African Union (AU)
Background Guide

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African Union Background Guide

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The African Union was established in July 2002 by the Organization of African Unity (OAU).[1] The OAU was created in 1963, with the vision of a united, independent, and self-sufficient African nation. The founding ideal of the African Union was Pan-Africanism, promoting values of justice, equality, and more with the goal of reaching African solidarity, prosperity, and peace. Following the occurrence of long periods of colonialism as well as apartheid, the OAU focused its vision on eradicating colonialism, furthering development and unity, defending sovereignty, and promoting international cooperation. Over the next few years, the OAU proved to be successful in its goal, working as one, united body.[2]

In September 1999, the OAU decided to create a new continental organization to further improve on its work. This led to the establishment of the African Union (AU). This decision by OAU was a result of consensus by African leaders that Africa had to refocus its attention from eradicating the effects of colonization and South African apartheid, to focusing on economic development and growth. As a result, the AU guides itself on the vision of "An Integrated, Prosperous, and Peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena."[3] The AU focuses on improving all aspects of African life, from increasing peace and security to promoting political participation to promoting sustainable economic, social, and cultural development.[4]

The AU is made up of seven principal decision-making bodies. These seven bodies include the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), the Executive Council, the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC), the Specialized Technical Committees (STCs), the Peace and Security Council, and The African Union Commission. The AU also consists of bodies to oversee judicial matters such as the African Court on

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[1] African Union Staff, "About the African Union," African Union, https://au.int/en/overview#:~:text=The%20African%20Union%20(AU)%20was,to%20build%20on%20its%20work

[2] African Union Staff, "About the African."

[3] African Union Staff, "About the African."

[4] African Union Staff, "About the African."

Human and Peoples' Rights (AfCHPR) and the African Union Commission on International Law (AUCIL). The AU is also working to establish oversights branches that focus on the financial aspect of the AU such as the African Central Bank and the African Monetary Fund.[5]

This AU committee will function under the Peace and Security Council (PSC). The PSC is the primary decision-making branch of the AU on matters related to the management of conflicts and crises in Africa.[6] The Peace and Security Council works closely with the AU and its member states on issues related to political development, peace and security-building, as well as conflict prevention and resolution.[7] The PSC strives to facilitate effective and efficient responses to conflict and crises in Africa.[8] As a result, the AU Peace and Security Council works in close collaboration with the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), observing and coordinating with the decisions made under the UNSC.[9] The AU Peace and Security Council is also expected to work with 3 non-permanent African member states of UNSC (A3) and is also expected to attend and document high-level political forums.[10]

I.   Implementing the African Commodities Strategy

Statement of the Issue:

In order to fulfill the ideals of the AU that were mentioned above, the Union created Agenda 2063, a framework that strives to promote Africa's long term socio-economic and integrative transformation.[11] The framework aims to transform Africa within 50 years, from 2013 to 2063, exponentially improving socio-economic development to make Africa a

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[5] African Union Staff, "About the African."
[6] African Union Staff, "The Peace & Security Council," African Union, https://au.int/en/psc
[7] African Union Staff, "The Peace and Security."
[8] African Union Staff, "The Peace and Security."
[9] African Union Staff, "About Us," African Union, https://www.africanunion-un.org/aboutus
[10] African Union Staff, "About Us."
[11] African Union Staff, "Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want," African Union
https://au.int/en/agenda2063/overview

global powerhouse.[12] By leveraging Africa's commodities, such as the abundance of available natural resources, the union strives to promote Africa's sustainable socio-economic development.[13]

Agenda 2063 is outlined through five 10-year development plans. The second of the five plans was adopted at the 2024 AU summit. This phase of development focuses on seven areas of socio-economic improvements. These seven areas include providing a high standard of living for all citizens, producing well-educated citizens with science and technology skills, creating healthy and well-nourished citizens, transforming economies, generating modern agriculture to increase productivity in production, increasing gender equality in various social and political areas, and reducing all forms of violence against women.[14]

Agenda 2063 proposes an African Commodities Strategy. This strategy is a flagship project of Agenda 2063, focusing on improving Africa's socio-economic development. The strategy focuses on increasing the value and competitiveness of African commodities in global markets.[15] In order to do so, Agenda 2063 outlines specific goals that the strategy hopes to accomplish. These goals include transforming Africa from a raw materials supplier, enabling countries to add value to commodities, extracting higher rents from commodities, integrating into global value chains, promoting diversification, addressing price volatility, and using Africa's natural resources and commodities market to help industrialize Africa.[16] While this plan had excellent ideas and methods to address the issue at hand, its effectiveness and implementation has been minimal.

