

## Big Power 500-Year Cycles and Africa

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### Abstract

The last 500 to 600 years witnessed cyclical patterns of geopolitical changes as powers rose and declined in terms of world dominance. The dominant ones tended to become geopolitical 'predators' as they ravaged and looted victim areas and peoples. This involved a series of 'liberations' in which the liberated became the new dominant force doing its best to contain or suppress others who desired to acquire the same dominant position. Once in the position of dominance, however, the power becomes complacent, inward looking, and susceptible to power erosion from outside due to internal weaknesses. In the late 14<sup>th</sup> Century, Ibn Khaldun well explained this rise and fall pattern in his *Muqadimah*. In those changes, Africa tended to be the victim of forces and the impact was continuously negative. Before the rise of Europe in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, however, Mali and China had proved their geopolitical prowess, had become complacent, and had then slid into subservience under Euro forces. The pattern started with the Europeans collectively liberating themselves from Muslim dominance in Southern Europe. The pattern turned into constant power rivalries among the Euros until the 21<sup>st</sup> Century when China has successfully challenged Euro global dominance.

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The last 500 to 600 years witnessed cyclical patterns of geopolitical changes as powers rose and declined in terms of world dominance. In those changes, Africa tended to be the victim of those forces and the impact was continuously negative. The pattern started with the Europeans collectively liberating themselves intellectually, territorially, and commercially from Muslim dominance. The pattern then turned into constant power rivalries among the Euros until the 21<sup>st</sup> Century when China successfully challenged Euro global dominance.

I

In the emerging pattern, the dominant powers tended to become geopolitical ‘predators’ as they ravaged and looted victim areas and peoples. This involved a series of ‘liberations’ in which the liberated became the new dominant force doing its best to contain or suppress others who desired to acquire the same dominant position. Once in the position of dominance, however, the power becomes complacent, inward looking, and susceptible to power erosion from outside and collapse due to internal weaknesses. Two North African scholars, the Christian Aurelia Augustine and the Muslim Ibn Khaldun, roughly a thousand years apart, elaborated on this pattern.

The two were good historians, delving into history to make their cases. In the 5<sup>th</sup> Century, Augustine, a North African Berber, in his *City of God*, tried to defend Christianity from accusations that it was responsible for the fall of Rome. The historical record, he argued, showed that Christianity did not exist in previous empires and yet they collapsed the same way, mostly from internal decay. Besides defending Christianity, Augustine virtually invented the concept of *original sin*.<sup>1</sup> Islam, a religious offshoot of Christianity that replaced the collapsed Roman Empire thrived in the Mediterranean zone from the 8<sup>th</sup> Century to the 15<sup>th</sup> Century but the signs of its eminent collapse were clear to Khaldun who, in the late 14<sup>th</sup> Century, agonized over the visible declining of the Umma. He sought to explain this rise and fall pattern in his *Muqadimah*. For him, internal decay arising from complacency and neglect of democratic bonding weakens an empire so much that it cannot defend itself. Having a low opinion of European Christians who had looted and expelled his family from Seville, Khaldun claimed that European Christians were not believers and should be destroyed.<sup>2</sup>

Eventually, the Spaniards led other Europeans in expelling the Muslims from Europe and then embarked on creating new identities. To legitimize their new status without the Muslims, the Europeans harped back to ancient Athens with its concocted amnesia, discrimination, disdain for non-Athenians, and denial of citizenship to other Greeks.<sup>3</sup> With Athens accepted as the

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<sup>1</sup> Macharia Munene, “Diplomacy in Pre-Colonial Africa,” in Korwa Gombe Adar, Patrick Lumumba Loch, and Pamela Inoti, editors, *African Foreign Policy, Diplomacy and Leadership: Reflections of Diplomats and Scholars* (Nairobi: African Institute for Leaders and Leadership, 2016), pp. 31-32; <sup>1</sup> Saint Augustine, *The City of God*

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History* as translated from the Arabic by Franz Rosenthal and edited and abridged by N.J. Dawood (Princeton: Bolingen Series, Princeton University Press, 1967)

<sup>3</sup> Joel Alden Schlosser, “Review: The Perpetual immigrant and the limits of Athenian democracy,” *Contemporary Political Theory* (2019) <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41296-019-00349-5>; Rebecca Newberger Goldstein, “Making Athens Great Again,” *The Atlantic* April 2017 Issue, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/04/making-athens-great-again/517991/...>

beginning of the *Conceptual West*, the stress in European strategic thought focuses on Thucydides, the chronicler of the Peloponnesian War, mainly because he was Athenian rather than simply Greek. Seemingly full of himself and disdain for the older Greek historian of the Persian Wars, Herodotus, Thucydides narrowed himself to the Greek civil war which destroyed both militaristic Sparta and imperialistic Athens.

