. Doctrine. The majority of African militaries are dominated by Land forces and there is little consideration of the asymmetric advantages offered by the third dimension. The mentoring of nascent air forces has become a standard role for Western air forces

in Afghanistan and Iraq and the task remains an underlying tenet of UK IDE. Arguably there remains a doctrinal void within the AU's ability to consider and integrate Air power into its intervention scenarios. Therefore, increased emphasis upon cognitive influence and development will likely prove fundamental to increase Air power's relevance to African stability.

b. **SOPs**. The potential value of established Western coalition[58] building mechanisms to the evolution of SOPs is evident in AU capacity development and closely aligned to doctrinal work. Although the challenges of pan-AU SOPs are considerable and most likely unrealistic, those for individual elements of the ASF are attainable. Indeed, there is some success already regarding Land Force SOP development within Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). Again, mentoring and exposure to appropriate capacity building exercises are the most effective way to progress and integrate regional Air power.

c. **Command, Control, Communications and Information Systems (C3IS)**. This area offers significant obstacles due to the limited infrastructure through the majority of the African continent. However, the rapid growth of African telecommunications offers an equal opportunity to integrate basic C3IS architecture for regional operations. This would be relevant to all environments and could serve as a key Joint enabler just as with western nations. Once again, a layered approach concentrating upon regional development with a smaller number of systems retaining compatibility with pan-AU activity and situational awareness. Ultimate connectivity to the Addis Ababa CEWS Situation Room would be a clear priority. However, additional data would require an equal expansion of the J2, J3 and J6 personnel required to act upon increased information flow. From a purely Air power perspective, standardisation of C2 facilities must be seen as a priority for the AU to overcome legacy restrictions of former Soviet equipment standards. As the most technologically minded of services, Air Forces are well placed to take a leading role in any such evolution.

d. **Logistics**. Arguably the most fundamental to AU intervention aspirations, Air power is particularly relevant to such capacity development. IDE involving increasing exposure to heavy lift and rotary support capabilities would undoubtedly be eagerly received by African states. Disaster response by RAF C-17s, C-130s and rotary assets, exemplified by Op BARWOOD,[59] illustrate the disproportionate effect available from even limited deployments. Appropriately targeted, such capability may also feed well into the prosperity agenda as key African nations develop economically. South Africa's cancellation of an A400M order has already been discussed. However, such requirements remain extant and the large fleets of increasingly obsolete C-130s and An-12s across the region are indicative of the defence sales prospects for this important European programme. However, the deployment of such assets must be balanced by the development of related air movements capability,

including that for aeromed. Whilst the latter is highly specialised, an increased AU air movements capability is arguably more attainable for the region. Similarly, the expeditionary knowledge which the RAF enjoys after a decade of unparalleled operational exposure is highly relevant to ensuring safe and effective operating environments for AU personnel deployed on operations. Irrespective of such factors, the ability to rapidly deploy the air and surface logistics required for rapid intervention is arguably the most pressing need for AU intervention capacity.

e. Training and evaluation. Implicit in any development of AU capacity is the need for robust training and evaluation. This is an area of long standing if little known importance to UK IDE which benefits significantly from the RAF 'brand.' The CFS remain a particularly sought after method for smaller overseas air forces to measure their flying standards and methods of supervision. Likewise, demand for 22 Gp RAF International Defence Training (IDT) significantly exceeds our capacity to deliver. The increasing move to contractor provisioned solutions such as the Military Flying Training System further remove a degree of agility in supporting IDES as contracts – and capacity – are often set many years in advance. However, it is clear that when such training is provided, it can have long lasting and sometimes strategic benefit which may last for generations. An examination of the discrete influence and access to middle eastern nations secured by the leaders of those nations having completed officer or flying training with the RAF exemplifies such second order benefits. Therefore, IDES should strive to emphasise Air power training capacity and consider it within commercial support contracts.