Since the inception of this strategy in 2013, progress has been extremely slow in Africa. For one, many countries have struggled to implement the measures outlined in the African Commodities Strategy, causing a stunt in socio-economic growth.[17] Moreover, the

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[12] African Union Staff, "Agenda 2063."
[13] African Union Staff, "Agenda 2063."
[14] African Union Staff, "Agenda 2063."
[15] African Union Staff, "Africa's Commodities Strategy; Value Addition for Global Competitiveness," African Union, https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20210902/africas-commodities-strategy-value-addition-global-competitiveness
[16] African Union Staff, "Africa's Commodities."
[17] United Nations, "Economic Development in Africa Report 2022," UN Trade and Development, https://unctad.org/edar2022

overall effectiveness of the strategy has been minimal. This raises questions as to the underlying causes of the strategy's inefficiency.

A 2015 report of the High-Level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa discovered that Africa lost approximately 80 billion USD annually through illicit financial outflows.[18] This 80-billion-dollar loss significantly exceeds the financial development assistance that Africa receives, significantly deteriorating socio-economic development progress.[19] Africa has a deep-rooted history with colonialism. While most of the continent gained independence in around 1960, the effects of colonial rule are still seen today. A huge example of colonialism's lasting effects is the continued resource exploitation in Africa. While Africa has a rich commodities market, many of the profits acquired flow to external entities, like Western countries.[20] This fosters continued dependency, stifling any effort at socio-economic growth.

Moreover, while global initiatives have provided assistance to Africa, it has also reinforced dependency and weakened the nation's sovereignty. Africa has seen an increased rate of political and economic interference through global initiatives.[21] This has not only fostered prolonged dependency but has also proven to be a threat to Africa's autonomy. In order for the AU to commit itself to the goal of creating a self-sufficient and economically prosperous Africa, it must effectively address the factors that are stifling Africa's current growth. The AU must brainstorm ways to successfully implement the African Commodities strategy in an effective and efficient manner, with a focus on preventing the issues that can slow down Africa's socio-economic progress.

History:

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[18] United Nations, "Draft African Union Commodity Strategy," African Union, pg. 1, https://au.int/sites/default/files/newsevents/workingdocuments/42503-wd-AU_Commodity_Strategy.pdf
[19] United Nations, "Draft African Union."
[20] Cristina Duarte, "A Growing Middle Class and Continental Import Substitution: Connecting the Dots to Unlock 'Made in Africa'," United Nations, https://www.un.org/en/un-chronicle/growing-middle-class-and-continental-import-substitution-connecting-dots-unlock-%E2%80%9Cmade
[21] United Nations Security Council, "Root Causes of Conflicts in Africa Must Be Addressed Beyond Traditional Response, Special Adviser Tells Security Council Debate on Silencing Guns," United Nations, https://press.un.org/en/2023/sc15249.doc.htm

To understand Africa's modern commodities market, it is important to analyze its development over the past few decades. Africa had a complex and prosperous trade market prior to colonial rule. With an abundance of natural resources and expensive commodities, the various regions of Africa engaged in trade with each other. Each region exchanged commodities such as gold, ivory, spices, textiles, etc. Over time, this trade expanded externally, with trade routes reaching the Middle East and even the Europeans.[22]

As European colonists started to arrive in the 19th century, Africa saw their trade routes experience massive disruption. Throughout the late 19th century to the early 20th century, European colonists exploited Africa's natural resources.[23] Commodities such as diamonds, gold, coffee beans, cacao, etc. started to face depletion as these products became central to the colonialist economies. European companies slowly started to control these commodity markets. These European companies dictated everything within these markets, from the production, to the extraction, to the exportation of these commodities.[24] This control significantly impacted local communities who were unable to make profit, losing all autonomy over their markets and products.[25]

Around the 1960's, the majority of Africa had gained independence. Following independence, African countries tried to regain control of their commodity markets and natural resources. In an attempt to eradicate the effects of colonialism, African countries took a different approach to rebuilding post-independence. With a focus on increasing the power of their citizens and communities, the state governments provided universal education, delinked from colonial currencies, implemented developmentalist central bank policies, and worked to diversify revenue sources.[26] Many countries explored nationalizing key industries to further economic profit.[27] However, all these efforts failed due to increased political violence. As Africa started to witness the presence of coups, increased

[22] Alexander Moradi, "Commodity Trade and Development: Theory, History, Future," African Economic History Network, https://www.aehnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Commodity-trade-and-Development.Moradi_update01032022.pdf

[23] Moradi, "Commodity Trade."