Thucydides managed to propose a lasting principle claiming that a rising power like Athens is an inherent threat to a dominant power like Sparta, what Graham T. Allison calls the “Thucydides Trap” in reference to the emerging power rivalry between the United States as the dominant power and China as the rising power. Thucydides advised people to study history or the past for it might reflect or resemble the future.<sup>4</sup> “It is,” Thucydides said of his book, “to be a possession for all time and not just a performance piece for the moment.”<sup>5</sup> European writers accepted his claim as a valid starting point in political and war strategies. Pericles, with his new laws of citizenship exclusivity, drew the line that made Herodotus a perpetual intellectual outcast.<sup>6</sup> They see Herodotus through the eyes of Thucydides<sup>7</sup> who accused his mentor of “philobarbarism”.<sup>8</sup>

Thus the Europeans copied Athens to claim superiority by barbarizing non-Europeans. First they organized collective amnesia on their inglorious past and second they manufactured new histories to justify claims to racial superiority, particularly outside Europe, and to deny the identity/humanity of their victims outside the West. Spain seemingly led the way in engaging in cultural and mental liberation by rewriting the record, removing anything that did not glorify white achievements, deliberately engaging in the exercise of officially not remembering, and creating myths of greatness.<sup>9</sup> Before the rise of Europe in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, for instance, Mali and China had proved their geopolitical prowess, had become complacent, and had then slid into subservience under European forces.

## II

Spain set the pattern of collective amnesia and manufacturing of history even as it competed with Portugal for world dominance. In their rivalry, Portugal and Spain used technology to build sea capacity beyond what their victims could master in Africa, the Americas, and Asia. In the process, they conquered inward looking Incas in Peru, Aztecs in Mexico, the Maya in Central America, the Indians in Asia, and subdued the Chinese. Although the Pope had tried to settle their world territorial grabbing disputes with a 1494 treaty at Tordesillas, the treaty could

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accessed June 16, 2020; Lisbeth S. Fried, “The Concept of ‘Impure Birth’ in 5<sup>th</sup> Century Athens and Judea,” in R.H. Beal, S. Holloway and J Scurlock, editors, *In the Wake of Tikva Frymer-Kensky: Tikva-Kensky Memorial Volume* (Gorgia Press, 2009), pp. 126-135 <https://lisbethfried.com/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2012/10/T...> Accessed June 16, 2020; Hesiod’s Corner, “Thucydides’ Athenian Exceptionalism,” <https://hesiodscorner.wordpress.com/2017/09/27/thucydides-athenian-exceptionalism/> accessed June 17, 2020

<sup>4</sup> Thucydides, as edited and translated by Jeremy Mynott, *The War of the Peloponnesians and the Athenians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 15-16; John Lewis Gaddis, *On Grand Strategy* (New York: Penguin Press, 2018), pp. 32, 62

<sup>5</sup> Quote in Thucydides, *The War of the Peloponnesians*, p. 16

<sup>6</sup> David Pipes, “Herodotus: Father of History, Father of Lies,” *Loyola University, The Student Historical Journal 1989-1990*, <https://www.loyno.edu/history/journal/1998-9/Pipes.htm> accessed June 11, 2020

<sup>7</sup> John Dillery, “Review of Foster and Leitner, Thucydides and Herodotus,” *Histos* 8, 15 February, 2014, pp. vii-xi.

<sup>8</sup> Jona Lendering, “Herodotus of Halicarnassus”

<sup>9</sup> Susan Martin-Marquez, *Disorientations: Spanish Colonialism in Africa and the Performance of Identity* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2008), pp. 12-16; Sophie Bessis, *Western Supremacy: Triumph of an Idea* (London: Zed Books, 2003), pp. 12-14

not hold because of two interconnected 1517 developments involving religious reformation that challenged papal authority and institution of slavery and Atlantic slave trade that the pope had authorised. The religious reformation that undermined the concept of Christendom in Europe in which the Pope was the spiritual boss started when a German Augustinian monk, Martin Luther, demanded reason before accepting papal decrees. Christendom then fragmented into denominations that competed along emerging nationalistic 'nation states' that challenged Spain's claim to dominance in looting global wealth that included slaves and the Atlantic slave trade.