At a broader level, it is suggested that some re-alignment of Western Air power priorities may also be required when applied in Africa and similar regions. Firstly, procurement may need to increasingly take into account the likely scenarios under IDE which will gain traction and influence. The implication for the UK of this is that Air power capabilities may not be wholly driven by UK requirements. Rather, equipment and procedures may be orientated by the implied demands specified by IDE 'target nations.' In the majority of cases, this will be entirely coherent with extant priorities, not least the ability to deploy to austere or unsupported locations. More controversial however would be the implications for how funding is secured and how subsequent activity is prioritised. Whilst MOD budgetary primacy is assumed, retired senior politicians and officers have previously questioned whether the cost of any Trident replacement should be wholly met from the defence budget. Similar, arguments could be made for defence activity which is increasingly influenced by IDES and the prosperity agenda. Where an RAF ISR asset for instance is able to make a major contribution to DfID projects,[60] should the ring-fenced funding of this department not contribute? The deployment of a Canberra PR9 to the DRC (then Zaire) in 1996[61] provides a salutary lesson in the disproportionate effect available from Air power. Against non-governmental organisation reports of an emerging humanitarian crisis, plans were being drawn up for a major deployment of land personnel. However, within days, PR9 imagery had indicated that reports were hugely

exaggerated and a costly and potentially dangerous intervention avoided. However, implicit in this is how tasking priorities would be affected. Already, Single Service regional IDES priorities sometimes differ subtly from those of the 'fourth floor' MOD community[62] when observed through the 'air lens.' As IDES increases in importance within Defence, so too will the requirement for increasing coherence across MOD and government departments.

Summary

It is clear therefore that the reality of the AU's ability to conduct autonomous operations is highly questionable. Significant weaknesses are evident in all of the ASF's key areas of development. Despite sound early progress, doctrine remains incoherent across the AU's RECs with a lack of even fundamental frameworks such as common language. Moreover, the limited doctrine which is available is insufficient to meet current needs due to being focused almost exclusively on the military land domain. SOPs and C3IS are equally weak with diverse national equipment and data standards largely prohibiting effective and safe interoperability without recourse to external support or insecure commercial means. However, it is logistics and sustainability where the AU's claims regarding autonomy are most flawed. Lacking any credible sea or airborne heavy lift capacity, or the infrastructure to operate from austere locations, the ASF remains entirely reliant upon support from local nations or external actors such as AFRICOM. Where local support is sought, the danger of AU contracts actually financing 'parochial rebels'[63] is a real possibility, thereby perpetuating conflicts in an identical manner as Western nations are accused of having done by Branch. In terms of Air power, it could be argued that a generation of expeditionary operations has secured an unsurpassed level of operational knowledge within the RAF. Lessons and institutional knowledge therefore ensure the Service is ideally placed to drive AU capacity forward should UK IDE be so prioritised. Indeed, the agility and asymmetric benefits which have proved so beneficial to Land Operations in the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan could potentially revolutionise the largely land centric AU intervention capacity. As the UK looks beyond Afghanistan and 2015, such benefits promise to facilitate a genuinely versatile overseas engagement capacity within Sub-Saharan Africa. Moreover, if enabled by Air power, regional sensitivities regarding the role of militaries[64] could be avoided as could the expense of large standing commitments. In this sense, the enormous physical size – and diverse security challenges – presented by Africa could be more effectively addressed.

Conclusion

> *'The complexity of modern peacekeeping means that no single organization is capable of tackling the challenge on its own.'*[65]

Adam Branch is correct to highlight the dangers of external interventions in Africa. Diverting focus from areas of genuine need, they sometimes aggravate or perpetuate underlying problems. Africa can undoubtedly do more to assist its own cause and nowhere is this more evident than in developing resolute and credible coercive intervention capabilities, particularly for humanitarian reasons. If this is to be successful, the AU offers the most appropriate organ

for success. However, Branch's hypothesis of Africanization of such activity is deeply flawed. Despite the AU possessing an evolutionary framework, APSA architecture and capabilities remain wholly unfit for the tasks proposed by Branch. With immature doctrine and enormous capability gaps the ASF will remain incapable of mounting autonomous intervention operations for the foreseeable future. Nowhere is this more evident than in the almost complete lack of logistic and sustainment capacity; a basic requirement for an organisation responsible for so large and geographically diverse an area. That AMISOM soldiers have succumbed to disease in a manner more reminiscent of the Crimea than a 21st Century peacekeeping mission due to simple lack of medical and other welfare considerations speaks volumes. Even were a significant increase in finances to be made available, it would likely be at least a decade before this mandate gap can be even partially remedied. Nevertheless, such an evolution is supported by the UN 'Prodi Paper' quoted throughout this narrative and offers significant potential for the Continent as a whole. Working alongside the UN just as the European Union and NATO routinely does, the AU could use funding for ASF expansion as a catalyst for social, technological and political benefits.