[24] Moradi, "Commodity Trade."

[25] Moradi, "Commodity Trade."

[26] Adebayo Olukoshi, Tetteh Hormeku-Ajei, Aishu Balaji, Anita Nayar, "Post-Independence Africa Had Dreams of Freedom. Neoliberalism Offers Nothing But Subordination," Jacobin, https://jacobin.com/2020/07/africa-colonialism-post-independence

[27] Olukoshi, Hormeku-Ajei, Balaji, Nayar, "Post-Independence."

levels of corruption, mismanagement, and political chaos, any hope of economic prosperity started to disappear.[28] Following World War II, Western countries' demand for commodities and natural resources for post-war reconstruction increased, with Africa being one of their primary exporters.[29] While Africa's economic profit increased, so did the nation's reliance and dependency on the West.

Moreover, the 1980's commodity crash devastated African economies.[30] Struggling to keep afloat, Africa started to rely on loans from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), loans that were conditional on African liberalization and privatization.[31] Africa started to adopt structural adjustment programs under the guidance of the World Bank and IMF. These programs restructured economies to rely on export-oriented policies and commodity markets.[32] This period of time also witnessed large commodity price fluctuations.[33] With all these factors working together over the next few years, Africa started to witness significant economic decline.

In an attempt to revitalize efforts for African socio-economic development, the African Commodities Strategy was created under Agenda 2063. With continued emphasis on economic diversification, the plan strives to battle the challenges that African economies have faced in the past. However, many countries have struggled to adequately implement the African Commodities Strategy. This committee must focus on the various factors impeding the implementation of the African Commodities Strategy, focusing on the continued effects of colonialism, IMF and World Bank intervention, export-oriented economies and more.

Analysis:

As Africa faces the large goal of sustainable socio-economic development within a span of fifty years under Agenda 2063, it becomes imperative for there to be immediate effective action. While frameworks like Agenda 2063 have developed complex and creative

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[28] Olukoshi, Hormeku-Ajei, Balaji, Nayar, "Post-Independence."
[29] Olukoshi, Hormeku-Ajei, Balaji, Nayar, "Post-Independence."
[30] Moradi, "Commodity Trade."
[31] Olukoshi, Hormeku-Ajei, Balaji, Nayar, "Post-Independence."
[32] Moradi, "Commodity Trade."
[33] Moradi, "Commodity Trade."

solutions to the issues at hand, like the African Commodities Strategy, progress cannot occur without the successful implementation of these solutions. Even though the African Commodities Strategy works to utilize Africa's natural resources and revitalize the commodities market for socio-economic development, it struggles to address many other issues that hinder the strategy's successful implementation. In order to promote the successful implementation of the African Commodities Strategy, it is imperative for the AU to detect and address factors hindering the strategy's execution.

The African Commodities strategy proposes utilizing Africa's natural resources to jump start industrialization.[34] For example, the strategy proposes improving areas like infrastructure to reduce costs of production and increase competitiveness.[35] However, Africa struggles with a shortage of skilled labor and technical proficiency.[36] This poses a significant challenge to industrialization and improvements in infrastructure. Without available labor and technical expertise, conducting significant improvements to infrastructure and labor sectors becomes extremely difficult. In addition, a lack of technical expertise reduces Africa's efficiency in production, limiting Africa's ability to utilize its natural resources and commodity markets for socio-economic progress.

Africa's deep-colonial history still affects its economic state. Following colonial rule, Africa fell into a period of political chaos. As a result, states within Africa still struggle with weak governance, increase rates of corruption, etc.[37] This political instability affects the state's economies through mismanagement of natural resources and commodity markets. Moreover, governments struggle to maintain transparency to the public and international community regarding revenue management, economic profit, compliance with frameworks, etc.[38] This challenges Africa's ability to successfully implement frameworks like the African Commodities Strategy.