That competition inspired devastating wars in Europe, couched in denominational logic, and forced a meeting at Westphalia in 1648 that stressed 'nation-states' as acceptable geopolitical units. Its purpose was to minimize religious fighting in Europe while agreeing on global looting. An employee of the Dutch East Indies, Hugo Grotius, came up with a formula recommending what became the basis of international law<sup>10</sup> which made agreements in Europe the basis of legitimacy. Each 'nation-state' received recognition as 'sovereign' to do what it wanted inside itself but also to accept rules of behavior towards each other outside Europe.

While Westphalia might have reduced religious fighting inside Europe by recognizing certain political territories as belonging to specific 'nations', fighting over overseas territories did not stop. Before Westphalia, England had been in the forefront asserting its imperial rights at the expense of other European 'nation-states' and the victims of its looting spree. Led by Elizabeth I, England had successfully challenged Spain's dominance. A human product of England's religious split from Catholicism, Elizabeth made anti-Spanish Catholicism the cornerstone of her imperial policies. Her grand strategy was two-pronged; encouraging piracy against the Spaniards and preparing for eventual naval encounter with Spain.<sup>11</sup> The expected encounter came in the 1588 Armada as a result of which Spain declined as a power and Britain rose<sup>12</sup> to become the biggest European empire builder. The determining naval battle that established England as the unquestioned global sea power, however, was the 1805 Battle of Trafalgar.<sup>13</sup>

England had, however, to contend with other claimants to slave dealings and global looting which led to a series of anti-colonial revolutions that eventually eroded England's imperial dominance. France, occasionally ganging up with Spain, repeatedly challenged England in series of wars fought in colonies. Among the critical wars was the one in which England acquired Canada and India from the French in 1763. In dispossessing the French in Canada and India, however, it was subjected to internal colonial upheavals that opened up three conceptual possibilities. First, when the interests of colonial subjects are in conflict with those of colonial authorities, the subjects could defy the master by claiming the right to freedom and equality. Second, the idea of defying rulers was not confined to those in the colonies for it subsequently applied to subjects in Europe. Third, the right to rebellion spread to slave in Haiti who in turn inspired anti-colonial rebellions in Latin America.

Slave trade had enabled England to accumulate much capital which it used to industrialize and having lost its biggest slave market in North America, it turned 'philanthropic'. It started

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<sup>10</sup> Siba N'Zatioula Grovogui, *Sovereigns, Quasi Sovereigns, and Africans: Race and Self Determination in International Law* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press)

<sup>11</sup> David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 6, 100, 183-184; Niall Ferguson, *Empire: How Britain Made the Modern World* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), pp. 10-11.

<sup>12</sup> Gaddis, *On Grand Strategy*, pp. 142-144, 153-154; George, *History of Warships*, pp. 32, 39, 47-48

<sup>13</sup> Halford J. Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1962 edition), pp.58, 133; George, *History of Warships*, pp. 51-52

campaigning to abolish slave trade.<sup>14</sup> In the process, it created Sierra Leone in West Africa as a good dumping place for blacks caught in the high seas. The United States followed the example and created Liberia for its unwanted free blacks to go and be free in Africa.

France had helped American rebels to defeat England and then it fell into the same challenge of subjects defying authorities in the French Revolution that spurred global realignment. It produced a conqueror in the name of Napoleon Bonaparte spreading concepts of liberty, Equality, and Fraternity across Europe only to generate anti-French nationalism that was responsible for his defeat at Waterloo. Before Waterloo, however, Napoleon had suffered defeat at the hands of slaves in Haiti which, while dashing his hope of recreating a French empire in the Americas, benefitted the United States through the Louisiana Purchase and prodded the rest of Latin America to anti-colonialism. Latin American anti-colonialism brought out inherent conflicts between ideals of desired world order and perceptions of national interests. Since it was not in its interests for Spain to regain its Latin American empire and probably impose mercantile policies, England trashed the Congress of Vienna commitments for big powers to help each other in restoring the old order.