A sympathetic expansion of the APSA could significantly increase intra-Continental economies of scale, trust, operational legitimacy and understanding via mutual cooperation and dialogue. The supporting C3IS for such activity could facilitate dual use improvements in communications access across the Continent for a variety of security, education and health causes. Meanwhile, joint procurement of a balanced logistics capability with sustaining and deployable accommodation, health, power generation and other essential infrastructure would be equally beneficial to civilian uses and disaster relief efforts. Perhaps most importantly from an African perspective, such procurement would potentially generate and maintain a large number of high technology jobs across the continent via offset agreements. Moreover, it would allow the AU to become a contributor to global disaster relief and humanitarian operations in its own right, thereby increasing the Union's influence and credibility.

From an Air power perspective, the opportunities are manifest and arguably present significant benefits for UK foreign policy activity, post 2015 defence posture, and the prosperity agenda. After generations of Land centric activity, many security challenges have become moribund. Conflicts associated with vast regions such as that presented by the DRC continue to be addressed by AU and UN land forces largely using methods little changed for decades. Should the agility and asymmetric advantages of Air power be applied in support of the AU and UN, many of these issues could undoubtedly be more effectively challenged. Moreover, numerical and funding efficiencies could be secured for those land forces responsible for such enormous and often inaccessible areas.

If backed by the funding profiles and private sector options suggested in recent UN discourses,[66] such possibilities are intriguing and worthy of further investigation as part of a potential long term UK IDES policy. In summary therefore, it is suggested that Branch's vision of almost autonomous AU intervention capabilities is unrealistic. However, a more

balanced partnered approach with the UN could potentially transform not only Africa's ability to manage internal problems, but also the Continent's own place on the world stage. The relevance of Air power in benefiting such aspirations is significant for the continent, UK IDES and the prosperity agenda.

Notes

[1] Prodi, R, *Report of the African Union-United Nations panel on modalities for support to African Union peacekeeping operations*, United Nations, 2008, p.8.
[2] Biswaro, JM, *Perspectives on Africa's Integration and Cooperation from OAU to AU*, Tanzania Publishing House Limited, 2005, p56.
[3] Branch, A, *Displacing Human Rights: War and Intervention in Northern Uganda*, Oxford University Press, 2011, p.4.
[4] Ibid, p.248-249.
[5] Ibid, p.248. The second case may be where influence is required beyond traditional AU areas of responsibility. An example would be African and Western cooperation in counter-piracy operations in the Horn of Africa and Indian Ocean.
[6] Evans, G and Newnham J, *Dictionary of International relations*, Penguin 1998, p.281.
[7] Branch, A, *Displacing Human Rights: War and Intervention in Northern Uganda*, Oxford University Press, 2011, p.249.
[8] Makinda, SM and Okumu, FW, *The African Union: Challenges of Globalization, Security and Governance*, Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2008, p.160-185.
[9] Prodi, R, *Report of the African Union-United Nations panel on modalities for support to African Union peacekeeping operations*, United Nations, 2008, p.22.
[10] Biswaro, JM, *Perspectives on Africa's Integration and Cooperation from OAU to AU*, Tanzania Publishing House Limited, 2005, p.232.
[11] Williams, PD, *The African Union's Conflict Management Capabilities, Council on Foreign Relations, October 2011*. Accessed on 24 February 2012 via: **http://www.cfr.org/region/african-union/ri208**, p.4.
[12] Ibid, p.7.
[13] Id.
[14] Autesserre, S, *The Trouble with the Congo: Local Violence and the Failure of International Peacebuilding*, Cambridge University Press, 2010, p.256.
[15] Akonor, K, *Assessing the African Union's Right of Humanitarian Intervention, Criminal Justice Ethics*, Vol. 29, No. 2, August 2010, 157-173 Accessed on 2 March 2012 via: **http://heinonline.org**., p.157-158.
[16] Williams, PD, *The African Union's Conflict Management Capabilities, Council on Foreign Relations*, October 2011. Accessed on 24 February 2012 via: **http://www.cfr.org/region/african-union/ri208**, p.4.
[17] Makinda, SM and Okumu, FW, The African Union: Challenges of Globalization, Security and Governance, Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2008, p.172.
[18] Ibid, p.173.
[19] Williams, PD, *The African Union's Conflict Management Capabilities, Council on Foreign Relations*,