In addition, colonial rule pushed Africa into an economy reliant on natural resources and commodities. Reliance on such products causes Africa to be a primary

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[34] African Union Staff, "Africa's Commodities."

[35] African Union Staff, "Africa's Commodities."

[36] United Nations, "Economic Development."

[37] Olukoshi, Hormeku-Ajei, Balaji, Nayar, "Post-Independence."

[38] Transparency International Staff, "Corruption in Africa: 75 Million People Pay Bribes," Transparency International, https://www.transparency.org/en/gcb/africa/africa-9th-edition

commodities exporter in the global trade market. The issue with economies reliant on commodity exportation is that they are extremely vulnerable to price fluctuations and overall trade dynamics.[39] This leads to instability within Africa's socio-economic profits. Economic diversification within Africa's exports could lead to significant improvement for the continent's socio-economic stability and progression. However, this type of diversification would require structural transformation and high levels of investment.

During colonial rule, European colonizers controlled all of Africa's markets. Local workers had no control over their profits and exports. While this direct control from Western countries ceased to exist after African independence, many countries still hold indirect control over Africa's exports. As previously mentioned, a 2015 report of the High-Level Panel discovered that Africa lost approximately 80 billion USD annually through financial outflows.[40] Colonial exploitation still occurs on the African subcontinent. While Africa has a rich commodities market that is not directly controlled by Western countries, many of the profits acquired by Africa flow to Western countries. Moreover, Western countries have limited Africa's access to global markets through trade barriers, tariffs, and many other financial blockades.[41] These barriers do not allow for African commodities to reach the global market and competitive prices. Such international interference substantially affects Africa's socio-economic development.

One of the most obvious barriers for Africa's socio-economic development and implementation of frameworks lies in a lack of funding. Developing countries struggle to implement structural changes and transformations due to a lack of financial support. While the international community is always a trusted source of financial support, African countries must consider the downsides of accepting funding from developed countries. In 2013, China adopted a strategy called the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).[42] The BRI strives to increase global connectivity through large-scale investment and infrastructure

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[39] UN Trade & Development Staff, "Commodity Dependence: 5 Things You Need to Know," UN Trade & Development, https://unctad.org/news/commodity-dependence-5-things-you-need-know#:~:text=Commodity%2Ddependent%20countries%20often%20grapple,increased%20economic%20and%20political%20instability.

[40] United Nations, "Draft African Union."

[41] Olukoshi, Hormeku-Ajei, Balaji, Nayar, "Post-Independence."

[42] James McBride, Noah Berman, "China's Massive Belt and Road Initiative," Council on Foreign Relations, https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/chinas-massive-belt-and-road-initiative

projects.[43] The BRI is an inspiration from the ancient Silk Road, the trade route that connected Africa, Europe, China, and many other countries centuries ago.[44] China has been making efforts to establish the BRI in Africa.[45] While international investment and infrastructure programs like the BRI can significantly help Africa's financial state and jump start socio-economic development, it can also foster increased rates of dependency, debt, and long-term economic failure.

The BRI provides loans to the country it is investing in.[46] For developing African countries, such loans can cause significant economic challenges. The concern lies in the fact that African countries may not be able to repay these loans causing a prolonged dependency on China. With Agenda 2063 calling for financial independence in less than fifty years, Africa must be wary of accepting aid that can cause future financial dependency.

Other concerns with the BRI arise from questions about its long-term sustainability. While the BRI provides investment for infrastructure and technological advancements, it does not invest time in providing structural long-term change.[47] For example, the BRI does not educate local populations on technological methods and skills.[48] As a result, concerns arise on the stability of economic development made after the BRI initiative ends. Without structural change like civilian education and skill development, long-term growth becomes impossible. While international support and initiatives can provide a developing country with financial assistance that results in significant short-term progress, it is also extremely important to consider the damage and effects that support can have on the country's long-term development.