### III

The tendency for big powers to trash agreements evolved into an imperial creed as they tried to deny each other access to resources. With France contained, Britain seemed like a new Rome in trying to deny sea capacity to other powers. In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, it undertook to balance and limit the rise of mainly Russia and a newly united Germany under Prussian leadership. In the Crimean War, for instance, it succeeded in hemming Russia by destroying the Russian Navy's Black Sea Fleet.<sup>15</sup> This was in order to deny Russia sea aspirations and to confine it to remaining a land power.<sup>16</sup> After hemming Russia to remain land oriented, Britain was concerned with militaristic Prussia that was looking for its geopolitical space. War, as Carl Von Clausewitz had observed in his *On War*, was simply an instrument for achieving other ends but not an end in itself.<sup>17</sup> For Prussia, war was an instrument for German unification and this was worrying. Subsequently, England's hemming strategy seemingly aimed at creating buffer zones between Germany and Russia.<sup>18</sup>

Emerging Germany, as well as the United States, appeared to learn from and then challenge British supremacy. Alfred Thayer Mahan, after noting British power supremacy because of big commerce, big navy, and strategic colonies worldwide wrote his 1890 *Influence of Sea Power Upon History*<sup>19</sup> which reportedly influenced Kaiser Wilhelm II to want to have his own big commerce, big navy, and strategic colonies. In itself, that desire threatened British supremacy and had to be countered through new alliance systems that eventually led to the Great War. To a large extent, intensified European competition for industrial raw materials had focused attention on African resources, symbolized by the 1884/85 Berlin Conference on the Partition of Africa. That was the reason, argued WEB DuBois in 1915, the Great War had broken out.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*(Durham: University of Carolina Press, 1994).

<sup>15</sup> Mizokami, "5 Most Powerful Navies of All Time"

<sup>16</sup> Lawrence Freedman, *Strategy: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 120-122

<sup>17</sup> Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War* (London: Wordsworth Classics of World Literature, 1997).

<sup>18</sup> Halford J. Mackinder, *Democratic Ideals and Reality* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1962 edition), p. 158

<sup>19</sup> Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783*(New York: Prentice Hall, 1980)

<sup>20</sup> W.E.B DuBois, "The African Roots of the War," *Atlantic Monthly*, Volume 115, Number 5, May 1915, pp. 707-714

Two years later, Bolshevik leader Vladimir Lenin claimed that imperialism had replaced capitalism as the mode of exploitation at the global level and set an example of mounting communist revolutions in non-capitalistic places. Since imperialism was the reason for the war, good Russians should not be part of such imperialistic undertaking.<sup>21</sup> They should, instead, have a communistic revolution. This was despite the fact that Russia was backward and did not fit the Marxian prescription of communist revolutions starting in the most advanced capitalistic countries. With Lenin succeeding in giving assistance to Marxian history, the Chinese decided to do the same by organizing communistic revolution among Chinese peasants and succeeded in October 1949.

The Great War thus ended 19<sup>th</sup> Century global British supremacy and gradually ushered in the current global powers of the United States, Russia, and China. By the beginning of the Great War in 1914, both the German and British had started deferring to the United States, particularly when Theodore Roosevelt was US president. That deference remained during Woodrow Wilson's presidency in which he ended up competing with Lenin as to which new world order should be imposed on the rest of the world. Although Wilson, through his Fourteen Points, successfully stemmed Lenin's influence in Eastern Europe and convinced the Germans to stop fighting, he could not stop Lenin's Bolsheviks from establishing an anti-capitalist communist system in Russia. Despite, creating a League of Nations, which his country failed to join, he similarly could not stop Britain, France, and Italy from getting their geopolitical pound of flesh from the Germans and the Ottomans. There then lay the seeds of the next big war, baptized World War II, after which European big powers emerged as supplicants to the United States. They also had to contend with the presence of an assertive Soviet Union and a People's Republic of China that was dusting itself from a 'Century of Humiliation.'