October 2011. Accessed on 24 February 2012 via: http://www.cfr.org/region/african-union/ri208, p.12.
[20] Ibid, p.13.
[21] Ibid, p.9. In contrast, the broadly equivalent UK Permanent Joint Headquarters has well over 120 personnel for the coordination of current UK deployed operations alone.
[22] Makinda, SM and Okumu, FW, *The African Union: Challenges of Globalization, Security and Governance*, Routledge Taylor and Francis Group, 2008, p.173-174.
[23] Williams, PD, *The African Union's Conflict Management Capabilities, Council on Foreign Relations*, October 2011. Accessed on 24 February 2012 via: http://www.cfr.org/region/african-union/ri208, p.9. In comparison, AFRICOM allocates several hundred personnel to such tasks.
[24] Ibid, p.9-10.
[25] However, the UN has recently gained funding to establish a limited RPAS surveillance capability based on a Line of Sight system.
[26] Tiruneh, BT, *Establishing an Early Warning System in the African Peace and Security Architecture: Challenges and Prospects*. Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, 2010. Accessed on 23 February 2012 via: http://www.kaiptc.org/Publications/Occasional-Papers/Documents/Occasional-Paper-29-Birikit.aspx, p.19.
[27] Williams, PD, *The African Union's Conflict Management Capabilities, Council on Foreign Relations*, October 2011. Accessed on 24 February 2012 via: http://www.cfr.org/region/african-union/ri208, p.10. RECs are Arab Maghreb Union (UMA), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), East African Community (EAC), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC).
[28] Cillers, J, *The African Standby Force: An update on progress*, ISS Paper 160, March 2008. Accessed on 27 February 2012 via: http://africacenter.org/2009/07/the-african-standby-force-an-update-on-progressthe-african-standby-force-an-update-on-progress/, p.2-3.
[29] Ibid, p.4.
[30] Prodi, R, *Report of the African Union-United Nations panel on modalities for support to African Union peacekeeping operations*, United Nations, 2008, p.10.
[31] Kent, V and Malan, M, *THE AFRICAN STANDBY FORCE*, African Security Review, 2003, 12:3, 71-81 Accessed on 27 February 2012 via: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10246029.2003.9627237,p.74.
[32] Williams, PD, *The African Union's Conflict Management Capabilities*, Council on Foreign Relations, October 2011. Accessed on 24 February 2012 via: http://www.cfr.org/region/african-union/ri208, p.12.
[33] Id.
[34] Ibid, p.16.
[35] Prodi, R, *Report of the African Union-United Nations panel on modalities for support to African Union peacekeeping operations*, United Nations, 2008, p.2-3.
[36] Alusala, N. *African Standby Force*, African Security Review, 2004, 13:2, 113-121Accessed on 27 February 2012 Via: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10246029.2004.9627291, p113.
[37] Cillers, J, *The African Standby Force: An update on progress*, ISS Paper 160, March 2008.