Conclusion:

The AU has recently been extremely focused on jump-starting exponential economic growth in Africa. With the goal of turning Africa into a global powerhouse within fifty years, the AU has worked hard to create transformative frameworks, utilizing Africa's abundant

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[43] McBride, Berman, "China's Massive Belt."
[44] McBride, Berman, "China's Massive Belt."
[45] McBride, Berman, "China's Massive Belt."
[46] McBride, Berman, "China's Massive Belt."
[47] McBride, Berman, "China's Massive Belt."
[48] McBride, Berman, "China's Massive Belt."

and rich resources. Agenda 2063 provides various solutions for Africa's development with strategies like the African Commodities Strategy focusing on Africa's sustainable economic growth. While these frameworks and solutions are comprehensive and creative, their implementation has stalled in recent years. Transforming a developing continent into a global powerhouse within fifty years is no easy task. As such, it is imperative for the AU to prioritize efficiency and cooperation when addressing the issue at hand.

By identifying the root causes for the delayed implementation of the African Commodities Strategy, the AU can work effectively to prevent these factors. In addition to the point elaborated on earlier, the AU must also keep in mind the importance of cooperation between states. When enacting solutions like the diversification of economic sectors, it is imperative for cooperation and communication between African countries. Moreover, the successful implementation of frameworks like the African Commodities Strategy is only possible with cooperation and transparency between countries. In the spirit of the United Nations, collaboration and cooperation is always key for successful progression on any issue. As such, it is imperative that delegates prioritize communication, respect, and cooperation in committee.

Furthermore, delegates must keep in mind the goal of this topic. The AU is tasked with *implementing* the African Commodities Strategy. In other words, it is up to this committee to propose solutions to the factors deteriorating the successful implementation of the African Commodities Strategy, *not* to re-propose solutions already given in the strategy itself. With the goal of socio-economic transformation within the next fifty years, the AU must work immediately to ensure the effective implementation of the African Commodities Framework.

Questions to Consider:
1. How can the international community support Africa's sustainable development journey without fostering continued dependence?
2. How can the AU work to mitigate the effects of colonialism and continued modern exploitation?
3. What are sustainable sources of funding that the AU can use to support Africa's economic progress and transformation?

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29, 2024. https://www.un.org/en/un-chronicle/growing-middle-class-and-

continental-import-substitution-connecting-dots-unlock-%E2%80%9Cmade.

McBride, James, and Noah Berman. "China's Massive Belt and Road Initiative." Council

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https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/chinas-massive-belt-and-road-initiative.

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https://www.aehnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Commodity-

trade-and-Development.Moradi_update01032022.pdf.

Olukoshi, Adebayo, Tetteh Hormeku-Ajei, Aishu Balaji, and Anita Nayar. "Post-Independence Africa Had Dreams of Freedom. Neoliberalism Offers Nothing But Subordination." Jacobin. Accessed July 29, 2024. https://jacobin.com/2020/07/africa-colonialism-post-independence.

Transparency International Staff. "Corruption in Africa: 75 Million People Pay Bribes." Transparency International. Accessed July 29, 2024. https://www.transparency.org/en/gcb/africa/africa-9th-edition.

UN Trade & Development Staff. "Commodity Dependence: 5 Things You Need to Know." UN Trade and Development, October 9, 2023. https://unctad.org/news/commodity-dependence-5-things-you-need-know#:~:text=Commodity%2Ddependent%20countries%20often%20grapple,increased%20economic%20and%20political%20instability.

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United Nations. "Economic Development in Africa Report 2022." UN Trade and Development, 2022. https://unctad.org/edar2022.

II.   African Standby Force: Protocol and Mobilization in Conflict Regions

Statement of the Issue:

The African Standby Force (ASF) operates under the AU's Peace and Security Council.[49] The ASF is made up of multidisciplinary groups from AU member states. These groups are organized and then divided within regions in Africa. These groups then work as a standby force for their regional assignment. These standby forces are tasked with immediate crisis responses.[50] In other words, ASFs are intended to be crisis management troops, responding to conflict ranging from terrorism to political instability.