The three powers, in their protracted rivalries, dominated post World War II developments and still dictate what happens. First, the 1918 ideological confrontation between Wilson and Lenin graduated into a Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union that was more than ideological as the two competed to force the rest of the world to choose sides. They divided Europe into Western and Eastern zones, with Germany at the centre of that division, and extended their rivalries to Asia and Africa where they actually fought through proxies. Their purported proxies fought in Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Angola. At the end, the United States emerged the winner as the Soviet Union disintegrated and the Americans cheered, chest-thumbed, and decreed that the world had to follow its ways and be on the right side of history.

There were some problems with the American sense of triumphalism for it did not take into account certain geopolitical realities. Transnational forces such as pandemics, the web, and international terrorism emerged to de-border countries and they showed little respect for powerful countries; all were made vulnerable. In addition, Russia remained militarily strong and after nursing its humiliation started rebuilding and reasserting its global presence. What was more, communism as an ideology remained revered in China and Cuba and China was emerging as a force to reckon with. With the United States helping to discredit itself in the world arena primarily through aggression on such small countries as Iraq and Libya as well as Donald Trump's antics, all these forces tended to diminish American global predominance. Over confident that the rest of the world has to obey its dictates, it appeared incapable of having a 'grand strategy' for a changing world.

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<sup>21</sup> Vladimir Lenin, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* (London: Pluto Press, 1996)

As the American led Western influence diminishes globally, compounded by blunders in Ukraine due to lack of vision, friction within the Western camp and silent global rejection of American leadership is on the rise. Russia under Vladimir Putin seems to be sure of itself even as it struggles to force Ukraine to surrender. It feels hemmed on land, its sense of security threatened, and that NATO is provocative by expanding to Eastern Europe. It is thus desperate to survive by adopting the Bush Doctrine of pre-emptive strikes to deter potential attacks; it did it in Ukraine and dared the West. After the initial portrayal of ‘solidarity’ with Ukraine, the West is dissonant and members are trading accusations. In contrast, China is methodical in cultivating global goodwill at the economic and geopolitical levels. China worries Western countries because it leads in realigning the world, appear to be more acceptable to outside Europe than they are, and is careful not to provoke unnecessary global crises.

#### IV

In the last over 500 years of global Euro dominance, Africa was the general victim of geopolitical competition. The contact with Europe, Walter Rodney argued, under-developed Africa.<sup>22</sup> Starting with the Pope authorizing Europeans to enslave Africans, this evolved into the Atlantic slave trade supposedly to save Native Americans. Although the number of people uprooted from Africa in four centuries remains debatable, it did two things. One, it underdeveloped Africa and, two, it spurred capitalism mainly in England and helped to build the Western Hemisphere.

After the American, the French and the Haitian Revolutions, various powers tried to assert themselves in Africa. The United States had challenged European trade dominance along the African coast, was first to establish a consulate in Zanzibar, and had set an example on how to deal with local rulers. It boosted its nascent navy by attacking North Africa kingdoms in order to avoid paying for use of territorial waters. It also created Liberia by putting a gun on the head of a local chieftain in West Africa in order to establish Liberia as a dumping ground unwanted free blacks. On its part, France tried to recover from its defeat by deferring to England while asserting itself in Africa. Having learned from the Americans to avoid payments by invading North Africans, it invaded Algeria in order to avoid its wheat debts and to divert attention from domestic challenges.

It was England, however, that took control of geopolitical sways. It did its best to create new entities such as Sierra Leone in West Africa for dumping blacks caught in the high seas and also the new kingdom of Belgium whose subsequent impact on Africa still reverberates in the Congo. As it chased the Dutch from Cape Province and followed them across Southern Africa and eventually created South Africa, England beat up various African entities into colonial compliance. It was not alone in doing what Emmanuel Kant had recommended to deal with Africans whose supposed inherent stupidity was evident in their blackness. He wanted them ‘thrashed’ into separation.

The actual thrashing into separation came with the establishment of colonial states as agreed at Berlin in 1884/85, as each power competed to grab slices of African territory. Colonial states were slave states, its inhabitant were turned into slaves in situ or ‘natives’ to be deprived of freedom, sovereignty, legitimacy, and identity. As DuBois argued in 1915, that competition led to the outbreak of the Great War in 1914 in which ‘natives’ were drafted into the ‘carrier

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<sup>22</sup> Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Washington DC: Howard University Press,

corps' to carry luggage for Germans and Britons to kill each other in Africa, although it was contrary to the agreement at Berlin.