Accessed on 27 February 2012 via: http://africacenter.org/2009/07/the-african-standby-force-an-update-on-progressthe-african-standby-force-an-update-on-progress/, p.161.
[38] Alusala, N. *African Standby Force*, African Security Review, 2004, 13:2, 113-121Accessed on 27 February 2012 Via: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10246029.2004.9627291, p.120.
[39] Prodi, R, *Report of the African Union-United Nations panel on modalities for support to African Union peacekeeping operations*, United Nations, 2008, p.12.
[40] Svensson, E, *The African Union's Operations in the Comoros: MAES and Operation Democracy*, Accessed on 14 March 2012 via http://www.foi.se/upload/projects/Africa/foir2659.pdf, p.21.
[41] Binnie, J, *Details of AMISOM Expansion Revealed*, Janes Defence Weekly, 22 February 2012, p.17.
[42] Prodi, R, *Report of the African Union-United Nations panel on modalities for support to African Union peacekeeping operations*, United Nations, 2008, p.10.
[43] Ibid, p.16.
[44] Nass, Major, IA, *A Study in Internal Conflicts: The Liberian Crisis and West African Peace Initiative*, Fourth Dimension Publishers, 2000, p334-337.
[45] Mathiasen, Lieutenant Colonel, F, *The African Union and Conflict Management*, US Army War College, 2006, p.7.
[46] Hoyle, C, *World Air Forces Special Report*, 2011/2012, Flight International, 2011. Accessed on 2 March 2012 via: http://www.flightglobal.com/airspace/media/reports_pdf/world-air-forces-2011-2012-90190.aspx, p.9-30.
[47] The definition of heavy lift differs between nations. For the purpose of this narrative, it is considered to be items which are indivisible and of weights exceeding 1 ton, or of dimensions greater than 100 meters. By way of illustration, a lightly armoured Snatch Land Rover weights approximately 8900 pounds while a typical mine-resistant 4x4 vehicle such as the RG-32 weighs over 4 tons.
[48] Eg the C-130 Hercules or AN-12.
[49] South Africa cancelled an order for 8 Airbus A400Ms in 2009 which could otherwise have provided such a capability to the AU.
[50] Williams, PD, *The African Union's Conflict Management Capabilities, Council on Foreign Relations*, October 2011. Accessed on 24 February 2012 via: http://www.cfr.org/region/african-union/ri208, p.10. RECs are Arab Maghreb Union (UMA), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), East African Community (EAC), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), p.22.
[51] http://www.plosone.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pone.0028345.
[52] Williams, PD, *The African Union's Conflict Management Capabilities, Council on Foreign Relations*, October 2011. Accessed on 24 February 2012 via: http://www.cfr.org/region/african-union/ri208, p.10. RECs are Arab Maghreb Union (UMA), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), East African Community (EAC), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the

Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), p.6.
[53] Cillers, J, *The African Standby Force: An update on progress*, ISS Paper 160, March 2008. Accessed on 27 February 2012 via: http://africacenter.org/2009/07/the-african-standby-force-an-update-on-progressthe-african-standby-force-an-update-on-progress/, p.159-160.
[54] Prodi, R, *Report of the African Union-United Nations panel on modalities for support to African Union peacekeeping operations*, United Nations, 2008, p.22.
[55] Williams, PD, *The African Union's Conflict Management Capabilities, Council on Foreign Relations*, October 2011. Accessed on 24 February 2012 via: http://www.cfr.org/region/african-union/ri208, p.10. RECs are Arab Maghreb Union (UMA), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), East African Community (EAC), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), p.22.
[56] Gelfand, L, *Kenyan Army Hit by New IED Attack*, Janes Defence Weekly, 30 November 2011, p.17.
[57] Williams, PD, *The African Union's Conflict Management Capabilities, Council on Foreign Relations*, October 2011. Accessed on 24 February 2012 via: http://www.cfr.org/region/african-union/ri208, p.10. RECs are Arab Maghreb Union (UMA), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), East African Community (EAC), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), p.22..
[58] Such as NATO and Partnership for Peace.
[59] The deployment of RAF Pumas and other assets in support of humanitarian relief operations following floods in Mozambique in 2000.
[60] Such as an assessment of hydrology or transportation requirements.
[61] Op PURPOSEFUL.
[62] NATO and European Policy (NEP) and International Policy and Planning (IPP) departments.
[63] Reno, W, *Warfare in Independent Africa*, Cambridge University Press, 2011, p.206.
[64] Due to generations of sometimes questionable political intervention by African militaries.
[65] Prodi, R, *Report of the African Union-United Nations panel on modalities for support to African Union peacekeeping operations*, United Nations, 2008, p.7.
[66] Prodi, R, *Report of the African Union-United Nations panel on modalities for support to African Union peacekeeping operations*, United Nations, 2008, p.23-25.