The AU Constitution gives the AU permission to intervene in member states undergoing concerning circumstances such as genocide or humanitarian crimes.[51] These standby forces allow the AU to manage these crises in an effective and efficient manner. Apart from immediate conflict intervention, the ASF also carries out functions like observation and monitoring missions, conflict prevention deployments, post-conflict peace-building, and humanitarian assistance for civilians.[52]

As conflict continues to blanket much of Africa, the responsibility falls on the AU's Peace and Security Council to develop swift and effective protocols to address the rising issues at hand. For one, terrorism and extremism have been a growing problem in Africa. The rise of terrorist and extremist groups in Africa causes serious regional destabilization.[53] Moreover, in the cases of conflict, the ASF struggles to initiate efficient and effective responses to terrorist threats.[54] With setbacks in conflict prevention as well as delays in conflict-response mobilization, terrorism and extremism continues to rise in Africa.

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[49] African Union Staff, "The African Standby Force (ASF)," African Union, https://peaceau.org/en/page/82-african-standby-force-asf-amani-africa-1

[50] African Union Staff, "The African Standby."

[51] African Union Staff, "The African Standby."

[52] African Union Staff, "The African Standby."

[53] Center for Preventative Action, "Violent Extremism in the Sahel," Council on Foreign Relations, https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/violent-extremism-sahel#:~:text=The%20persistent%20and%20growing%20strength,the%20United%20States%20and%20Europe.

[54] Dr. Andrew E Yaw Tchie, Dr. Ndubuisi Christian Ani, "Standby Security Arrangements and Deployment Setbacks: The Case of the African Standby Force," Training for Peace, https://trainingforpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/ASF-Report_Standby-Arrangements.pdf

In addition to terrorism, Africa's main struggle has been the presence of coups. Following colonial rule, Africa witnessed a period of political chaos, during which military and coup groups took hold of African governments.[55] Since then, coups have posed a large challenge to Africa's overall stability and security. The AU has been relatively scared to address coups due to their complex and complicated nature.[56] The complexity of coups is exacerbated by political sensitivities and questions of sovereignty that cause the AU to be hesitant when intervening. The AU historically has taken diplomatic stances rather than military interventions when it comes to coups.[57] The AU's confusion and lack of protocol on coups has caused the ASF to be essentially useless in protecting civilians and political order during coups.

History:

Following colonial rule, Africa witnessed a lot of political chaos. The early-independence period was marked by chaos stemming from a lack of experience regarding state governance.[58] As political leaders were still familiarizing themselves with state-building, many individuals started to grow dissatisfied with the post-colonial governance.[59] This led to the initialization of the first few coups in Africa. Regions like Ghana and Nigeria started to experience recurring military coups overthrowing civilian governments.[60] These coups used arguments of governmental corruption, mismanagement, and irresponsibility as factors to support their actions.[61]

The 1960s through the 1980s was marked by the effects of the Cold War. The Cold War brought along numerous proxy wars between the United States and Soviet Union.[62] Each country backed regions in Africa that aligned with their political ideology, sparking

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[55] Claude Lambert, "Africa's Coup Calamity: What Happened to Deterrence," War on the Rocks, https://warontherocks.com/2024/02/africas-coup-calamity-what-happened-to-deterrence/
[56] Lambert, "Africa's Coup."
[57] Lambert, "Africa's Coup."
[58] Peace and Security Council (PSC) Reporters, "The Evolution of Coups in Africa," The Institute for Security Studies (ISS), https://issafrica.org/pscreport/psc-insights/the-evolution-of-coups-in-africa
[59] PSC Reporters, "The Evolution."
[60] Lambert, "Africa's Coup."
[61] PSC Reporters, "The Evolution."
[62] Lawrence James, "Snuffed Out Democracies and Poisoned Toothpaste: How the Cold War Wreaked Havoc in Post-Colonial Africa," History Extra, https://www.historyextra.com/period/20th-century/africa-cold-war-proxy-wars-decolonistation/

internal conflict within Africa.[63] These proxy wars furthered the issue of political instability and militarization in African states.

Africa experienced significant economic struggles throughout the late 20th century. The proxy wars had taken their toll on African infrastructure, economies, and governments.[64] As economic devastation grew, so did the discontent of the population. This discontent served as a catalyst for more coups. Military coups increased their attacks for the purpose of restoring governmental stability, only to further their authoritarian rule.[65]

The 21st century has brought forward increased efforts for democratization throughout Africa. South Africa, Botswana, and Cape Verde are all functioning African democracies.[66] However, many regions are still experiencing political instability and periodical coups. With weak governments and international frameworks, the continued presence of political elites, and non-democratized countries, coups are still thriving in many African regions. Mali is a prime example of a coup-affected state.