There were three options in response to the new order. First was to fight and stop the establishment of the new order but technology disadvantaged the Africans. Except for Ethiopia in which empire building Menelik II whipped the Italians at Adowa in 1896, each European power eventually subdued the territories it claimed. Second was to accept, subordinate themselves to the new order, become 'happy natives', and let the masters or master states decide everything including thinking. Third was to be realistic enough to take conditional acceptance, reflect as to the why of the new order, and then think of what to do to reverse the situation. The last two options are in constant struggle with each other as to who has the right to interpret Africa or decide what Africa's best interests are. In Kenya, it is the conceptual struggle between the *Home Guards* for the second option and the *Mau Maus* for the third option.

That conceptual struggle about who thinks and decides for Africa and Africans explains the rise and the success of Pan-Africanism as a political movement mostly after World War II in which colonial powers were weakened and became Cold War subordinates in the new geopolitical realignment. Among the Pan-African highlights was the 1945 meeting at Manchester where the African delegates vowed to eliminate imperialism and colonialism irrespective of the consequences. That commitment to liberation manifested itself in West Africa mostly through the Gold Coast/Ghana, through the *Mau War* in East Africa, through Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt, and through the Algerian War. These successes set examples for others to follow, mostly in Southern Africa where remnants of white settler-dom persisted.

The seeming successes, however, hit Cold War snags as postcolonial African states were pulled in different directions in a continuing conceptual struggle between response option two and option three. That struggle is clear in the current geopolitical realignment in which competing big powers host Africa 'summits', promise goodies to the leaders, and then expect Africans to go along with certain geopolitical desires. Increasingly, in deciding what is in their best interests, however, African states prefer making their own decisions even if the decisions annoy big powers. And that is the way it should be.

V

In the last five or six centuries, geopolitical changes gave rise to a cyclical pattern in which dominant powers rose and declined and Africa found itself having to adjust to the whims of the prevailing geopolitical environment. It started with the Europeans, led by Spain and Portugal, expelling the Muslims from Europe and then engaging in concocted amnesia to manufacture new identities of white racial superiorities that found comfort and justification in Ancient Athens with its arrogant discriminatory behaviour. Harping back to Athens enabled them to ignore history and all that had happened between Pericles imperialism and discriminatory attitude towards other Greeks and the 1492 capture of Alhambra in Granada and the emergence of Spain as a geopolitical entity. They were, in their new beliefs, starting everything afresh which then made other people irrelevant to be dismissed as barbarians and savages fit for conquest and enslavement.

With an acquired attitude of racial superiority to make them feel good, they became global 'predators', preying on Africans. They mounted the Atlantic slave trade which uprooted people



from their homes, underdeveloped Africa, and laid foundations for capitalism. They also fought wars to determine who the imperial champion 'predator' was. This turned out to be England which tried to balance others by denying them access to various resources.

The search for resources led industrializing powers to turn to Africa and, after the 1884/85 Berlin Conference, impose slavery *in situ* in the name of colonial states. African responses to the new order varied but they produced a continuing conceptual struggle as to whether Africans have a right to think and decide for themselves what is in their best interests. This continuing struggle is the *Home Guard* verses the *Mau Maus* one; an attitudinal and conceptual conflict over the subordination of Africa.

The Chinese appear to lead the current global power realignment and force rethinking on the part of each country, especially those in Africa. This is as Americans claim to be leading an increasingly reduced led, Russians reassert themselves by pounding on feisty Ukraine, the European Union is splitting over Russian gas and oil, and they all expect Africans to tag along their geopolitical whims. To succeed, China seemingly reversed its 'Forbidden City' mentality and the 15<sup>th</sup> Century inward looking arrogance that had enabled Europe to subject it to a 'Century of Humiliation.' Racial arrogance had probably encouraged Western powers to ignore rising China, despite warnings, as they concentrated on the geopolitical power politics of provoking resurgent 'whitish' Russia in the possible hope of subjecting it to a likely Carthaginian settlement. Their 'grand strategy' on Russia, if it ever existed, flopped grandly in Ukraine even as they try to force Africans to take sides on the Ukrainian fiasco. They now accuse each other of war profiteering, double standards, and wonder whether they should anymore have common approaches to international issues. The intrigues among the members of the Western sorority/fraternity on each other in times of self-inflicted crises are amusing to watching Africans.