In 2012, Mali experienced a military coup led by junior military officials.[67] These officials were frustrated with how the government had handled a northern insurgency. This led to the overthrow of a democratically elected government. This overthrow led to a politically chaotic situation that many extremist groups tried to take advantage of. Since then, the Malian armed forces have been trying to bring these extremist groups under control, with the help of the international community. Similarly, in 2020, Mali witnessed a second coup, this time led by senior military officials. These officials cited governmental corruption and mismanagement as supporting factors for the overthrowing of the government. Prior to this 2020 coup, Mali had witnessed months of protests calling for the resignation of the President Keita. Mali is an important example showcasing the continued presence of coups in modern day Africa.[68]

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[63] James, "Snuffed Out."
[64] James, "Snuffed Out."
[65] PSC Reporters, "The Evolution."
[66] Victor Oluwole, "Top 10 African Nations Leading in Democracy Index Rankings," Business Insider Africa, https://africa.businessinsider.com/local/lifestyle/top-10-african-nations-leading-in-democracy-index-rankings/y0p62pd
[67] Emily Cole, "Five Things to Know About Mali's Coup," United States Institute of Peace, https://www.usip.org/publications/2020/08/five-things-know-about-malis-coup
[68] Cole, "Five Things."

While coups emerge as a result of dissatisfied populations trying to combat issues of political corruption, violence, and instability, history has repeatedly shown that coups do not magically restore these factors within governments. In fact, history has shown the opposite. Using Mali as an example, it becomes clear that the occurrence of coups only exacerbates existing issues such as political corruption, violence, and instability. As coups cause more violence and instability, societies tend to face higher levels of political issues for a considerable amount of time following the coup. Thus, history has shown that coups are not the answer to growing concerns of instability.

Terrorism and extremism go hand in hand with political instability and the presence of coups. For one, many coups are supported or composed of extremist groups. The rise of extremist groups in Africa started after the Cold War.[69] Socio-economic marginalization was a prime catalyst for the rise of extremist groups, with Somalia witnessing the rise of Al-Shabaab, a Sunni-Islamist military group that imposed their strict interpretation of Sharia Law.[70] Moreover, the rise of terrorist and extremist groups in Africa have raised further concerns due to these group's transnational nature. For example, Boko Haram, an Islamist Jihadist group that began in Nigeria has now spread to Chad, Niger, Cameroon, and Mali.[71] Further, ISIL groups are making a presence in North Africa and Sahel.[72]

As a result of increases in terrorism, extremism, coups, and overall political violence, the ASF was created in 2003 as a means to mitigate and manage political and violent crises.[73] Due to the increased threat of terrorism and extremism, the ASF prioritized counter-terrorism protocols and interventions. However, a lack of resources, complex regional dynamics, among other factors have setback the ASF's efficiency in counter-terrorism. When it comes to coups, the ASF has been extremely inconsistent.[74] As mentioned earlier, the AU has historically been scared to address coups due to questions of

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[69] James, "Snuffed Out."

[70] National Counterterrorism Center Staff, "Al-Shabaab," Office of the Director of National Intelligence, https://www.dni.gov/nctc/groups/al_shabaab.html

[71] National Counterterrorism Center Staff, "Boko Haram," Office of the Director of National Intelligence, https://www.dni.gov/nctc/groups/boko_haram.html

[72] National Counterterrorism Center Staff, "ISIS-Libya (ISIS-L)," Office of the Director of National Intelligence, https://www.dni.gov/nctc/ftos/isis_libya_fto.html#:~:text=ISIS%2DLibya%20(ISIS%2DL)%20is%20one%2 0of%20several,of%20targets%20in%20North%20Africa.

[73] African Union Staff, "The African Standby."

[74] Lambert, "Africa's Coup."

sovereignty. As a result, the ASF has also remained relatively stagnant on the matter. The ASF's role in coup intervention has been extremely loose and abstract. The ASF's inefficiency in such matters have put civilian lives at risk amid conflict. As a result, with growing concerns of terrorism, extremism, and political violence, it is of utmost importance for the AU to devise strategies to mobilize the ASF in an efficient and effective manner.

Analysis:

The ASF is a body that has a lot of capability to promote peace and stability in Africa. In fact, the democratization of many countries happened after the ASF was established. However, recent inefficiencies in the ASF call for immediate attention and action. One of the largest issues the ASF faces is logistical constraints.[75] Many ASF missions have faced challenges due to inadequate resources, improper infrastructure, limited transportation, and more.[76] With a lack of funding, these problems are growing. The AU must brainstorm ways to acquire funding in a sustainable manner. While international communities and countries have helped Africa in the past, they haven't always been the most sustainable source of funding. Aid from developed countries has fostered dependency within Africa. This dependency has caused issues within Africa's economies, causing more harm than good in the long run. Moreover, with varying levels of corruption throughout African countries, it is important for the AU to develop frameworks to encourage transparency and accountability within countries.

The ASF has also struggled to carry out cross-regional missions due to varying levels of preparedness within each region.[77] Each member state part of the ASF has a different level of military capacity, resources, etc. During joint missions, this variance causes issues with coordination and execution.[78] As a result, the ASF requires methods of resource reallocation and standardization of procedures. Moreover, the AU must develop strategies to implement standardization of response procedures across Africa.

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[75] Tchie, Ani, "Standby Security."
[76] Tchie, Ani, "Standby Security."
[77] Tchie, Ani, "Standby Security."
[78] Tchie, Ani, "Standby Security."

Coups have been a sensitive topic within the AU for decades. The AU's member states operate under a guideline of non-interference in each state's internal matters.[79] This guideline has significantly complicated the AU's stance on coups. As a result, even in the case of humanitarian crises or security dangers, the AU has been reluctant to deploy the ASF. This has undermined the ASFs credibility and functionality. Thus, while the AU may still lack consensus on setting protocol for coup intervention, it is important for the body to develop strategies to utilize the ASF for civilian assistance and humanitarian aid. This can include more training in international humanitarian law, conflict-sensitive approaches, humanitarian assistance engagement, etc. The AU must develop ways to utilize the ASF to bring humanitarian support in the midst of coup attacks or political violence.

Humanitarian support also includes areas such as education and healthcare. Education and access to jobs have been large deterrents for terrorism recruitment.[80] As a result, prevention strategies for terrorism can include increasing access to education. The AU can develop strategies to utilize the ASF in such humanitarian efforts. In addition, a decrease in inequality and poverty has also been shown to prevent the spread of terrorism and extremism. By focusing its efforts on improving infrastructure, increasing job opportunities, expanding healthcare access, etc. the ASF can strengthen the economic sphere of Africa and as a result, strengthen Africa's ability to combat terrorism and extremism. By utilizing the ASF to improve and protect civilian life, the AU can start to see improvements in other areas such as terrorism, extremism, and coup violence, topics that the AU has struggled to address in the past.

Conclusion:

As the fear of terrorism, extremism, and political violence grows within the African subcontinent, it becomes imperative for the AU to devise strategies to effectively prevent and manage crises by utilizing the ASF. While the AU and the ASF have struggled to

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[79] African Union Staff, "The African Standby."

[80] UNDP Staff, "Lack of Jobs Eclipses Religious Ideology as the Main Driver of Violent Extremism in Sub-Saharan Africa," United Nations, https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/february-2023/lack-jobs-eclipses-religious-ideology-main-driver-violent-extremism-sub#:~:text=Hope%20of%20finding%20work%20is,Nations%20Development%20Programme%20(UNDP).

intervene in conflict within the past decade, their reformation can signal a turning point in Africa's future peace and security. As the AU explores solutions to terrorism and extremism, it is important to once again keep in mind the importance of national cooperation. Moreover, when addressing the ongoing question of adequate coup intervention, it is important for the AU to prioritize humanitarian aid and civilian help. On the topic of coup-intervention, the AU must brainstorm effective strategies to utilize the ASF for civilian help and aid. By working together to reform the ASF, the AU will start to see significant progress in Africa's current and future peace and security.

Questions to Consider:

1. What strategies can the ASF implement to mitigate the spread of terrorism and extremism in conflict-prone or conflict-ridden areas?
2. How can the ASF and AU strengthen their stance on coups and ensure the security and protection of civilians?
3. What other methods can the ASF take to strengthen their peacekeeping operations? If the ASF were to collaborate with international peacekeeping organizations, what challenges might arise and how would the AU be prepared to combat these issues?

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